

Personal Pondering Pads Alternative Response Form

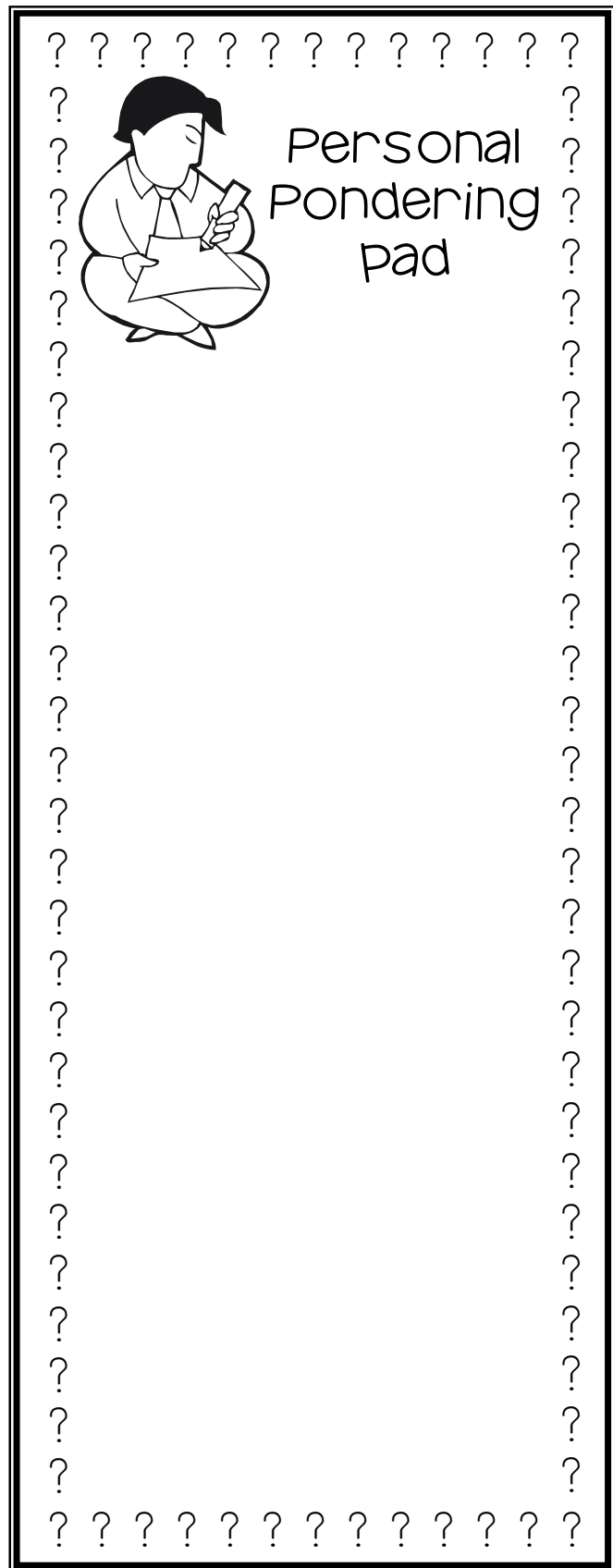
When hands are raised high in the air eagerly awaiting the teacher's welcome for a proud response to a question, it may be the "kiss of death" for struggling learners. These students require more wait time, so this is one more reflection of their struggle. A dreaded raised hand will simply draw attention to those who have not yet come up with an answer, resulting in two missteps for these learners:

- * abandon an impossible quest
- * join in hoping that no one notices

Pondering Pads are designed as an equal opportunity response system by slowing down more confident peers. A pondering pad will temporarily take the place of a raised hand during discussion activities. This concrete tool allows students to demonstrate an answer is known while respectfully offering wait time for more reflective learners. In other words, it also promotes deeper responses for all.

It is important that students understand the purpose and use of these notes. Explain that some people need more *think time* to answer a question. Emphasize *thoughtful reflection* as a strategy that will lead to far better answers. For students who want to show that an answer is known, the pondering pad provides a tool *in place of* the raised hand. This promotes reflective thinking and gives struggling readers a fighting chance.

Pondering pads can be used in any setting including whole and small group. During small group activities, it can be used to record an unknown spelling word or questions to inquire about later. The goal is to form the habit of becoming a thoughtful reader as you model respect for the learning needs of peers. This is a lesson worth celebrating as we highlight the uniqueness of *every learner!*



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