

Strategies for Communicating High Expectations to Students

February 15, 2005

TIP #6

FOSTERING HIGHER ORDER THINKING

Questions cause thinking. They can produce more learning than telling (Garmston, 2000). Classroom instruction that incorporates higher level questioning helps students make meaning out of what they are learning.

Higher level thinking is enhanced by the addition of both teacher and student questioning skills (Ciardiello, 1998). Student participation helps the teacher teach the lesson.

According to the research, many teachers are reluctant to include low achieving students in discussions that would encourage them to explain their ideas and stimulate their thinking. High achieving students are asked questions that require them to give greater detail or explanation, which strengthens their confidence in their thinking ability. If low achieving students are consistently asked low level questions, they are being denied equal access to the curriculum (Loftus, 1992). Lower achieving students need opportunities to discover they are capable of higher order thinking and that their teachers EXPECT it of them.

Three ways that teachers can foster higher order thinking skills in their classrooms are described below:

1. **Creating a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to higher order thinking by:**

- Providing multi-level materials
- Practicing flexible grouping
- Valuing and accepting diversity
- Having high expectations for ALL students
- Encouraging risk taking

2. **Engaging students in activities that foster higher order thinking by:**

- Allowing students to work collaboratively or in cooperative learning groups, to enhance communicating with others in varied ways.
- Asking open-ended questions with more than one “right answer”.
- Providing activities that accommodate multiple learning styles.
- Developing problem solving activities that require different types of thinking (creative, deductive, divergent, convergent).

3. **Construct questions that call for higher order thinking by:**

- Using a variety of assessment methods that match teaching strategies (surveys, discussions, exit cards, exhibits).
- Monitoring types of questions posed to include:
 - *questions that probe reasons and evidence such as:*
 - What would be an example?
 - What led you to that belief?

- ***questions about viewpoints or perspectives:***
Did anyone see this another way?
What is an alternative?
- ***questions that probe implications and consequences:***
What effect would that have?
What are you implying by that?

Sources: TESA: Teacher Expectations & Student Achievement Coordinator Manual. Los Angeles County Office of Education. Downey, CA

Louisiana Teacher Assessment Instruments Observation Record

For additional information go to:

<https://itc.utk.edu/~jklittle/edsmrt595/clinton/thinkingtables.html>