**Types of Question Prompts**

(adapted from Andrews, 1980, with permission)

Ertmer,P., Sadaf,A., & Ertmer, D. (2011). Designing effective question prompts to facilitate critical thinking in online discussions. Design Principles and Practices: *An International Journal, 5*(4), 1–28.

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|   | Question Type (abbrev) | Description |
| 1 | Playground (PG) | Questions require the interpretation or analysis of a specific aspect of the material, or “playground,” for discussion. Students are free to discover and interpret the material. |
| 2 | Brainstorm (BS) | Questions ask students to generate a number of conceivable ideas, viewpoints, or solutions related to a specified issue. Students are free to generate any or all ideas on the topic. |
| 3 | Focal Question (FQ) | Questions relate to a specific issue and require students to make a decision or take a position and justify it. Students are asked to support one of several possible positions. |
| 4 | General Invitation (GI) | Questions invite a wide range of responses within a broad topic in an open or unfocused discussion. |
| 5 | Lower-Level Divergent (LD) | Questions require students to analyze information to discover reasons, draw conclusions, or make generalizations. |
| 6 | Analytic Convergent (AC) | Students are required to examine a relevant material and produce a straightforward conclusion, summarize material, or describe a sequence of steps in a process. Answers require analytical thought but lead to a single correct answer. |
| 7 | Quiz Show (QS) | Questions require reproduction of factually oriented material. Students are required to specify the facts. |
| 8 | Multiple Consistent (MC) | Multiple questions are included that are consistent in the content. Students need to assimilate two or more versions of the same question before responding. |
| 9 | Shotgun/Funnel (MIX) | These questions represent multiple question-sentences and may contain two or more content areas. Students are expected to answer at least one fragment of the question. |
|  | New Categories | Description |
| 10 | Shotgun (SG) | Multiple questions that may contain two or more content areas. |
| 11 | Funnel (FUN) | Prompt begins with a broad opening question, followed by one or more narrower question, and ending with a very concrete question. |
| 12 | Critical Incident (CI) | Questions relate to a scenario or case study students have read; students are typically asked to propose solutions to the issues presented in the scenario/case study. |
| Note. We eliminated Numbers 7 and 8 from the original list and divided Category 9 into two separate categories. A new category, Critical Incident, was also added. |

