INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Fist to Five

The Fist to Five strategy gives teachers a quick and easy way to identify the needs of their students before discussing a topic more in depth. The strategy can be used to indicate the extent of student understanding of a concept, procedure, or directions. It also can be used as a weighted voting activity.

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FIST TO FIVE

Summary

The Fist to Five strategy asks students to indicate the extent of their understanding of a concept, a procedure, or the directions of an activity by holding up their hand and indicating their understanding with a number of fingers. This strategy also can be used for weighted voting or for grouping. It is helpful to create a poster or slide to show students what each finger means.

Procedure

1. Introduce a topic, a procedure, or the directions of an activity to the class.
2. Ask students to show their level of understanding by holding up their hand with the appropriate number of fingers.
3. A closed fist means the student has no understanding.
4. One finger means the student has a little understanding.
5. Two fingers mean the student understands but still needs some support.
6. Three fingers mean the student has basic knowledge.
7. Four fingers mean the student knows what to do and doesn't need any help.
8. Five fingers mean the student understands and can help or explain it to someone else.
9. For weighted voting: Students can indicate their level of agreement with the proposal or topic using the same method.
10. For grouping: Students can indicate their prior knowledge as described and partner up with another student to equal the sum of five. For example, a student who indicates a "zero" can be paired with a "five."

Keeley, P. & Tobey, C. (2011). Mathematics formative assessment: 75 practical strategies for linking assessment, instruction, and learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.