

# Asking Open Ended Questions

## Promoting student Discourse in the Classroom

Talking about ideas is an important aspect of creating confident thinkers. While students are working and having class discussions, it is important that your style of questions encourages them to think and to talk about their thinking.

- ✓ **Ask Open-Ended Questions:**  
Avoid questions with simple answers, especially yes or no.
- ✓ **Allow Time for everyone to Think:**  
Ask a question and say, *Talk to your partner for a few minutes and be ready with an idea.* This encourages everyone to think about the question instead of relying on the “quick” students to do all the talking.
- ✓ **Encourage Student to Talk to Each Other:**  
A discussion is a back and forth conversation. Get your students talking to each other, not responding to you.
- ✓ **Take on the Role of the Friendly Skeptic:**  
Respond equally to right and wrong answers, saying *Well, I’m not sure....what do the rest of you think?* Let the rightness or wrongness of answers come from the class, not from you.
- ✓ **Challenge Students to Ask Their Own Questions:**  
Pushing beyond the original question to new questions and answers is an important move toward higher-order thinking. Ask, *What is another questions you could ask about this?* Take time to explore some of these student generated questions.
- ✓ **Make thinking questions Part of Your Routine:**  
Include thinking questions and good class discussion in your curriculum throughout the year. You will see an amazing change in your student as their confidence soars.