

Wait Time

Wait Time is a dialogue strategy used to provide time to think between asking a questions and receiving a response. Wait Time allows all students to reflect on the question prior to further discussion. Appropriate Wait Time results in more detailed student responses and increases higher order thinking skills. It has been found to be beneficial for students who speak English as a second language.

Benefits of the strategy:

A. Wait Time - Before Calling on Student:

1. Gives the teacher time to count those students who have been answering questions and those who have not.
2. Gives the teacher time to assess which students might answer the question correctly.

B. Wait Time I - After Calling on Student:

1. Gives student time to frame an answer.
2. Gives teacher time to think of what a comprehensive answer could be.

C. Wait Time II - After Student Answer:

1. Gives the student time to elaborate on or complete an answer.
2. Gives the teacher time to think about whether the answer was correct, incorrect, partially correct or evasive.
3. Provides time for the teacher to frame a response.

Source: Better Thinking and Learning (MSDE)

How to implement the strategy:

1. The teacher can use Wait Time in many different situations as described above.
2. The teacher should deliberately and consistently wait in silence for 3-5 seconds or longer before encouraging responses.
3. The teacher should enforce a disturbance-free silent time so that both the students and teacher can consider and process relevant information.
4. When the teacher asks a question, they should not preface it with a student's name. As soon as particular student is called on, all the other brains in the room immediately shut down

Additional resources:

1. <http://www.agpa.uakron.edu/p16/btp.php?id=wait-time> – In most classrooms, students are typically given less than one second to respond to a question posted by the teacher. Research shows that under these conditions students generally give short, recall responses or no answer at all rather than giving answers that involve higher-level thinking.
2. <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/De/PD/instr/waittime.html> - Instructional Strategies on line.
3. <http://www.ericdigests.org/1995-1/think.htm> - Using “Think-Time” and “Wait-Time” Skillfully in the Classroom