

QUESSIE Newsletter March 2017

Dear **QUESSIE** Member

I have had a query from a member (Sam - NSW) about ideal “wait time” after posing a question to students. This is an area of great interest and features in this month’s newsletter.

Wait time is the period of silence between the time a question is asked and the time when one or more students respond to that question.

Wait time is a crucial factor in questioning techniques. While traditional practices advocate for a swift pace of instruction in order to maintain engagement and cover more content, research shows that slowing slightly to include more wait time promotes student achievement.

The typical teacher pauses on the average, between 0.7 and 1.4 seconds after his/her questions before continuing to talk. What do you think happens if instead the teacher waits three seconds before speaking after the question has been posed?

Tobin’s 1987 review suggests that if the three second wait time is instigated by the educator there are generally:-

- Longer students responses;
- Less failure to respond;
- More complex answers;
- Increased student to student discourse;
- Decreased student confusion;
- Higher achievement.

Tobin most importantly states, “Wait time is not a panacea, and unless other variables are at optimal levels, the advantages reported in wait time studies may not be apparent” (p.88).

Waiting three seconds for a student response needn’t happen on every occasion when a question is posed. Like most strategies, the purposeful use of wait time in appropriate settings provides the most benefit. Sharing with students why you use wait time (on occasions) is a powerful and worthwhile conversation.

Teaching strategies related to questioning that improve student outcomes are *QUESSIE*’s bread and butter. Wait time is one such strategy that educators need to be mindful of when presenting their offerings to students. Research and real life experience backs the “wait time strategy” as a reliable way to lift both student engagement and achievement in your classroom.

Best wishes

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Reference :-

Kenneth Tobin
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