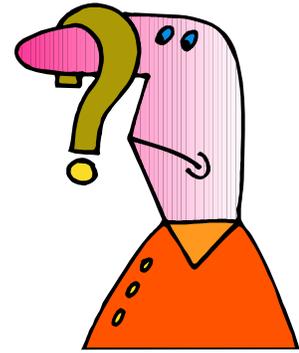# Ways to Deal with Questions and Children's Responses

There are ways to manage questions and answers that reduces a child's fear of giving a wrong answer and generates confidence to verbalize in class.  As the instructor, call on *all* students, male or female, as well as those who do not raise their hand.  (Research indicates that teachers call on boys more than girls, 8 to 1, and tend to call on the children that "know" the answers.)

Suggestion: Ask specific children; <u>say the child's name</u> before you ask the question, get <u>eye contact</u>/attention, and talk with them about their <u>"inner conversation"</u>:  "It is desirable to talk/think to yourself about the answer before you answer out loud."  Following are "questions" options.

- With some kids (or groups of children), start with "yes or no" questions and answers.

- Ask (begin with) questions you know he/she/they can answer.  Build confidence.

- Supply choices of two (or three) answers to choose from; prompt the correct one.

- Give the student a prompt (physical, visual, or verbal) that leads to the correct answer.

- Do fill in the blank/"close technique":  For example, "We live in the state of _____."

- Ask, "How many children think they know the answer?"  Well, here's the answer.  Who was thinking that in their mind?" (or "How many were going to say that?").

- Do controlled brainstorming and write all of their answers down on the board (some answers will be correct, others wrong).  For those that were wrong, being part of the "several" is better than being the "only one" that was wrong.

- Say, "That would have been correct if I had asked _____, but I asked _____." (Supply the question to which the wrong answer belongs.)

- Say, "No…but I can see where you're coming from with that answer.  Listen carefully to the question again.…"

- Tell the student that doesn't know the answer to ask another student for help (address question formation); ask them to work together to come up with the answer (may need to instruct them on how to "work together").

- Ask for group vote:  "Raise your hand, how many think____?  Now, how many think _____?  I'm curious (speaking to a specific child), why do you think _____." (or "What is the reason behind your answer?")

- Do "think-pair-share", i.e., each child gets together with a partner.  Ask a question and instruct the children to think about the question and answer and exchange their thoughts.  Several groups share their ideas with the entire class.

In regards to class management:  a) obtain eye contact; b) call the children by name; c) provide clear, meaningful questions, and d) re-state the answers to make sure everyone got the info.  Also, "There are three words that are critical in creating a civil environment:  *cooperate, appreciate, and appropriate*.  If you put these words together with *thank you* and *please*, you make it difficult for students to misbehave!"
            -- <u>You Can't Teach Until Everyone is Listening</u>, by Marilyn Page (2008)