

## *”How do I know what I think until I hear what I say?”*

### **Guidelines for Classroom Questioning**

<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu5.html>

Based on the findings from the research on classroom questioning, the following recommendations are offered:

- Incorporate questioning into classroom teaching/learning practices.
- Ask questions which focus on the salient elements in the lesson; avoid questioning students about extraneous matters.
- When teaching students factual material, keep up brisk instructional pace, frequently posing lower cognitive questions.
- With older and higher ability students, ask questions before (as well as after) material is read and studied.
- Question younger and lower ability students only after material has been read and studied.
- Ask a majority of lower cognitive questions when instructing younger and lower ability students. Structure these questions so that most of them will elicit correct responses (scaffold), then move to higher cognitive questions.
- Ask a majority of higher cognitive questions when instructing older and higher ability students.
- In settings where higher cognitive questions are appropriate, teach students strategies for drawing inferences.
- Keep wait-time to about three seconds when conducting recitations involving a majority of lower cognitive questions.
- Increase wait-time beyond three seconds when asking higher cognitive questions.
- Be particularly careful to allow generous amounts of wait-time to students perceived as lower ability.
- Use redirection and probing as part of classroom questioning and keep these focused on salient elements of students' responses.
- Avoid vague or critical responses to student answers during recitations.
- During recitations, use praise sparingly and make certain it is sincere, credible, and directly connected to the students' responses.
- Making Inferences - basic steps can help students make connections between what they know and what they are seeking to learn. Teachers should complete all the steps in this process by way of demonstration, then gradually shift responsibility for all but the first step to the students.

1. Ask the inference question.
2. Answer it.
3. Find clues in the text to support the inference.
4. Tell how to get from the clues to the answer (i.e., give a line of reasoning).

TIPS for encouraging classroom interaction:

- Avoid asking multiple questions simultaneously
- Maintain eye contact with the responder
- Respond that an answer is wrong, before moving on to another student.
- Circle or horseshoe room arrangements are more conducive to responses
- Unhurried, unpressured, safe atmosphere
- Scan class, and begin questions with Who, what...not long introduction or student name
- Praise but not excessively.