

Strategy Name: Pick a Stick/Deck o' Cards/Roll 'em

Pick a Stick (including variations) is a form of checking for understanding* that randomly samples student responses. It is a type of individual checking for understanding.

What it looks like (from CCRTL protocol guide)

1. Teacher poses a question, problems, etc.
2. Students are given sufficient thought and/or work time
3. Teacher picks randomly in one of these ways:
 - a. from a group of sticks that represent each student (**Pick a Stick**)
 - b. from a group of cards that have students' names (**Deck o' Cards**)
 - c. by the roll of one or two dice which then indicates a seat (**Roll 'em**)
4. Teacher judges understanding based on students' responses

Essential elements:

- ☺ Individual response (not whole class or group)
- ☺ Students have time to prepare their answers.
- ☺ Visibly random choosing
- ☺

Possible variations within this strategy:

- ? Students can pass or not pass (passing is assumed to be anecdotal data)
- ? What is written on the stick or card (nicknames, photos, interesting fact)
- ?

Possible times/ways to use it:

- ✓ To assess what students remember from the previous day
- ✓ When an answer requires some work to prepare an answer
- ✓ When a response requires a long answer
- ✓ When there are multiple possible responses to a question
- ✓ To review answers
- ✓

Possible times/ways not to use it:

- ✗ When the reviewed material happened a significant time ago
- ✗ To point out non-understanding (i.e. show how many students weren't listening)
- ✗ It is not for self-assessment (i.e., asking the students questions about their level of understanding)
- ✗

**checking for understanding should be considered a formative assessment. It is a way for the teacher to determine what clarifications or re-teaching are necessary.*