

KEY CONCEPTS

The power of a pause: wait times in questioning during debriefs

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THE POWER OF A PAUSE

Wait Times in questioning during debriefs

Questioning is a key skill in simulation debriefing. How we ask questions and handle answers changes the nature and quality of ensuing discussion. Timing is a core aspect to consider.

WAIT TIME 1

The time between asking a question and the question being answered by a learner [1].

WAIT TIME 2

The time between a learner answering and the facilitator commenting [1].

Cognitive benefits

WAIT TIME 1 BENEFITS

- Allows for deeper thinking [2]
- Reduces reliance on guessing [2]
- More inclusive (e.g. students with different first language)
- Reduces anxiety [2]

WAIT TIME 2 BENEFITS

- Allows for answer elaboration and deeper reflection [3, 4]
- Improves facilitator responses and analysis [1]
- Encourages self-correction
- Encourages co-student response

How long to wait?

Extending Wait Time 1 from 5 to 12 seconds doubles response rate. For follow-up questions, shorter wait times (5 - 8 seconds) are sufficient. Benefits appear to plateau at 12 seconds [3]

Implementation



Match wait times to question complexity [3, 5]

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