**Sample Questions**

From EDCI530 “English Language Development” fall 2011

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|  | **OD#2** |
| **Q1**  | **Q1:** How does code-switching affect the infant language development? How does bilingualism in an early age affect their intelligence development and academic achievement in school in a later age? If you, as a parent, want to make your child bilingual, which ways would be helpful especially for the infants aged between 0 to 3?  | **MC** |
| **Q2**  | **Q2:** Several interventions appropriate for bilingual children (those in the list for normally developing children and also those identified for use with bilingual children) are presented on pages 36-37 of Menyuk & Brisk. Please select one of these interventions and discuss your perceptions of its importance for the language development of bilingual infants. Also address the relevance of the intervention for bilingual students at other age groups if possible. (To allow for a richer, more complete discussion, please do not select the same intervention as those that have already been posted.) | **FQ** |
| **Q3**  | **Q3:** Many examples of real-life situations are given in the first two chapters of Menyuk & Brisk. Think about the examples in the reading and find some sort of correlation between a situation in the book and a situation that you have experienced. Think about these questions as you describe your personal situation:First, briefly describe the example from the reading and include the specific page number.Why is this situation described in the book?How does your personal situation relate to the one in the book?What did you learn from your situation?How does your situation relate to the language development of ELLs? | **AC** |
| **Q4**  | **Q4:** How does socioeconomic status and culture affect the language development of children in Frankfort? | **QS** |
|  | **OD#3** |  |
| **Q5**  | **Q1:** Based on Menyuk & Brisk, how can teachers incorporate bilingual activities in the context of an English medium class? What kinds of activities might be helpful to boost young learners’ literacy skills? How can the knowledge of the culture and students’ background help teachers to encourage students’ progress in speaking, reading and writing? | **LD** |
| **Q6**  | **Q2:** On chapter four, Menyuk and Brisk argue that “when children know a language, they should be allowed to use it [in the classroom]” (75). Nonetheless, in chapter three, they describe a seemingly negative scenario, which occurred during play when children were allowed to use their heritage language in class. What is your position regarding the usage of a language other than English in class? | **FQ** |
| **Q7**  | **Q3:** In chapter 4, there was an emphasis placed on activities designed to enhance linguistic ability and development in all children. In our discussions, we often get caught up talking only about ELLs and things we could do with them specifically to promote language and literacy development. However, most teachers have mixed language ability classrooms and need activities that will work for all students. Choose at least two strategies/activities from the chapter (sections 4-2 through 4-5 may be most helpful) and explain how and why you would use them in a lower elementary classroom to promote language development in both ELL and native speaking students. Use information from the book or other course readings to support your answer. | **CI** |
| **Q8**  | **Q4:** An example from the book relates how one kindergarten teacher would begin each day with a "hello" from a different language. Every morning the children would gather around the world map, a country would be selected and the children would learn how to say hello in that language. The book noted that in this classroom many of those countries were represented. This is one way to create a classroom environment where second-language learners are accepted and their language and culture is respected. Based on the readings so far this semester, what are some ways we can make our classrooms and our teaching more interactive for our students and families? How can we show that we value, accept, respect other cultures and that our classrooms reflect those values as well as integrating a safe and welcoming atmosphere and environment for students and parents? | **BS** |
|  | **OD#4** |  |
| **Q9**  | **Q1:** 1. How can a teacher scaffold their classroom/instruction as an environment conducive to the “zone of proximal development?” (Hawkins, p. 26); what challenges might teachers face in using ZPD theory as an instructional method in their ELL classrooms? How might parents be incorporated? 2. How does Hawkin’s article relate to the Valdes chapters with Ms. Gordman’s classroom and/or student experiences?  | **LD** |
| **Q10**  | **Q2:** 1. In Hawkins’ paper, she references Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, provides a figure illustrating the ‘ecological system’ of the classroom, shows the many factors that effect each classroom, like students’ and teachers’ ethnic backgrounds, and how all of these factors are interconnected. Is this ecological system exclusive to the US’s classroom environment, or can this interconnectivity be found in all classrooms? How can the teacher’s policies change the ecological system? How does the encouragement or discouragement of multilingualism affect this system? 2. A student’s literacy in their L1 is said to be very beneficial to L2 learning, no matter what the language background. Valdes mentions “how nearly impossible it was for teachers to work with non-English-speaking children and children who had very limited literacy skills in their first language”. In Valdes’ reading for this week (p60 & p65), we see her (sometimes without the classroom teachers’ permission), focusing on using the students’ L1 to scaffold their own English Language development. Is focusing on a student’s L1 absolutely necessary for an ELL to become a successful English language learner? What benefits and difficulties would this present to the students, teachers, and school districts?  | **SG** |
| **Q11** | **Q3:** In Chapter 3 of Valde's, The author explains her experience with Mrs. Gordon's methods of teaching. Name three methods that Mrs. Gordon used that were not effective and explain why. | **QS** |
| **Q12**  | **Q4:** In the Hawkins article, she dedicates a section of the text to understanding a study by Jimenez, Garcia, and Pearson (1995) that examined factors contributing to the reading proficiency (in English) of Latino children. She states: “They also found that learners who could explicitly recruit language and reading strategies fared better, leading them to recommend a more explicit focus in instruction on awareness of language features and learning strategies.” What can we do as teachers to specifically focus on metacognition and explain it to our learners in a way that will help them grab hold of strategies they can use to succeed in the classroom?2. Hawkins mentions in her summary a longitudinal study of young children in Canada by Kelleen Toohey (2000), in which she explores the discursive practices in kindergarten through second grade and how they shaped the identities and participation of six language learners. In addition, Hruska (2000) studies how these discursive practices connect to the school identities constructed by bilingual children in a kindergarten classroom and show how they affected their self-esteem and motivation and their investment in school. What do we as teachers think the impact of seemingly small choices, like failing to learn the proper pronunciation of our students’ names or valuing English above Spanish for discourse, makes upon the long-term academic success of our students. My son has commented on how “quiet” his Latino classmates have become over the years (he’s currently a fifth-grader, having grown up with Latino classmates since kindergarten). He says they’re the least likely to raise questions, invoke controversy (even when warranted), or engage in debate. What are we doing at young ages that either encourages Latino students to become and/or discourages Latino students from becoming full members of Frankfort’s “community of learners?”3. Based on what we've already learned about ELL learners, what are some areas you would focus on to best help the students at Garden Middle School? | **CI** |
