



Friday Focus

Carter County Schools

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Questioning and Discussion

Effective questioning and discussion techniques (Domain 3B of TPGE5) can turn a classroom of passive listeners into a classroom of students who are engaged and enthusiastic participants in their own learning. We've all been in the "Ferris Bueller" classroom...the one where the teacher has a two second wait time before providing a one-word answer to a low-level question while a room full of sleepy kids collapses onto their desks under the heavy weight of boredom. The power to turn this scene into a flurry of excited and engaged students rests in the hands of the teacher...in his/her preparation...in his/her willingness to employ strategies that will move students to be engaged.

Teach Like a Champion by Doug Lemov offers multiple strategies for questioning and discussion. Several are given in this week's edition of the *Friday Focus*.

No Opt Out—One consistent thing among top teachers is the expectation that it is not okay not to try. Children are never allowed to say "I don't know." Here is a scenario: A question is posed, "What is 3 times 8, Char-

lie?" Charlie replies, "I don't know." Glancing to Danielle (i.e. another student), say, "Danielle, what is 3 times 8?" She says, "24." Turning immediately back to Charlie, ask again, "Charlie, what is 3 times 8?" At this time, Charlie must answer 24. This is just one way to practice No Opt Out. The idea is to always return to the student who "didn't know" and have him/her show that *now I know*. There are many questioning sequences that can lead back to Charlie, but always return to the accountable child.

Stretch It—Learning doesn't end with the right answer. Reward answers with follow up questions that extend knowledge. Ask how or why. Ask for another way to answer. Ask for a better word/vocabulary. Ask for support or evidence. Have students apply the same skill to a new problem. The idea is to push students to extend their response to a higher level of understanding or application.

Ratio—The proportion of cognitive work students do in the classroom is known as the *ratio*. As teachers become conscious of their ratio, they will find themselves rarely solving any problems or answering questions without the input of students. **Never say what you can get a student to say!**

Here are some ways to get students to do the talking!

A. Unbundle: break the questions into small parts to share the work out to more students and force them to react to one another. Instead of "Who can tell me the parts of a sentence?" Say, "How many parts are there to a sentence?" "Yes, there are two." "Now, who can name one?" "Yes, the subject." "And, what's the other?" "Yes, the predicate."

B. Half Statement: Instead of speaking in a complete idea, have the student finish the thought. "So, the second part of a sentence is the...."

C. What's next?: The fastest way to double the number of questions students answer is to ask about process as often as product. Have them tell how to solve a step or tell what comes next.

D. Feign ignorance: Turn the tables and pretend not to know. "So, now you just add the numerators, right?" "Is that where I put the comma?"

E. Repeated examples: Teachers often ask for an example, but they rarely ask for ANOTHER example that is different from the first.

"Questioning and discussion are the **ONLY** instructional strategies specifically referred to in the framework for teaching: this fact reflects their central importance to teachers' practice."

Accomplished	Exemplary
Although the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she asks the students questions designed to promote thinking and understanding.	Teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge.
Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond and stepping aside when appropriate.	Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, and make unsolicited contributions.
Teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard.	Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion

Inside This Issue

[Questioning Strategies](#)

[Teach Like a Champion \(on YouTube\)](#)
(There are many strategies modeled on YouTube.)

[Danielson Framework Weebly](#)

[Teacher Tools - Questioning Techniques](#)

[3 Steps for Improving Questioning](#)



Upcoming Events

- Sept. 29 WCMS Academy
- Oct. 1 District PD Day
- Oct. 2-3 Fall Break
- Oct. 6 ECHS Academy
- Oct. 13 ECMS Academy
- Oct. 16 Elementary Reading Festival
- Oct. 23 Middle and High Reading Festival

