

Quick Starts

Simple Practices for Better Classroom Discourse

Transform your classroom questioning from a table tennis game to a basketball game: Lots of exchanges among all players!




Ask fewer questions.
You'll get more and better responses.

Before class, plan a handful of questions carefully rather than inventing a slew of mediocre questions on the spot.

Less is more: Use fewer questions, more silence.

Wait Time 1
After you ask a question, wait 3-5 seconds before calling on someone.

Wait Time 2
Before you respond, wait 3-5 seconds more.



Just wait!

Six Strategies Can Easily Encourage All to Speak.

This strategy...

...sounds like this.

1. Comment on the hands you see going up and ask for more.

"I see 3 hands up. I'm going to wait for 3 more."

2. Take five: Ask a question and tell students you'll call on five people.

"I'm going to call on five. Give your answer when I call on you, even if the person before you said the same thing."

3. Invite someone who hasn't spoken yet.

"I'd like to invite someone we have not yet heard from."

4. Invite students to respond to each other's ideas.

"Who has a similar opinion? A different one?"

5. Use a whip. Every person gives a brief response. There is no pause for evaluation.

"Please share, in a sentence, your response. It's okay to repeat answers, and you may say 'pass.'"

6. Ask who else had a response.

"Raise your hand if you had a response to my question, even if you didn't share it."

FDC Quick Starts:

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Ask fewer questions in class.

You'll get more and better responses. Before class, plan a handful of questions carefully rather than inventing a slew of mediocre questions on the spot. Less is more: Use fewer questions, more silence.

Just Wait!

Wait Time 1

After you ask a question, wait at least 3-5 seconds before calling on someone.

Wait Time 2

Before you respond, wait 3-5 seconds.

Six Strategies Can Easily Encourage All to Speak

1. Comment on the hands you see going up and ask for more. *Sounds like: "I see 3 hands up. I'm going to wait for 3 more."*
2. Take five: Ask a question and tell students you'll call on five people. *Sounds like: "I'm going to call on five. Give your answer when I call on you, even if the person before you said the same thing."*
3. Invite someone who hasn't spoken yet. *Sounds like: "I'd like to invite someone we have not yet heard from."*
4. Invite students to respond to each other's ideas. *Sounds like: "Who has a similar opinion? A different one?"*
5. Use a whip: Every person gives a brief response. There is no pause for evaluation. *Sounds like: "Please share, in a sentence, your response. It's okay to repeats answers, and you may say 'pass.'"*
6. Ask who else had a response. *Sounds like: "Raise your hand if you had a response to my question, even if you didn't share it."*