Questions to Elicit Student Thinking

Because so much classroom dialogue takes the form of teacher initiation/student response/teacher evaluation (IRE), students may be unpracticed in responding to questions that invite thinking rather than retrieving information. Be transparent about how you will help students collaboratively explore their thinking and the kinds of questions they should expect.

And respond nonjudgmentally, with a nod, a thank-you, or a follow-up question. Your attentiveness will produce more conversation than your praise (or it’s obvious absence).

# **Invite Thinking.** Ask questions that do not presume everyone has the same ideas.

* So…what do you think?
* What was especially interesting – for you?

# **Invite Confusion.** Ask questions that encourage students to reveal their reading difficulties.

* How did you know that your understanding was breaking down?
* Can you point to certain places in the text where you lost comprehension?

# **Probe.** As needed, help students share or uncover why they may have offered a particular answer.

* Help us understand your thinking on that.
* Can you tell us a little more?
* What in the text makes you say that?
* Can you give us an example?

# **Document.** Record student’s ideas so that they are easily available for others to respond to and to compare and connect.

# **Extend.** Ask questions that explicitly focus students on responding to others’ ideas and confusions.

* Does everyone agree?
* Did anyone else have a similar problem?
* What might be another way to look at that?

# **Link.** Help students connect to previous learning and student thinking.

* How might this relate to…?
* What connections come up for you?