

4QM Student Empathy Interviews

The Four Question Method (4QM) is largely perceived positively by students, aligning with several strengths identified by teachers. Student feedback highlights specific successes and provides clear direction for refining implementation, particularly around active engagement during note-taking.

Key Takeaways

1. **Students Appreciate Structure and Clarity:** Students widely appreciated the structure, predictability, and clarity provided by 4QM. This consistent approach helped them understand daily expectations and prepare for lessons. At least four students (Students 1, 4, 5, 6) explicitly described this "repetitive but helpful" dynamic.
 - Student 1: "With this class, I think there was a lot more structure behind it...everything we had right in front of us. We were able to figure it out pretty quickly...knowing what's coming, I think, helps prepare a lot of students as well".
 - Student 4: "I think it's helpful because it's repetitive and it's kind of like you get down in the mindset of today, we're working on Question one today, working on question two, and just kind of helped to, like, figure out what we're going to be doing that day".
 - Student-Teacher Alignment: Students' appreciation for structure and clarity validates teacher observations that 4QM could provide a consistent framework for historical thinking. Both groups recognize that this systematic approach aids comprehension and predictability.
2. **Students Appreciate Narrative Notes and Storyboards:** Students consistently identified narrative notes and storyboards as effective and often enjoyable tools for learning. Narrative notes were praised by at least four students (Students 1, 4, 5, 6), and storyboards were popular with at least five students (Students 1, 2, 4, 5, 6).
 - Student 6 on Narrative Notes: "Narrative notes "kind of help, like, understand because you could put into your own words and really think about it".
 - Student 2 on Storyboards: "Drawing it is way more better...That storyboard would make me want to go back into the article, look for any more information, and then draw about it".
 - Student-Teacher Alignment: Students' positive experiences with these tools align with teacher's observations that narrative note taking is a powerful tool to build knowledge, and that these activities (part of Q1 lessons) help "create a base of a story". Both students and teachers see these as effective activities for comprehension and knowledge construction.

3. **Students Distinguish Between Active and Passive Note Taking:** Active cognitive engagement in the note-taking process is crucial for deeper learning. Subtle shifts in implementation can counteract the potential for lessons to become passive or "lecture-heavy," a concern voiced by teachers.
- Student 4 on active note-taking: "Instead of going from, I'm gonna show you what the notes are...to where you're gonna write your own notes...now you have to write your own I feel like it's making maybe me a better...note writer...because I kind of focus more on the reading, and I stay more focused". She noted this active process, with less direct information on the board, improved her quiz scores.
 - Student 1 on the need for engagement: "I would make it a little more engaging...sometimes when it's a narrative notes day, it's like they're talking at us...So I think making it a little more engaging would definitely help".
 - Student-Teacher Alignment: Student desire for more engagement (Student 1) and the demonstrated success of more active processing during note-taking (Student 4) directly address teacher concerns that Q1 could be lecture-heavy and the general need for more student discourse. Student experiences indicate that the *implementation* of activities like narrative notes is key to their success.
4. **Students Appreciate Vertical Alignment:** The majority of students (five out of six: Students 1, 3, 4, 5, 6) support the idea of using the 4QM in younger grades and future high school classes, anticipating benefits from familiarity and increased confidence.
- Student 6: "It would feel like something I've already done so it's like, I already have understanding. And I kind of know I do it because I've been in class...It would give confidence".
 - Student 1: "I do think it's a useful thing. Yeah, I've really enjoyed the narrative notes this year. I've gotten very familiar with the processes we've used this year".
 - Student-Teacher Alignment: Students' enthusiasm for consistent application of 4QM across grades validates teachers' emphasis on the potential benefits of vertical alignment, which they believe would offer students "consistency and alignment year over year". Both groups see significant value in this long-term, structured approach.

Student feedback affirms teachers' intuitions about the structural benefits of 4QM and the power of its core activities, especially when implemented to foster active student engagement. By emphasizing active processing during note-taking, the framework can effectively address concerns about passive learning and enhance its overall impact.