

What can tutors do to develop questioning in groups?

Independent evidence

Research into assessment shows that teachers routinely leave too little time between asking a question and either answering it themselves or asking a student they know will answer to do so! The average 'wait time' is less than 4 seconds...Increasing wait time, socialising students into a new way of engaging with questions – where they know the purpose – can all help to change a classroom climate of questioning i.

Your evidence and reflections

Why not invite a colleague to observe a part of your session to count the amount of 'wait time' you allow students. This might be for 10 minutes at the beginning of the session when you are refreshing earlier learning. It may be helpful to distinguish between the time you allowed different students, and for what type of questions. An observation grid like the one below might be useful for recording the information.

<i>student name</i>	<i>wait time</i>	<i>question asked</i>

Putting the evidence to work

Use the outcomes of the observation to assess where your practice is in terms of allowing students time to answer. Did the observer feel the students were left adequate time to consider their answer? If the outcomes indicate that students would benefit from more time, you could discuss with your colleague tactics you might put in place to extend wait time. This might be allowing at least 7 seconds between question and you breaking the silence. Alternatively you might come up with a strategy with your students – you could encourage them to put you on hold with a hand signal if they feel they need more time.

i Find out more about questioning and answering: Ecclestone, K (2008) *Improving formative assessment in vocational education and adult literacy and numeracy programmes*. Report for the Quality Improvement Agency and the National Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

You can find an overview of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) Further Education projects at: <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/FEcommentary.pdf>

You can find an evaluation of post-16 pedagogy and thinking skills at: <https://www.isneducation.org.uk/user/order.aspx?code=041542&src=xoweb>