

boys to dominate discussions, he asked the journalist to ask the students from left to right and arranged for the two girls to be sitting on the left. At the first question, the two boys’ hands shot up but the journalist, as requested, asked the girl seated on the extreme left to answer first. After a while (during which time the boys were, in Daniel Ferri’s words, squirming in their seats), the first girl answered, and then the second girl gave a brief answer, and then the boys gave theirs. Afterward Daniel Ferri asked the girls if they had enjoyed their interview. One of the girls replied, “Yeah, it was fun, but . . .” “But what?” “Well, we didn’t really get a chance to say what we wanted to say. We needed time to think. And the boys were all anxious to answer and everything, so we just said anything. And by the time the boys were done, we knew what we wanted to say, but by that time the reporter was asking us the next question, and we had to think about that.”

### Common Errors in Questioning

Over twenty years ago, George Brown and Ted Wragg drew up a list of “common errors in questioning” from their extensive research in classrooms (G. Brown & Wragg, 1993). We reproduce the list here (Table 4.1) because it seems as relevant now as it was then.

**Table 4.1:** Common Errors in Questioning (from G. Brown & Wragg, 1993)

Asking	Failing to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• too many questions at once</li> <li>• a question and answering it yourself</li> <li>• questions only of the brightest or most likeable</li> <li>• a difficult question too early</li> <li>• questions in a threatening way</li> <li>• irrelevant questions</li> <li>• the same kind of questions all the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correct wrong answers</li> <li>• indicate a change in the type of question</li> <li>• give students the time to think</li> <li>• pay attention to answers</li> <li>• see the implications of answers</li> <li>• build on answers</li> </ul>

## Enhancements

### Think-Pair-Share

One technique that teachers find very useful for structuring wait time is “think-pair-share.” The technique became popular in higher education in the 1980s, but, of course, the fundamental idea is much older than that; indeed, good teachers have probably always used such techniques to get students thinking and talking. The basic structure is that the teacher poses a question and then gives students some time to think about their response; depending on the kind of question and age of the students, this could be