

Component 3b: Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques

LEVEL		CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES	POSSIBLE EXAMPLES
4	The teacher uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse, and promote meta-cognition. Students formulate many questions, initiate topics and make unsolicited contributions. Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.	In addition to the characteristics of a level of performance 3, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students initiate higher-order questions. ▪ Students extend the discussion, enriching it. ▪ Students invite comments from their classmates during a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A student asks, “How many ways are there to get this answer?” ▪ A student says to a classmate, “I don’t think I agree with you on this, because...” ▪ A student asks other students, “Does anyone have another idea as to how we might figure this out?” ▪ A student asks “What if...?” ▪ And others...
3	While the teacher may use some low-level questions, he or she poses questions to students designed to promote student thinking and understanding. The teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, providing adequate time for students to respond, and stepping aside when appropriate. The teacher successfully engages most students in the discussion, employing a range of strategies to ensure that most students are heard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or have multiple possible answers. ▪ The teacher makes effective use of wait time. ▪ The teacher builds on and uses student responses to questions effectively. ▪ Discussions enable students to talk to one another, without ongoing mediation by the teacher. ▪ The teacher calls on most students, even those who don’t initially volunteer. ▪ Many students actively engage in the discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher asks, “What might have happened if the colonists had not prevailed in the American war for independence?” ▪ The teacher uses plural the form in asking questions, such as, “What are some things you think might contribute to...?” ▪ The teacher asks, “Student M, can you comment on Student T’s idea?” and Student M responds directly to Student T. ▪ The teacher asks a question and asks every student to write a brief response and share it with a partner; the teacher then invites a few students to offer their ideas to the entire class. ▪ And others....
2	The teacher’s questions lead students along a single path of inquiry, with answers seemingly determined in advance. Or the teacher attempts to frame some questions designed to promote student thinking and understanding, but only a few students are involved. The teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion and to encourage them to respond to one another, with uneven results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher frames some questions designed to promote student thinking, but only a few students are involved. ▪ The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another’s ideas, but few students respond. ▪ The teacher calls on many students, but only a small number actually participate in the discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many questions are of the “recitation” type, such as, “How many members of the House of Representatives are there?” ▪ In a lesson on plot structure in a Dickens novel, the teacher asks, “Where was Shakespeare born?” ▪ The teacher asks, “Who has an idea about this?” but the same three students offer comments. ▪ The teacher asks, “Student M, can you comment on Student T’s idea?” but Student M does not respond, or makes a comment directly to the teacher. ▪ And others...
1	The teacher’s questions are of low cognitive challenge, with single correct responses, and asked in rapid succession. Interaction between teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers. A few students dominate the discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions are rapid-fire, and convergent, with single correct answers. ▪ Questions do not invite student thinking. ▪ All discussion is between teacher and students; students are not invited to speak directly to one another. ▪ A few students dominate the discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All questions are of the “recitation” type, such as, “What is 3 x 4?” ▪ The teacher asks a question for which the answer is on the board; students respond by reading it. ▪ The teacher only calls on students who have their hands up. ▪ And others...

