

Connect the Dots

Formative Assessments

Ever wonder if your students are getting it? Join us as we explore diverse assessment strategies that help you connect the dots from your lessons to their understanding. From the youngest learners to experienced students, your classroom will benefit from these tactics and techniques.

Commit and Toss

Commit and Toss is an anonymous technique used to get a quick read on the different ideas students have in the class. It provides a safe, fun, and engaging way for all students to make their ideas known to the teacher and the class without individual students being identified as having 'wild' or incorrect ideas. Students are given a question. After completing the question, students crumple their paper up into a ball and, upon a signal from the teacher, toss the paper balls around the room until the teacher tells them to stop and pick up or hold on to one paper. Students take the paper they end up with and share the ideas and thinking that are described on their 'caught' paper, not their own ideas.

Fist to Five

First 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 activity, teachers might ask for a fist to five to do a quick check on whether students understand the directions before proceeding with the lab.

Four Corners

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.

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 group and whole class discussion.

More Information

These activities are from [Science Formative Assessment](#) by Page Keeley.