



Creating a Culture for
Higher Level Questioning

Reflection Question #3

What does a safe questioning environment look like in your classroom? Are there things you could be doing to encourage more of this risk-taking amongst students? What would your ideal questioning classroom look like?

First Day of School

1. What do you love? What are you most proud of?
2. How do you respond—emotionally, practically, etc.—when you're challenged?
3. What do you need from me to be successful this year?
4. What does it mean to 'understand' something?
5. What should school 'do' for you?
6. What should you do with the things you learn?
7. What do you want to learn about this year? What are you curious about? What can a person do with curiosity?
8. When are you most creative? Why do you think that might be?
9. What do you want me to know about you? What should I be asking you but I'm not?
10. Do you think you're a good student? A good learner? Is there a difference?

Discussion Ideas

Discussion Diamond. This is a strategy that encourages students to respond to a statement or question and commit to reasoning behind their viewpoint...This strategy encourages individual and group thinking and reflection. Group members independently respond to the question or statement, jot their thoughts, then share their responses with the team. Upon hearing all team members input, a summary is decided upon and shared out to the class. This strategy emphasizes respect, active listening, and critical thinking.

Four Corners Discussion. The purpose of this discussion is to get kids to choose a view or perspective on a statement or question and share their reason for responding. It is considered to be a cooperative learning strategy. This strategy is kinesthetic in that it gets kids up and moving. It also encourages listening, verbal communication, critical thinking and decision-making. These skills are all touted as important skills to reinforce. They are explicit or implied within the Four Cs of Twenty-First Century learning.

Talk Moves. This gets students moving out of the recitation style of discussion and into a more student centered discussion format. Talk is an important and integral part of learning which should be employed daily to give students an opportunity talk through their ideas...Talk Moves starts with some basic prompts to be used in the classroom as follow ups to questions. For example, asking students to clarify the explanation or thinking of another student by putting it into their own words. Another example, would be to ask a student if they agree or disagree with a student's position. Often times, simply asking a student "Why they think that?" or using the phrase "Tell me more" encourages deeper levels of discussion (Christensen, 2007).

Questions to ask students when greeting them

1: What was the best part about your day?

2: What work is most exciting you this week?

3: What new ideas are giving you energy lately?

4: Tell me one thing you've learned recently that inspired you.

5: What is one thing we could do right now to make this (day, project, event) even better

Morning Meetings

- If you could have any superpower, what would you choose?
- What are things that get in the way of you learning what you want to learn?
- What state or country do you want to travel to and for what purpose?
- What is your favorite number and why?
- If you had to eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- Describe your perfect day.
- What is a holiday you wish you could create and why?
- Should kids get rewarded for getting good grades?
- Someone has given you a million dollars. What would you do with it?
- Why do they make pizzas round, cut them in triangles, and put them in square boxes?

