**Fist to Five**

**Description:**

*Fist to Five* asks students to indicate the extent of their understanding of a concept or procedure by holding up a closed fist (no understanding), one finger ( very little understanding), and a range up to five fingers (I understand it completely and can easily explain it to someone else). For example, after giving instructions for a lab acitivity, teachers might ask for a *Fist to Five* to do a quick check on whether students understand the directions before proceeding with the lab.

**﻿How this FACT Promotes Student Learning:**

*Fist to Five* provides a simple feedback opportunity for all students in a class to indicate when they do not understand a concept or skill and need additional support in their learning. It is especially effective with individual students who are reluctant to let the teacher know they are experiencing difficulty during a lesson. It encourages metacognition by raising self-awareness of how well a student feels he or she understands a concept, skill, or procedure.

**﻿How this FACT Informs Instruction:**

*Fist to Five* is a feedback and monitoring technique used to check understanding or skills at any point in a lesson. It is particularly useful when new material is presented, a new procedure is introduced, or directions for a task are given. It allows the teacher to direct the challenge and pace of lessons toward the needs of the students rather than follow a prescribed instructional plan. The quick read of the class provides teachers with the feedback they need to modify the lesson or pair students up to help each other.

**﻿Design and Administration:**

At any time during a lesson, ask students to hold up their hands for a check of understanding. The closed fist idicates "I have no idea," one finger means "I barely understand," two fingers means "I understand parts of it but I need a lot of help," three fingers indicate "I understand most of it but I'm not sure I can explain it well enough to others," four fingers mean "I understand it pretty well and can do an adequate job explaining it," and five fingers indicate "I understand it completely and can easily explain it to someone else." Some teachers post a "Fist to Five" chart in the room so students remember how many fingers to hold up. Make sure all students hold up their hands. It can be used to group students for peer assistance by putting the students who hold up two to three fingers together with the students who hold up four to five fingers. The teacher can then take the closed fist and one finger responses aside for differentiated assistance.

**﻿General Implementation Attributes:**

Ease of Use: High Time Demand: Low Cognitive Demand: Low

**﻿Modifications:**

This FACT can be modified as a three finger strategy: one finger: I don't get it, two fingers: I partially get it, and three fingers: I get it. Likewise, you can use thumbs up: I get it, thumbs sideways: I'm not sure I understand, and thumbs down: I don't get it.

**﻿Caveats:**

When matching students who claim to understand with students who need help, make sure that the students who held up four or five fingers really do understand well enough to explain it to others before putting them inot peer-assistance groups.

**﻿This FACT can be used in these disciplines:**

This FACT can be used in math, science, social studies, language arts, health, foreign languages, and performing arts  
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Keeley, Paige. (2008) *Science Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction, and Learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

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