

**General Implementation Attributes**

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

**Modifications**

3-2-1 can also be used when students are learning new algorithms, procedures, or skills. For example, the following can be used with elementary students who are learning multiplication facts: *Three facts that I always know, two facts that I still have to think about first, and one strategy I can use when I don't know a fact.* If more information is desired for a particular instructional situation, consider using a 5-3-1.

**Caveats**

Vary this strategy with other FACTS that encourage reflection, and change the prompts periodically, or students may quickly tire of this technique.

**Use With Other Disciplines**

This FACT can also be used in *science*, social studies, language arts, health, foreign language, and visual and performing arts.

**My Notes****#63. THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN****Description**

*Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down* provides a quick visual check on how well students understand a concept, procedure, or skill before the teacher proceeds further with the lesson or activity. Students hold their thumbs up if they feel ready to move on or put their thumbs down if they feel they are not ready.

**How This FACT Promotes Student Learning**

*Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down* promotes metacognition and helps students develop self-assessment skills (Black & Harrison, 2004). Students use their

thumb signals to indicate to the teacher when they need additional support for their learning.

**How This Fact Informs Instruction**

*Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down* is a quick monitoring strategy that can be used at any time during instruction to help the teacher gauge the extent of student understanding, which in turn informs the pace of instruction. When students are asked to hold up their thumbs showing where they are in their current understanding, the teacher can get a quick snapshot of the class as well as individual students' level of understanding. If the majority of students hold up a "thumbs down," this is a clear indication to the teacher that instruction needs to be modified in order to accommodate the needs of the class. Conversely, a majority of "thumbs up" indicates that most of the class is ready to move on. A mixture of thumbs up and thumbs down indicates the need to provide peer and teacher support before moving on. For example, the "thumbs down" students can be matched with "thumbs up" students to help them address difficulties in their understanding. This frees up time for the teacher to circulate and help individuals who are struggling the most.

**Design and Administration**

At any point during the lesson, ask students to raise their fists with their thumbs out. Ask students to point thumbs up if they "get it" and are ready to move on. Ask them to point thumbs down if they are confused, have questions, or need help before moving on with the lesson or activity. Analyze the ratio of thumbs up to thumbs down to make determinations on how to proceed with the lesson or note individual students that may need further help as you proceed.

**General Implementation Attributes**

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

**Modifications**

Thumbs can be turned sideways if students feel they can move on but may have some questions as they get further into the lesson or activity. *Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down* can also be used with assessment probes to indicate students' confidence level in their commitment to an idea. For example, a "thumbs up" represents confidence, "thumbs sideways" represents some confidence, and "thumbs down" represents no confidence or a guess.

This FACT can also be used to have students evaluate the solutions and arguments of their classmates. Requiring students to signal agreement (thumbs up) or disagreement (thumbs down) sets the expectation that students are actively listening to their classmates' explanations.

### Caveats

Make sure the "thumbs up" students who are matched up with "thumbs down" students have an accurate grasp of the content or skill targeted by the lesson so that one student's misunderstandings will not be passed on to another. Choose students carefully for peer assistance and, if possible, listen in on their discussions to determine how well students are able to assist others.

### Use With Other Disciplines

This FACT can also be used in science, social studies, language arts, health, foreign language, and visual performing arts.

### My Notes

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## #64. TRAFFIC LIGHT CARDS

### Description

*Traffic Light Cards* are a variation on the popular "traffic lighting" strategy used in the United Kingdom (Black et. al., 2003). The traffic light icons—red-, yellow-, and green-colored "lights"—are used to represent levels of student understanding. Students are given three cards of different colors, asked to self-assess their understanding about a concept or skill they are learning, and hold up the card that best matches their understanding. Green means "I understand this very well," yellow means "I understand most of it but could use a little help," and red means "Help! I don't get it."

### How This FACT Promotes Student Learning

Traffic light icons promote metacognition and help students develop self-assessment skills (Black and Harrison, 2004). Students use the cards to indicate to the teacher when they need additional support for their learning.