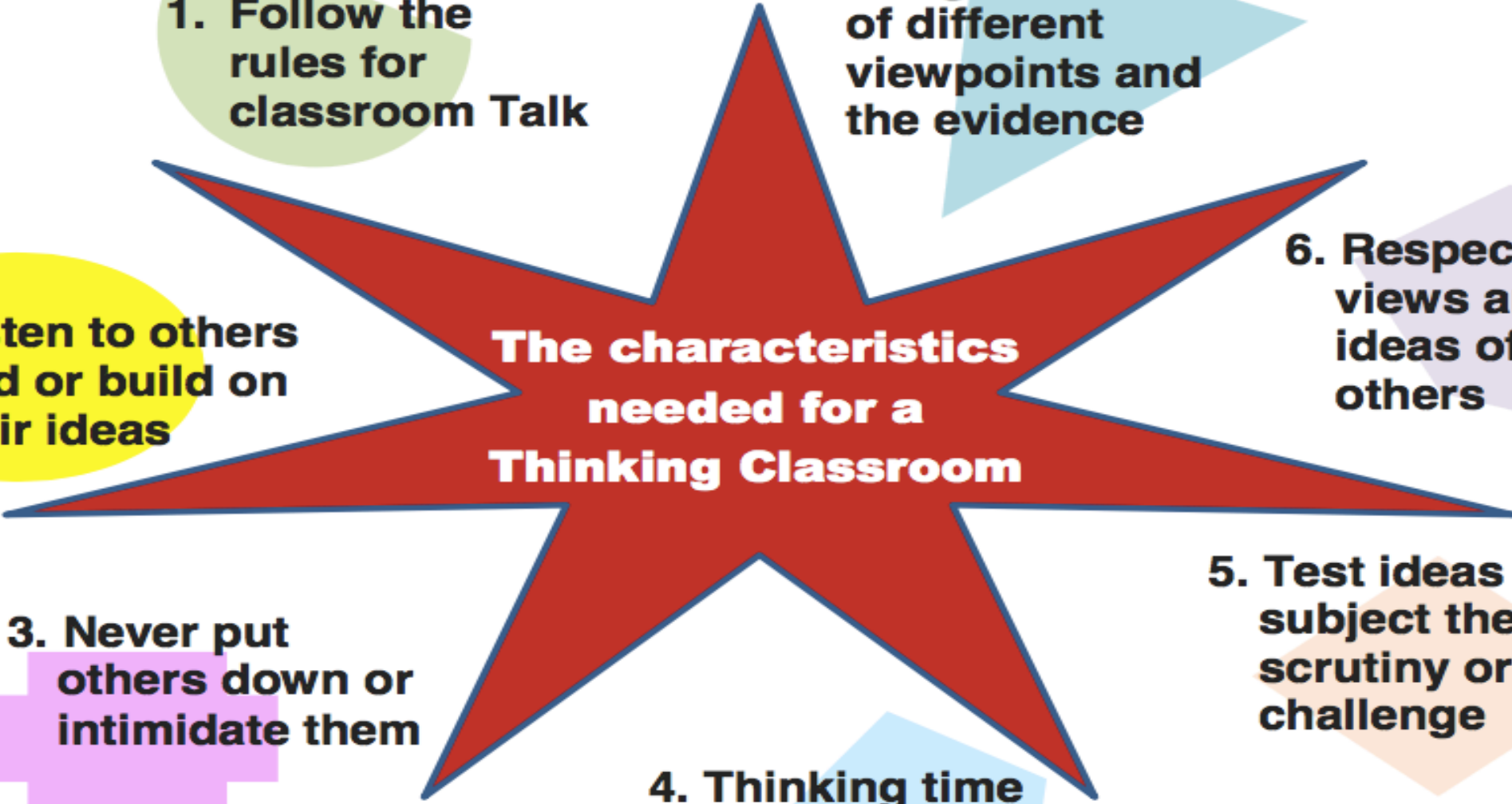
Tips for Involving Students

The following simple tips can get ALL students involved in the lesson and help them gain a deeper understanding of the content by challenging them to think critically.

- Create a high-level thinking question for each lesson
- Require ALL students to answer the question
- Require students to defend answers.
- Differentiate questions as appropriate.
- Promote examination of new and different perspectives.

The 14 Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

1. Independently ask pertinent questions.
2. Reason, analyze and weigh statements and arguments.
3. Have a sense of curiosity and wonder, being interested in finding out, new information or solutions.
4. Can define criteria for analyzing ideas and problems.
5. Are willing to examine beliefs, challenge assumptions and opinions, weigh them against facts (distinguishing between fact, opinion, bias and prejudice).
6. Listen respectfully and carefully to others so that they are able to give feedback.
7. Suspend judgment until all facts have been gathered and considered.
8. looks for evidence to support assumption and beliefs.
9. Are able and flexible enough to adjust opinions when new facts are found.
10. Examines problems closely and looks for proof.
11. Able to identify and reject information that is incorrect or irrelevant.
12. Make assertions based on sound logic and solid evidence.
13. Able to admit a lack of understanding or information.
14. Recognizes that critical thinking is a lifelong process of self-assessment.



**The characteristics
needed for a
Thinking Classroom**

**1. Follow the
rules for
classroom Talk**

**2. Listen to others
Add or build on
their ideas**

**3. Never put
others down or
intimidate them**

**4. Thinking time
Actively consider
all ideas, ask new
questions**

**7. Weigh the value
of different
viewpoints and
the evidence**

**6. Respect the
views and
ideas of
others**

**5. Test ideas and
subject them to
scrutiny or
challenge**

1. Follow the rules for classroom talk

- Be respectful of others
- Participate
- Listen before talking
- Don't dominate the conversation
- Pay attention

2. Listen to others to add and build on their ideas

Student #1: I think we should be making efforts to use more renewable resources such as wind or the sun in order to generate energy that is cleaner.

Student #2: Are you aware of how expensive those things are?

Student #3: And how much space they take up or how loud they are? My cousin lives across from a wind turbine and he says it can be very noisy.

Student #1: Isn't it worth it though? To have energy that is so much cleaner than oil and coal?

Student #3: If they find a way to make it more efficient. Do you think they could do that?

Student #1: Don't know but I know cars used to be a whole lot louder and with advancing technology they aren't so much anymore.

Student #2: You still haven't addressed the expense.

