



Staff Development Newsletter

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What is the difference between an activator and a warm-up?

An activator gets students thinking about a new concept you are preparing to introduce.

A warm-up asks students to connect to and practice applying information that has already been learned.

Both are effective ways to begin your lessons and engage students in learning!

Do You Know Your Wait Time?

Most teachers practice very little "wait time", typically less than or about one second. Information processing involves multiple cognitive tasks that take time. Students must have uninterrupted periods of time to process information; reflect on what has been said, observed, or done; and consider what their personal responses will be.

Mary Budd Rowe invented the concept of "wait time" as an instructional variable. The wait time periods she found—periods of silence that followed teacher questions and students' completed responses—rarely lasted more than 1.5 seconds in typical classrooms. She discovered, however, that when these periods of silence lasted at least 3 seconds, many positive things happened to students' and teachers' behaviors and attitudes. To attain these benefits,

teacher were urged to "wait" in silence for 3 or more seconds after their questions and after students completed their responses.

Positive effect on students:

- Length and correctness of their responses increases
- Number of their "I don't know" and no answer responses decreases
- Number of volunteered, appropriate answers by larger numbers of students greatly increases
- Scores on academic achievement tests tends to increase

Positive effect on teachers:

- Questioning strategies tended to be more varied

and flexible

- Decreased quantity and increased quality and variety of questions

- Additional questions are asked that require more complex information processing and higher-level thinking on the part of the students



Try counting silently to 3 after asking a question.

Adapted from "Strategies for Communicating High Expectations to Students"-MCPS Diversity Training and Development Team, November 2004



Literacy For Every Classroom

Your feedback from our April 24 session indicated that you would like additional ideas for incorporating student discourse (or student voice) into your lessons. Here is a strategy that is useful in all content areas:

SAVE THE LAST WORD

- Begin with a piece of text, music, art, video, sport that students have all experi-

enced.

- Individually, students write one sentence, phrase, idea, scene, etc. from the above that resonates with them, or that they found significant on an index card
- On the other side of the card, students write why it resonated or what they would like to say about it

- In groups of 4, choose a first reader
- The first reader reads only his/her sentence, phrase, idea, scene, etc. aloud while table peers listen
- Each person in the group makes 1 comment about the sentence. The reader only listens

- After everyone has said something in response to the sentence, the original reader has the last word about his/her sentence
- Continue the process until everyone has had a turn to say the

Last Word

