



*There is more to life than
increasing its speed.*
Mahatma Gandhi

*Is faster always better?
When the world speeds
up must we speed up as
well?*

Pace

Lesson pace is not just about speed. It's about what, when, how much and how often; about lesson structure, transitions and learning milestones.

How It Works

'Work on pace'. How often does this show up on performance management plans. And how often do manager and teacher actually discuss and agree what they mean by 'pace'. The assumption is, 'do more, do it quicker'. There is more to pace: consider the students, the content, the depth and difficulty of the material, the kind of lesson, the parts of the lesson, the time of day, the relationships in the room and your energy levels. And then decide the pace.

Knowledge, Skills & Attitudes

Pupils know when learning is too fast or too slow for them. They may not be able to communicate this or be allowed to speak up, but they know. Develop their metacognition and self-regulation so that they can adapt to changes in pace and can communicate what works best for them. Help them to recognise that time is not endless but that it can, occasionally, be stretched and squashed when it needs to be.

1. Define

Discuss and agree with your class, your department, your year team, your school: what do we actually mean by 'pace'?

2. Design

Find the ideal number of transitions within a lesson so that students remain interested and engaged. Seek immediate feedback and involve them in an improved lesson design.

3. Design Detail

For each element of the lesson decide what kind of pace it needs. New and difficult learning might need slower and longer input; revision of previous knowledge might be speedier and shorter. Signal changes of pace with reasons.

Applications

- Be aware of the natural pace to your lessons.
- Notice when your teaching is too fast or too slow.
- Purposefully design in slow, medium and fast parts to your lessons.
- Seek in-lesson feedback from students.
- Use the classroom clock and timers well.
- Record yourself talking and work out how many words you speak per minute. Reflect.

When you realise that pace is more than speed, you become a lesson designer, not a clock-watching deliverer of knowledge.

Extensions, Adaptations, Variations

- Develop classroom signs to indicate a change in pace.
- Agree with your class the ideal pace for different kinds of lesson.
- Develop parallel learning paths in lessons that move at different speeds for different pupils.
- Develop classroom signs or rituals to signal changes of activity.

For younger learners, spend time observing the natural pace at which they learn when engaged with an activity. Use these observations to design learning.

Begin here

Count the number of transitions in your last lesson:

Reflect on how you felt about the pace of delivery:

Consider the effectiveness of your transitions:

4. Seamless Joins

Join the various parts of the lesson smoothly. Spend time teaching pupils to make their transitions slick and quick. Entry to class; movement to carpet/benches; changing groups; sitting back down; lining up; leaving the room; working in pairs.

5. Visualise It

Sketch a pace map to help visualise the speed and structure of your lesson:

