

Rigorous Questioning: What can I do to help a student access rigorous questioning?

“...approximately 80% of students with disabilities have average intelligence (Gloeckler 2006). If students have average intelligence, then they have average potential. They have the intellectual potential to master grade-level material. They can understand the work. They may have physical, sensory, or learning differences that must be accommodated, but their fundamental capacity is there.”

O'Connor, J. (2010). *Students with disabilities can meet accountability standards: A roadmap for school leaders*. Lanham, Md: Rowan & Littlefield Education.

It is very important to remember that all students should be provided with rigorous instruction. **Rigor should not change for students with disabilities**, but the approach or design of instruction for students with special needs should be considered. Teachers should collaborate with the speech/language pathologist and special education teacher involved with specific students for information about their educational disability and IEP programs.

What is language?

Language and literacy are important in all content areas. **Receptive language** involves the ability to listen to, process and comprehend spoken language and is required before the student can develop effective verbal communication skills (i.e. - expressive language skills). **Expressive language** involves the ability to use age-appropriate vocabulary, grammar and contextual information to verbally comment, share ideas, express feelings, explain and ask questions. The ability to understand and generate complex sentences and questions enables students to develop the rigor that is expected in the Common Core Curriculum.

Language Based Strategies:

Language-based strategies help students respond to and develop higher-level questioning skills needed to be effective communicators in the 21st century. The resources provided in this document will enable general education students and students with special education needs to be successful during verbal discourse and in collaborative activities in school.

For students with IEP's, review accommodations and modifications to ensure that all targeted areas are being addressed. An accommodations tutorial is available at http://education.fcps.org/accommodation_tutorial/.

Click the links below to access the following areas:

[Strategies and Techniques to help Students Understand Language for **Rigorous** Questions](#)

[Strategies and Techniques to help Students Develop & Answer **Rigorous** Questions](#)

[Resources](#)

Strategies and Techniques to help Students Understand Language for *Rigorous* Questions

1. Use pre-teaching and [priming](#) to teach key concepts of grade level curriculum.
 - a. Consider if the key concepts are curriculum based (inference, multiple meaning words, and/or vocabulary) or functional (directional, time, quantity, sequence, and/or positional concepts).
 - b. **Strategies:** [index cards](#), [Frayer model](#), act it out, visual support, think aloud, [personal dictionary](#), student friendly definitions, explicit instruction in the use/benefits of using a dictionary, thesaurus, etc.
2. Use vocabulary that is consistent (i.e. – deconstruct, examine, define, sequence, etc.) across all content areas to help the student generalize information.
 - a. Provide multiple exposures to vocabulary words. Have all teachers use target vocabulary often so that a student has many opportunities to listen to it, hear how it is used, and answer questions that contain the vocabulary.
 - b. **Strategies:** bridge prior background knowledge to new learning by having students create [visual maps](#) of information, [word walls \(SmartPen\)](#), word of the day (Promethean Boards, Slates and ActivInspire)
3. Scaffold the tiers of questions/vocabulary and increase the rigor as the conversation/dialogue continues.
 - a. Provide various structured levels of questions/vocabulary. Rigor builds on a basic understanding before you can obtain the rigorous level.
 - b. **Strategies:** carefully consider the use of structures such as: complex sentences, double negatives and imbedded questions, use context clues to determine meanings of words presented verbally or in text, provide repetition and sufficient number of explicit exposures with purpose and intent (Struggling learners may need 25 trials to acquire novel words compared to 9-11 trials for typical learners.), implement frequent comprehension checks when teaching, stop periodically and discuss information presented (Discovery Education)
4. Build vocabulary understanding.
 - a. Consider the presentation of new and key vocabulary related to the content or question.
 - b. **Strategies:** use hands on materials/manipulatives/visuals when possible, [use several modalities when teaching materials \(speaking, reading, writing, listening, visuals, hands-on\)](#), add images (line drawings, photos or pictures) to the text or discussion, develop enhancement activities with Quizlet
5. Make effective use of **wait time** (the amount of time provided between a question/direction and a response).
 - a. Provide adequate time for the student to process what you have asked and form an answer. If the student does not respond after a given period of time, ask the question in a different way.
 - b. **Strategies:** 3 seconds is often a suggested amount of wait time, [visual task analysis](#), repeat questions and rephrase questions (explain it in other words if the student does not seem to understand)
6. Strategies for success:
 - a. Provide an environment where the student feels confident to take risks and persevere through challenging tasks.
 - b. **Strategies:** [active listening](#) (using the [5 L's](#)), encourage the student to ask for help and provide structures for this to occur, offer verbal, non-verbal and tangible reinforcement for attempts to build intrinsic motivation over time

