**﻿Four Corners**

**﻿Description:**

*Four Corners* is used with selected response questions to identify groups of students with similar responses to the question asked. Students move to a corner of the room designated to match their response or similar way of thinking.

**﻿How this FACT Promotes Student Learning:**

*Four Corners* provides an opportunity for students to make their ideas public. By meeting "in the corner" with students who have similar ideas, students can further discuss and clarify their own thinking with others before returning to their seats and engaging in scientific argumentation with the class or small groups of students with different ideas. In the process of explaining their thinking, students sometimes notice gaps or inconsistencies in their own reasoning and question whether they have enough information to be certain their ideas are plausible.

**﻿How this FACT Informs Instruction:**

Teachers can visually see which idea individual students have as well as which idea is most prevalent in the class. By circulating among corners as studnets are discussing and clarifying their ideas, the teacher gains insight into students' *foothold* ideas-those ideas students assume to be true at that point in time (Hammer & Van Zee, 2006). The information is used to inform instructional strategies that can help students gradually move toward and accept the factual ideas.

**﻿Design and Administration:**

Choose a selected response assessment that includes an explanation and label the four corners of a room with the letter or name that matches the response. Ask students to individually think through their response, commit to an answer, and write their explanation. When students are finished with the task, have them go to the corner of the room that matches their selected response. Give students up to five minutes to share and discuss their thinking with others who selected the same response. Teachers can follow up the discussion at the *Four Corners* with a class debate about the ideas by having students return to their seats for mixed small groups and whole-class discussion. Another alternative is to have students remain in each of the corners and work together as a group to support their arguments in front of their peers. As students listen to and consider the arguments of other groups, they may move to a different corner when they give up their idea in favor of a new one. The challenge is to try to get all students over to one corner, ideally the one that represents the correct view.

**﻿General Implementation Attributes:**

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

**﻿Modifications:**

Use different areas of the room or designated tables for more than four responses, or use only three corners for selected response items that include fewer than four selected responses.

**﻿Caveats:**

This FACT works best in a classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing and defending their own ideas without being influenced by others' responses.

**﻿Disciplines this FACT can be used in:**

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