

Response Formats to Support Frequent Opportunities to Respond

This resource provides examples of common response formats teachers can use to elicit opportunities to respond (OTRs) during instruction. Use the tables to help you select response formats based on your instructional goal, the type of student thinking you want to promote, and how students will respond (e.g., verbally, through actions, or in writing). Each format includes guidance for when to use it and key considerations for implementation. Technology-based tools (e.g., clickers, online polling) can be used to collect responses across verbal, written, or action formats. To ensure all students can participate effectively, explicitly teach and model response routines so students understand how and when to respond.



Verbal Response Formats and Implementation Guidance

Response format	Best used when	What to do	Example	Intensity tip
Whip around	Activating prior knowledge, summarizing learning, or generating multiple possible responses.	Pose an open-ended question → provide brief think time → move quickly student-to-student for responses (students may pass or repeat ideas).	“What is one thing you learned about fractions today?”	Keep responses brief (5–10 words) to ensure all students participate quickly.
Choral response	Introducing new skills, teaching simple skills with a single correct answer (i.e., letter sounds, decoding, math facts), or building fluency.	Ask a question → provide think time → provide clear signal (auditory or visual) → students respond together.	“Tell me all the sounds in ‘hat’” → wait 2–3 seconds → provide hand signal and say, “What sounds?” → students say /h/ /ă/ /t/.	Aim for every student responding every time, not volunteers.
Turn and talk (partner response)	Encouraging explanation, reasoning, or use of academic language.	Pose a question → provide think time → assign partners → students discuss → optionally share out.	“Explain to your partner how you solved that problem.”	Assign Partner A/B roles to ensure both students respond; monitor conversations.
Cued recall	Reinforcing recently taught content; supporting recall when students may need prompts.	Pair students → one explains a concept or sequence of steps or ideas → partner listens and provides prompts or cues → switch roles.	“Tell your partner the steps for solving this problem; your partner can give hints if needed.”	Provide prompts or cues in advance to guide productive support.



Action Response Formats and Implementation Guidance

Response format	Best used when	What to do	Example	Intensity tip
Signal response (hand signals)	Quickly checking understanding or confidence, or selecting among a limited set of responses.	Ask a question → provide think time → signal students to respond using gestures (e.g., thumbs up/down, fist-to-five, fingers for options).	"Show me with your fingers: 1 = unsure, 2 = almost, 3 = got it."	Use consistent response scales across lessons; have students show responses simultaneously.
Response cards	Quickly assessing understanding when response options are limited (e.g., multiple choice, categories, true/false).	Provide each student with response cards → ask a question → signal students to hold up their response.	"Is this a noun or a verb? Show me your card."	Ensure all students respond simultaneously; prepare cards in advance for efficiency.



Written Response Formats and Implementation Guidance

Response format	Best used when	What to do	Example	Intensity tip
Whiteboards	Checking accuracy of responses from all students; practicing written responses or problem solving.	Ask a question → students write responses on whiteboards → signal to display → scan responses.	"Solve $24 + 18$ and show me."	Scan for patterns of errors and reteach immediately as needed.
Stop and jot	Promoting quick written reflection or synthesis during or after instruction.	Pause instruction → ask a focused question → students write a brief response.	"In one sentence, explain how this symbol contributes to the story."	Keep responses brief (1–2 sentences) to maintain pacing.
Think–write–share	Checking understanding across all students while integrating written and verbal responses.	Pose a question → students think → write a brief response → share with a partner or teacher.	"Solve $24 + 18$, then show your work to your partner and explain your steps."	Use sentence frames or prompts to support responses.