Strategies and Techniques to help Students Develop & Answer *Rigorous* Questions

1. Use explicit instruction in answering questions and making inferences.
 - a. Provide the student with models using a variety of question structures and response structures prior to and throughout instruction. Ask the student to engage in the development/answering of his/her own questions.
 - b. **Strategies:** model by asking questions aloud and then talking through the process you use to formulate the answer, use a “think aloud” strategy if the student is struggling with formulating an answer
2. Formulate an initial response.
 - a. Consider the level of support a student will need to initially respond to/develop a question. This level of support can vary among topic, interest level and other factors.
 - b. **Strategies:** use a word bank or a visual of possible vocabulary words to be used in conversation, add images to the text or discussion, refer to a graphic/visual organizer for vocabulary to support the response (Kidspiration/Inspiration)
3. Expand the student’s response.
 - a. Provide structures that allow the student to elaborate on responses and build on pre-requisite knowledge. Develop a response repertoire that encourages students to clarify initial responses, lift thought to higher levels, and support a point of view or opinion.
 - b. **Strategies:** use a [pacing board](#) to expand sentence length (The pacing board could include a vocabulary target word that has to be used in sentences), use the following [prompts/questions](#) for expansion (verbally or visually):
 - Tell me more...
 - What do you mean?
 - Which happened first? Why?
 - Can you give me an example?
 - How would you define ____?
 - What is a characteristic of ____?
 - What do they have in common? How are they different?
 - Is this new information? What does this remind you of?
 - Can you restate that?
 - Could you clarify that further?
 - What are some alternatives?
4. Make effective use of time for the student to formulate questions and responses
 - a. Provide adequate time for the student to formulate responses. If the student does not respond after a given period of time, provide supports in order for the student to rethink/rehearse their answer.
 - b. **Strategies:** wait time will vary, self-talk, silent/oral rehearsal, provide the student with an advanced warning or preparation of the question or topic

5. Rigorous questioning supported by peers and small groups.
 - a. Construct groups of peers to allow for verbal discourse to facilitate questioning and question development.
 - b. **Strategies:** use peer models during instruction, structure small group work to give students confidence to express themselves, flexible grouping, activity jobs, set group boundaries/ground rules (online presentations – Prezi, Slideshare, MovieMaker, Animoto)
6. Strategies for Success:
 - a. Provide an environment where the student feels confident to take risks and persevere through challenging tasks.
 - b. **Strategies:** have verbal/visual dialogue with the student prior to the activity, develop a visual or verbal cue to prepare the student for a future response , provide the student with the target question to be answered prior to whole or small group instruction

Resources

UDL and Technology Connections:

These strategies are for all students based on UDL principles and best teaching practices. Here are links to UDL websites:

- **FCPS UDL Website:** This website has resources surrounding UDL and its implementation into the classroom.
<http://www.fcps.org/Page/661>
- **HIAT Website:** A website devoted to UDL principles and professional learning surrounding UDL. This website has classroom videos of UDL in practice and many other resources.
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/hiat/udl/>
- **UDL Wheel:** An interactive wheel that helps teachers design instruction that includes core principles of Universal Design for Learning. <http://udlwheel.mdonlinegrants.org/>
- **FCPS Salient 5 and Technology Connections:** A website resource linking technology to instruction.
<http://www.fcps.org/cms/lib02/MD01000577/Centricity/Domain/97/Salient%205%20and%20technology.pdf>

Disabilities/Service Delivery/Research:

FCPS Instructional Service Delivery for Inclusive Practice: Located on the Special Education FCPS website, this document provides resources and information about a variety of service delivery models including co-teaching.

[FCPS Instructional Service Delivery for Inclusive Practice](#)

Nichcy- Provides specific information about individual disabilities, tips and tricks and background knowledge.

<http://nichcy.org/disability/specific>

A link to a resource which states strategies listed by the type of speech/language deficit presented by the student.

<http://images.pcmac.org/SiSFiles/Schools/AL/BaldwinCounty/FoleyElementary/Uploads/Forms/classroomstrategies.pdf>

Common Core Connection: Speaking and Listening Standards are introduced in the common core in Kindergarten and continue until grade 12. The Speaking and Listening Standards provide a foundation for 21st century members of society.

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Being productive members of these conversations requires that students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains.

New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio.

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/SL>