

# Intentional Instructional Moves

Strategic Steps to  
Accelerate Student  
Learning

## Companion Guide

Chapter 17: Intentional Step Two



## Chapter 17

### Intentional Step Two: Invite Students to Share Ideas with the Teacher

Once teachers establish an initial practice of student discourse, the next step is to encourage students to share their thoughts and questions with the teacher more readily. The Quaglia Institute found that 50% of elementary students felt comfortable asking questions in class (2024a) and 54% of middle and high school students agreed that the adults at their school listened to their ideas (2024b). These data suggest that half of our students feel less comfortable asking questions or sharing ideas.

To encourage more student-teacher dialogue, teachers can prompt students to share their questions and ideas. But keep in mind that we want to move toward students volunteering their ideas, questions, and opinions with less teacher support (Allen, 2008). Through modeling and direct instruction, we can teach students to pursue lines of inquiry and ask their own questions. Achieving this level of participation will involve creating a welcoming environment where all students feel comfortable speaking and sharing. It will also require teachers to make space for students to voice their opinions, personal connections, and insights.

#### Strategy 1: Revoicing

The teacher (or student) restates what students have said during a class discussion and checks with the speaker that this interpretation is correct. For example, the teacher can use the following statements and/or questions:

- It sounds like you are saying...
- Let me clarify...
- If I understand you correctly...

- ...Did I get that right?
- ...Is this what you are saying?

Revoicing not only helps reinforce content and skills, but it also ensures students' ideas are communicated clearly. It encourages active listening and demonstrates to students that their ideas are worth sharing (Blanke, 2023). This promotes future participation and fosters a stronger sense of community and belonging. Based on Hattie's research, meaningful classroom discussions where students can practice communication skills, social influence, and critical thinking have a high effect size (.82).

### Strategy 2: Numbered Heads

Students form small groups and the teacher assigns each student within a group a number. Then the groups work together to complete a task. When they are finished, the teacher selects a number and asks for all students with that number to answer the question. For instance, if students are working in groups of four, then each member of the group will either be a 1, 2, 3, or 4. If the teacher invites all number twos to speak, then each student who was assigned that number will share their group's thinking.

This form of prompting has several benefits: students don't know which number will be called at the end of the activity, so they all need to be prepared to represent the group. In addition, the prompting is randomized, which helps avoid common pitfalls, such as only a handful of students doing most of the talking or students feeling hesitant to raise their hands and share. This exercise taps into cooperative learning (.55), problem-solving (.68) and self-regulation strategies (.52). It's also a form of active learning in which students can develop their self and social-awareness, leadership skills, and stress tolerance.

### Strategy 3: Answer Charts

The teacher sets up chart paper at various stations around the classroom. Then the teacher breaks students into small groups and asks the groups to physically get up and stand next to one of the charts. The teacher begins the activity by posing a question. The groups discuss their answers and write them down on the chart paper. For instance, a teacher with a classroom of 30 students may have 10 different charts. In this case, it might be useful to arrange students in groups of three. As students record their answers, the teacher can quickly see the thinking of the students, check if students are correct, and move on. They might also ask students to explain their answers, look around and see who has similar answers, or invite them to find a peer they disagree with and debate their answers together.

This form of explicit teaching (.57) gives students time to process and think through a topic or question, and then record their thinking. The teacher can easily see what students know and offer support to those who are struggling. Moreover, students can discuss ideas with their peers, see what other groups have written down, and evaluate or change their answers based on feedback. Cultivating problem-solving, self-management, and help-seeking behaviors will benefit them not only in group work, but anytime they must collaborate with peers or future colleagues.