

3. Wait Time (Rowe 1974)

Wait time is the time that elapses between a facilitator and a student speaking.

There are two kinds of wait time:

1. The time the facilitator waits after asking a question to the group.
2. The time the facilitator waits after a response from an individual.

Wait time is an important factor in successful sessions. Research has demonstrated that the quality and quantity of students' verbal responses increases significantly if facilitators regularly utilise at least three seconds of wait-time. This is particularly valuable when pausing after a student responds.

Benefits for Students	Benefits for Facilitators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More students answer question, • More accurate answers, • Answers are more elaborate, reasoned and supported, • Students listen to each other more, • More speculative responses, • More questions asked, • More participation by poorer students, • Increased use of logical consistency in responses, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks fewer questions, • Connects questions better, • Ask more higher-order questions, • Demonstrates greater flexibility, • Expects more from poorer students,

Wait time seems to benefit students by allowing the brain more time to consolidate information, giving deeper processing of information. Deep-level knowledge is associated with comprehension, abstraction, critical judgement and evaluation (de Jong and Ferguson-Hessler 1996); deep-knowledge “has been thoroughly processed, structured and stored in memory in a way that makes it useful for application and task performance.”

If nobody responds to a question after waiting 5-10 seconds, you can:

- Repeat the question,
- Rephrase or simplify the question,
- Ask a student to try to rephrase or simplify the question,
- Break down the question into component parts,
- Make the question more specific,
- Ask students what they don't understand about the question,