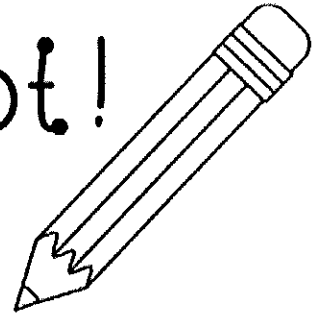


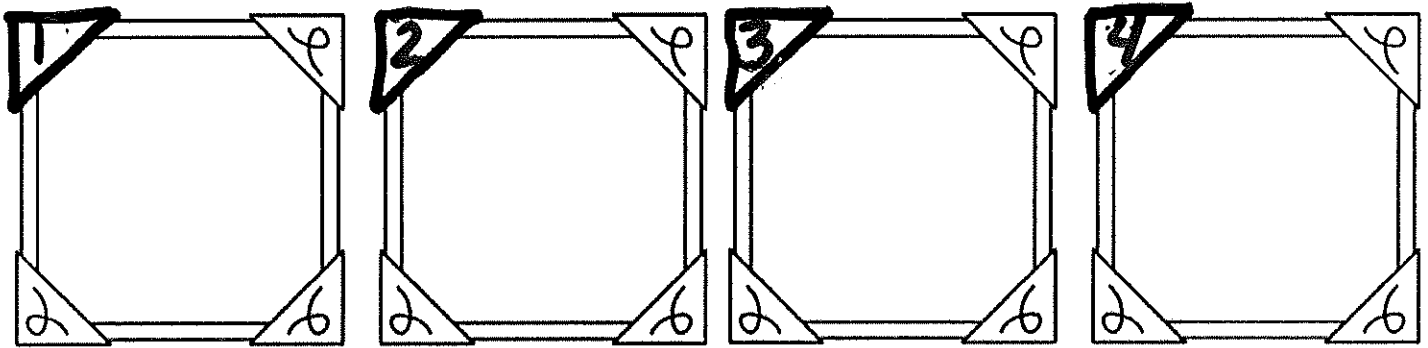
Stop and Tot!



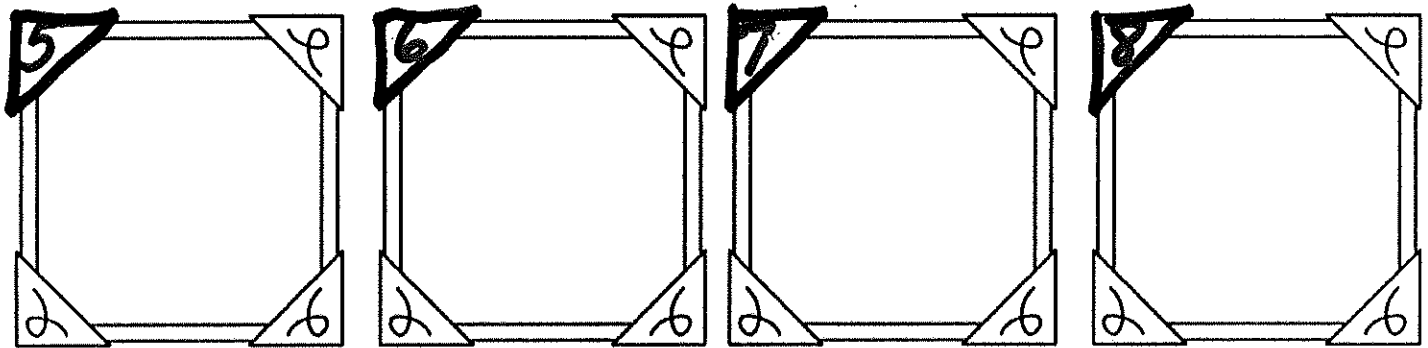
Name _____

There are two strategies posted around the room that are especially useful when checking for student understanding.

Strategy 1: _____



Strategy 2: _____



Fast Finisher-Check for Understanding

Did you try out the Whip Around strategy with your students last week? If so, how did it go?

1

Response cards are index cards, signs, whiteboards, or other items that are simultaneously held up by all students in the class to indicate their response to a question or problem presented by the teacher. Using response cards, the teacher can easily note the response of individual students while teaching the whole group. Additionally, response cards allow for participation by the whole class and not just a few students who raise their hands to respond (Heward et. Al., 1996)

2

While there are a number of examples of response cards, there are basically two types: preprinted and write-on cards. Preprinted cards already have responses on them; write-on cards allow students to indicate their responses in real life. There are specific reasons to use each.

Response Cards

4

Classroom Examples of Pre-printed Response Cards

When Dana Nielsen wanted her 1st grade students to learn to use response cards, she first provided each student with two preprinted index cards that read "yes" or "no". Looking at the cover, she asked her students "Are they dogs?" Students held up their "no" card. Then she asked, "Is this story a real story?" Most of the class held up their "no" cards, but four held up "yes" cards." The use of these preprinted response cards ensured that all of the students remained focused on the content of the book and allowed Ms Nielsen to check her students' understanding of the information on a regular basis.

3

Classroom Examples of Pre-printed Response Cards

Physics teacher Tom Jensen uses preprinted response cards that read, "potential energy" and "kinetic energy" as part of his instruction in matter and motion. Mr Jensen asked his students to identify if the energy being displayed was potential or kinetic energy. In response to a picture showing a stretched rubber band, all of the students held up their "potential" energy card. One picture showed a massive waterfall. The majority of students held up "kinetic energy" but Anthony said "potential." Anthony justified, "I see more potential energy because the water looks ready to go over the edge. Only a small amount of water is kinetic (moving)" Mr. Jensen's use of response cards allowed him to check student understanding of the key ideas they were learning and also view misconceptions.

6

Hand signals are often used as classroom management tool. For example: Wong and Wong (2005) suggest a classroom procedure called "Give Me Five" in which students are taught specific behavioral expectations for each of the numbers 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 as the teacher counts down on his or her fingers. Hand signals have also been successfully used to ensure that students with ADD/ADHD or behavioral disabilities get immediate and private feedback from their teachers (and possibly trusted peers) regarding their performance.

5

Students can also use hand signals to indicate their understanding of content information. Similar to response cards, hand signals require engagement from the whole group and allow the teacher to check for understanding in large groups of students.

7

Classroom Examples of Hand Signals

In her kindergarten classroom, Donna Kim uses "thumbs up" to check her students' understanding of instruction and information. Her students know how to display the following signals.

-Thumbs up: "I understand _____ and can explain it."

-Thumbs sideways: "I'm not completely sure about _____"

-Thumbs down: "I do not yet understand _____"

At one point, Ms Kim used the "thumbs up" procedure to determine which of her students needed additional assistance in their journal writing. Her ability to check for understanding ensured that her students were successful in completing the task at hand.

8

Classroom Examples of Hand Signals

Pre-algebra teacher Tara Jacobsen also uses hand signals to check her students understanding. As she models the solutions to word problems, she asks her students to hold up fingers based on how well they understand each step along the way. Five fingers means that you have a deep understanding and can explain this step or idea to others in the class; one finger means that you have no idea what just happened. Two to four fingers indicate varying levels of understanding. The use of hand signals allowed Ms. Jacobsen to identify the places where her students did not understand the math content so she could reteach this information on the spot.