



Kata in the Classroom

Instructions

THE PREDICTION PAUSE

Pause ⇒ Predict ⇒ Do ⇒ Compare

This tiny exercise can help make our thinking a little more curious, evidence-based, and scientific. Educators, students, and parents can add it to almost any activity simply by cheerfully asking:

"Wait, before we do it, what do you predict will happen?"

It only takes a minute, and you can do it almost anywhere and anytime. The goal is not to be right. The goal is to notice the difference between what we expected and what actually happened, because that's often where learning occurs. The value is to get into the fun habit of making a prediction, seeing what actually happens, making it okay to be wrong, and treating surprises as interesting.

Although making the prediction itself is quick, it makes our thinking visible and creates an opportunity to compare expectation with reality. Over time this helps us (a) notice the gap between our assumptions and the world around us, and (b) get more comfortable knowing that our initial thoughts may not be correct, which are foundations of scientific thinking. Here are some example cues:

Step 1: Before doing

"Ah, wait, one more thing, before we start..."

"What do you predict will happen?"

"How long do you think it will take?"

"How much...?"

"How many ...?"

"When...?"

☞ Note that for this little game, predictions don't need to be elaborate hypotheses. Simple estimates are fine.

☞ If the metric is time, it can be fun to hand out stopwatches so the students themselves can measure what actually happens.

Step 2: Observe

"Let's see what actually happens."

Step 3: Reflect

"What did you predict?"

"What actually happened?"

"What surprised you?"

This micro-practice is simple, adaptable, takes almost no preparation, yet captures something genuinely important: that useful learning often happens when expectations and reality differ. Strengths include:

- 1. Extremely low friction** - Requires no special materials, training, or significant time. This little step can be inserted into almost anything in about a minute.
- 2. Emphasizes a scientific habit of mind** - You're not teaching a formal scientific procedure. You are cultivating a habit: making a prediction explicit before observing outcomes.
- 3. Normalizes being wrong** - When prediction becomes routine, being "wrong" becomes expected and useful rather than embarrassing.
- 4. Works across ages and subjects** - The same little twist can be used in science, math, reading, history, art, sports, and, perhaps especially, everyday life.
- 5. Creates engagement** - Once there is a prediction, we naturally become more curious about the outcome, and pay attention out of personal interest.

As you ask someone to make a prediction, be sure to keep it small, light, and fun with phrases that help create psychological safety, like:

"Take your best guess."

"It's okay if you're wrong."

"Interesting predictions are often wrong."

Repeated use of this activity helps develop our ability to judge how accurate our own understanding is. Over time, this simple habit helps us calibrate our understanding. We learn:

- What we know.
- What we only think we know.
- Where our intuition is reliable.
- Where it needs improvement.

The strongest aspect of this exercise is that it can turn prediction from a special event into a fun everyday habit. Many activities already contain observation and reflection; a missing piece is often making an expectation explicit beforehand. By adding the brief *prediction pause*, you create a comparison between expectation and reality, and that comparison is where much of the learning happens.



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"Wait,
before we
do this..."

The Prediction Pause

Pause. Predict. Observe. Reflect.

1 BEFORE: PREDICT

Ask:

- What do you predict will happen?
- How long do you think it will take?
- How much...?
- How many...?
- When...?

★ Take your best guess.
It's okay if you're wrong.
Interesting predictions are often wrong.



2 OBSERVE

Let's see what happens



3 REFLECT

Ask:

- What did you predict?
- What actually happened?
- What surprised you?



★ The goal is not to be right.

The goal is to notice the difference between what we **expected** and what **actually happened**.

That's often where learning occurs! ★

WHY IT WORKS

- 1 Extremely low friction – takes about a minute.
- 2 Builds a scientific habit of mind.
- 3 Normalizes being wrong – and makes it useful.
- 4 Works across ages & subjects.
- 5 Creates engagement and deeper curiosity.

WHAT IT BUILDS OVER TIME



Helps us calibrate our understanding.
We learn:

- ✓ What we know.
- ✓ What we only think we know.
- ✓ Where our intuition is reliable.
- ✓ Where it needs improvement.



Small pause. Big impact. ♥

USE IT ANYWHERE!



Science



Math



Reading



History



Art



Sports



Life

In class. At home. Anywhere curiosity lives.

★ Make prediction a habit. Compare expectation with reality. Celebrate surprises. Keep learning fun! ★