



### 3. QUESTIONS

**Purpose: Increase quality questions to show evidence of learning.**

Planning effective classroom discussions that enhance thinking seems to be one of the biggest challenges teachers face today in maximizing learning opportunities.

Black & Wiliam's research (1998) included the finding that teacher-created questions should include longer "wait-time" after questions are posed. They also reported that it is important to establish a supportive climate for right and wrong responses (as all responses are learning opportunities). An additional finding was that by giving all students a chance to participate while eliciting responses provided optimum ways to maximize learning.

The research suggests that "question-style" needs to move **from factual routine questions - to thinking questions**. "The aim is thoughtful improvement, rather than getting it right the first time... The teachers also shift their role from presenters of content to leaders of an exploration and development of ideas in which all students are involved" (p. 13, Black et al, 2004).

***"Four words to improve teaching – talk less – ask more" Smith***

#### **Primary:**

1. Turn and talk to a partner about your thinking to this question...
2. Stuffed toy baseball throw – be ready to help us understand your thinking if you are the one to receive this when I throw it (supportive climate - all thinking is encouraged)

#### **Intermediate:**

1. Hands down – create questions that have students really think (they can process these questions with a partner or a small group, and state their opinions / ideas)
2. 'Big' questions and 'Skinny' questions – developing common understanding together as a class

#### **Secondary:**

1. Learning Partners/Hands Down – discuss the question with your learning partner and be prepared to share your thinking (change learning partner often to "broaden" the thinking).
2. Discuss with your learning partner for 5 – 10 minutes then form groups of 4.

***What are some other strategies that might work for designing effective questions and fostering more thinking from all students?***

Sources: Black & Wiliam, 2005; Cameron et al, 2006