

Muddiest Point

Muddiest Point is a quick monitoring technique in which students are asked to take a few minutes to jot down what the most difficult or confusing part of the lesson was for them. This strategy provides a comfortable outlet for students who are reluctant to let the teacher know when they are having difficulty understanding a concept or procedure. Instead of an expectation of “everyone understands,” Muddiest Point sets an expectation that everyone has something that is still confusing in the new content. The information gained through Muddiest Point helps the teacher prepare for strategies or activities that will address student difficulties.

How to Implement the Strategy:

1. Teacher distributes small sheets of paper (index cards, half sheets, post-it notes, etc.)
2. Teacher clarifies what is meant by “Muddiest Point”—the “muddiest point” is the part of the lesson that is most confusing to you, or seems to be most difficult to you.
3. Students individually describe their “muddiest point” on the provided paper.
4. Teacher collects responses and uses them to determine next steps for instruction.

Adapted from:

Keeley, Page (2008). *Science formative assessment: 75 practical strategies for linking assessment, instruction, and learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Corwin.