Question 11: Pivot Resource Pack

Pivot
Transforming teaching practice

Survey Question	11. This teacher pushes me to think instead of just giving me the answers
Australian Professional Standard	Professional Knowledge Domain Standard 3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning Focus areas: • 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals • 3.3 Use teaching strategies • 3.5 Use effective classroom communication
What does this sound like in the classroom?	"We're encouraged to take our time to explain our answers, and this teacher is really good at giving us strategies and templates to help us really think about our answers. Other teachers just jump in and give us the answers if we wait long enough!"
Why is this important?	The idea of stretching students to the edge (or beyond) their level of capability was initially highlighted by Vygotsky and his work on the zone of proximal development. Learning intentions need to be both well-designed and well-delivered to students (Hollingsworth & Ybarra, 2009). They should be appropriately challenging and lessons should be structured around students reaching the goals, which means the plan related to learning intentions may need to be adapted to different student learning rates and starting points (Hattie, 2012). There needs to be a shift from a deficit model (teaching lower-order skills) to a developmental approach (encouraging higher-order thinking). It is important that classrooms ensure a place for challenging students to push themselves to achieve.
What strategies have been shown to work in the classroom?	Research evidence strongly supports teachers' use of explicit teaching practices that include: • Explaining new ideas, and checking that students understand • Giving time for asking and answering questions • Evaluating and confirming whether students understand what they are learning before progressing. Checking for understanding should occur frequently during a lesson, and involve various tools and strategies. For example, after introducing, explaining and providing examples about a concept, a teacher should check

that students understand the concept (Archer, 2011). This involves more than simply asking students if they understand. There are many ways to check for understanding effectively including: having students generate examples and non-examples; asking questions that require deeper processing about the meaning; and, asking students to explain ideas in their own words as part of review at the end of a lesson (Archer, 2011; Fisher & Frey, 2014) Allowing students to perform these tasks is vital to the outcome.

What three things can I try in my classroom tomorrow?

1. Give the students time to think during class discussion. After you ask the question, count to yourself "1,2,3,4 then I'll wait a little more…" before taking student comments. Do they have an opportunity to do this verbally or in written form? Analyse your lesson and identify a section in which you can provide an opportunity for student elaboration.
2. What techniques or formats are you using to share student ideas? Is it a forum shared among the entire class (e.g. Class discussion, a twitter feed) or is it an opportunity for students to share their ideas with individuals (a submitted written piece, work shared with peers)? Think about which techniques or formats will work best for your class? Create a formal or informal debate time in class where students are invited to analyse/extend/rebut points made.
3. Offer avenues for students to extend their thinking or explanation of perspective. This can be simple verbal questions or longer form thought provoking material. Scaffold questions that guide students toward deeper thought.

What opportunities are there for collaboration with my colleagues?

Ask a colleague to observe your class for how deeply the students are thinking. Discuss with your colleague what data you could collect in the classroom to reflect student thinking. It may be giving students sufficient 'think time' before answering questions, it may be the nature of the questions that you pose to the class, or it may be the quality of the questions that form part of shorter or longer research or assessment tasks.

Where can I find out more?

Video

- Teaching Channel: Think time and collaborative learning
- Study.com: Non-verbal and verbal communication in the classroom
- Digital Chalkboard: Giving students think time

Referenced articles, books and other great reads:

- Archer, A. and Hughes, C. (2011) Explicit Instruction. Guildford Publications, USA.
- Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2014) Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom. 2nd edition. ASCD.
- Hollingsworth, J. & Ybarra, S. (2009) Explicit Direct Instruction: The Power of the Well-Crafted, Well-Taught Lesson. Corwin Press.
- Atwood, V. & Wilen, W. (1991) "Wait Time and Effective Social Studies Instruction: What Can Research in Science Education Tell Us?" Social Education 55 (March 1991): 179-81. EJ 430 537.

- Rowe, M. (1972) Wait Time and rewards as instructional variables, their influence in language, logic and fate control. Paper presented at the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, Chicago, IL, 1972. ED 061 103.
- Stahl, R. (1990). Using Think-Time behaviours to promote students' information processing, learning and on-task participation. An instructional module. Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University.