

FDC QuickStarts: 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 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 ok to repeat 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."