Student #1: I think once there are more of them out there, when it's not so new it will bring the price down. I remember when a computer cost \$5000 but nowadays even faster and lighter ones are half the cost. Besides, I'd be willing to pay a little more now so that my great, great-grand children have access to energy sources because coal and oil are going to run out. That's why they're called nonrenewable.

3. Never put others down or intimidate them



4. Thinking time

The **POWER**
of WAIT TIME



@ValentinaESL

Why Should I
WAIT?

? →  Students need to listen to the question.



Students may need time to build up courage for responding.

 Students need to process what they've heard.



Students raise their hand in an effort to be heard.

 Students may need to translate from one language to another.


WAIT 1:

The time between asking the question and the answer.

WAIT 2:

The time after the student answers the question. This wait time allows for an extended response.

5. Test ideas and subject them to scrutiny

Advantages to debating in class

1. Improved critical thinking skills
2. Acquire better poise, speech delivery, and public speaking skills
3. Increased student retention of information learned
4. Improved listening note-taking skills and increased self-confidence
5. Enhance teamwork skills and collaboration
6. More confidence to stand up for the truth when a discussion is promoting falsehoods or inaccuracies
7. Learning better ways to graciously state one's point with gentleness
8. Help students identify holes in their theories and concoct more balanced arguments
9. Help students better structure their thoughts
10. Debating is lots of fun

6. Respect the views and ideas of others



7. Weighing the value of different viewpoints

Remember....
there are two sides
to every story.
If you're not willing to
listen to both sides,
don't be so quick
to make your judgement
on what you heard.

Protocol – Gallery Walk

- Now that you have heard how you can create a safer questioning culture in your classroom, what do you envision as being your perfect classroom for encouraging students to receive and ask higher-level question.
- You are going to draw this classroom on the whiteboard feature.
- Gallery walk – once everyone is finished, we will look at different drawings, looking at what people came up with. Talking is encouraged.

Final words of advice

1. *Just as you are setting up a classroom where it is acceptable for students to fail, you too should be afforded this*
2. *Never take the easy way out, it only cheats your students*
3. Follow the 3 rules to spark learning
https://www.ted.com/talks/ramsey_musallam_3_rules_to_spark_learning?language=en
4. *Continue to reflect on your practice*

Fortune Cookie Reflection

If you could sum all of your takeaways from this workshop into a single sentence, what would it be?

Try to phrase it like a fortune cookie, where there is a lesson to be learned or something to think about.

Examples:

- I have a question, why aren't I asking better questions?
- He who asks better questions receives better answers
- Big journeys begin with a single step

Questions?

Higher level or otherwise?

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Promoting

RIGOR

through

HIGHER

LEVEL

QUESTIONING

Practical Strategies for Developing
Students' Critical Thinking



TODD STANLEY



Todd'sGiftedRants

1,834 Tweets



Todd'sGiftedRants @the_gifted_guy · 22h

Random higher level thinking question of the week: We have names for all five fingers but when it comes to our toes, we only name the big and the small. What would you name your middle three toes and why?

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TODD

Teaching Theory into Practice



Concluding the theme of inquiry learning, this Todd Talk looks at case-based learning, a method used widely in the medical and law professions but not used very commonly in US primary schools. Learn about the benefits of case-based learning which are having a relevant subject matter to engage students and being able to apply what you learn to a real world situation.



One of the strategies under the inquiry-based learning umbrella, problem-based learning seeks to make the learning authentic for students and to help them see the context of what it is they are learning. The students are the ones driving the learning and the teacher acts as a facilitator, helping them find resources and asking questions meant to get them thinking.



Projects put students in a real-world setting and ask them to complete a task meeting the requirements as laid out by the project. Projects teach students how to learn for themselves. It also has other advantages such as collaboration, public speaking, and organization, all 21st century skills that would benefit any student.



What if we let the students be responsible for most of the learning in class? That is the basic premise behind inquiry-based learning where the content is not given to the kids by the teacher but rather generated and discovered on their own.



The brain is just like a muscle that needs exercised regularly if it is going to develop and get stronger. How you can exercise the brain is by cognitively challenging it using puzzles. Puzzles such as SuDoku, brainteasers, logic puzzles, cryptograms, and riddles can cause one to think and thus exercise the brain.



Benjamin Bloom created a taxonomy for the various levels of questioning and thinking back in 1953. Now, 70 years later his taxonomy still very much resonates in the classrooms of the 21st century. Learn how to use the various levels of Bloom's and the advantage to doing so.



We have two sides to our brain and although everyone uses both sides, most tend to lean to one side or another. If you are left brained dominant you typically...



In this edition of Todd Talk I talk about Kolb's 7 different learning styles and how knowing which ones are your students' strengths is very important to teaching them effectively. For every learning style there are suggestions for how to practice this in the classroom.