



Active Insight: Evidence in Action

Tip #288



Reducing Waiting Time

Overview

Waiting time is not limited to **standing in a queue**. It can occur during **explanations, demonstrations, equipment collection, team selection, transitions and activity setup**. Small periods of inactivity can quickly accumulate across a lesson and reduce opportunities for practice and learning. Reducing waiting time is often about **improving organisation rather than changing activities**.

Key Teaching Ideas

Observe lessons from a **student perspective** and identify where movement stops. Consider how long students spend **listening, waiting for equipment, finding partners or transitioning between activities**. Review organisational routines and look for tasks that can be **simplified, prepared earlier or completed differently**. Small improvements in organisation can create **additional opportunities for practice across every lesson**.

Practical Application

- **Audit a lesson for waiting time.** Eg: Track how long students spend waiting during transitions, explanations and activity setup.
- **Prepare equipment before students arrive.** Eg: Set up stations, boundaries and activity areas before the lesson begins.
- **Use predetermined groups.** Eg: Create partner and team lists in advance rather than selecting groups during the lesson.
- **Deliver instructions where the activity occurs.** Eg: Explain tasks at the station or playing area instead of repeatedly bringing students together.
- **Stagger activity starts.** Eg: Begin one group while others complete a short challenge or setup task rather than waiting for the entire class.
- **Create 'When Finished' challenges.** Eg: Provide short extension tasks so students remain active while waiting for the next instruction or rotation.

Next Steps

Plan lessons to reduce inactivity. [Game Sense](#) formats support continuous engagement and ensure students remain active throughout learning experiences effectively.

The Game Sense model is informed by Teaching Games for Understanding (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982), the Game Sense approach (Light, 2013), and contemporary skill acquisition research including ecological dynamics (Davids & Renshaw).