|  | **OD#5** |  |
| **Q13**  | **Q1:** 1) Menyuk et al. (2005) explain that students are more aware of social rules and peer pressure during adolescence. During these years, students are bombarded with academic forms of language and little emphasis is given to language in use or in real contexts. In light of this, what bigger societal issues underlie the value that schooling ascribes to academic language versus everyday forms of communication? 2) How can we create more socially just environments at schools without disregarding the importance of teaching ELLs the genres and literacy practices needed to effectively transition into college? | **CI** |
| **Q14**  | **Q2:** 1. Menyuk and Brisk mentioned on page 177 that dramatic educational intervention by the high school years are greatly needed to help tackle reading difficulties encountered by high school ELLs. What are the possible and appropriate interventions that classroom teachers may use? 2. On page 179, Menyuk and Brisk mentioned that there may be a variety of experiential factors that have caused delay of English language development in high school ELLs. What do you think are the possible experiential factors and what solutions do we have to help these students? | **LD** |
| **Q15**  | **Q3:** In Chapter 10, Menyuk and Brisk explain that learning academic content can be difficult for high school students either because they do not understand the content language or they have limited background knowledge and experience with the concepts (p.188). They offer several suggestions for helping to develop the language of content courses. Choose two ideas you might use in a high school setting and discuss how those are important. You may also discuss how using these strategies might be different or more appropriate for high school rather than in the primary grades. | **FQ** |
| **Q16**  | **Q4:** Menyuk & Brisk state in Chapter 10 "the bulk of language development has occurred over the previous school years. However, not all high school students are equally prepared to take on the thinking and learning that is required during these years. Long before the high school years the problems in language development that particular children have should have been identified and appropriate interventions to help should have taken place. As pointed out in the previous chapter this is not always the case." Keeping this in mind, and reflecting on the different experiences Manolo had in the two school school systems, do you think it is possible for high school aged ELL students to succeed if self motivation is not present? Manolo was considered an intelligent and somewhat excelling ELL student at Garden School, compared to many of his ELL peers who lacked his desire for education and perhaps, the previous educational opportunities. What can teachers do to help motivate high school aged ELL students coming from so many diverse backgrounds and expressing different attitudes towards their education?  | **CI** |
|  | **OD#6** |  |
| **Q17**  | **Q1:** What are your thoughts about the students’ abilities to preserve diverse identities while assimilating into a new culture? What are your views on identity constructions and bilingualism and have they changed after reading Ricento’s and Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk's articles? | **PG** |
| **Q18**  | **Q2:** Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk (2008) advocated “Language, culture, and identity are closely related factors that impact academic achievement and personal development of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students” (p.21) Do you support their stance and why (or why not)? What pedagogical approaches could be incorporated in academic practices to help students negotiate their identities? Is their pedagogical creed applicable (not applicable) in your professional experience, and in what ways? Are there any pitfalls of incorporating this stance in contemporary classrooms?  | **MC** |
| **Q19**  | **Q3:** Ricento (2005) summarizes research now considered biased and outdated because it perpetuates the isolation of ELLs - the “us vs. them” mentality. He urges us to consider the postmodernistic perspectives of SLA theorists who affirm social identity is neither fixed nor based on stereotypical characteristics of ethnic traits. The author then presents identity, gender, race, and ethnicity studies as providing a framework for examining our practices and beliefs. For discussion, we will be reflecting on our real-life experiences with ELLs and the course readings. First, provide examples of three real-life situations in which positive identity of gender, ethnicity, or race is NOT promoted and explain why. Then, identify and discuss three examples that DO encourage positive identity formulation - the pedagogical shift from TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) to TEGCOM (Teaching English for Globalized Communication), as discussed by Ricento on p. 905. To reiterate, these reflections may come from experiences in your own schools and/or from student experiences as described by Valdes (2005) or other scholars we have read so far. | **FUN** |
| **Q20**  | **Q4:** In both articles for this week (Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk, 2008; and Ricento, 2005), the authors discuss the Language Analysis complexity and importance of identity for L2 and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners. On page 24 of Language, Culture, and Identity, the authors state that: “The majority of mainstream classroom teachers are monolingual English speakers who have received little preparation to work with CLD students and, for the most part, come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds than their students” (Clayton, Barnhardt, & Brisk, 2008). With that being said, how can we as monolingual English speakers provide these CLD students with the best education possible with little to no training? In addition, Ricento mentions on page 899 according to Norton, “if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (Ricento, 2005). How can we encourage our students to invest in that second language?  | **BS** |
|  | **OD#7** |  |
| **Q21**  | **Q1:** Based on your knowledge, personal and professional experience, having in mind the two main points of the reading for this week:(1)Valdes Ch 7(2005), discussing how due to inappropriate teaching styles and not understanding ELLs needs, the teacher in fact is preventing the ELLs even to keep themselves on the learning level they had back in their country. (2) de Jong & Harper (2008), focusing on the need of new generations of teachers, preparing curricula for teaching ELLs, which would correspond to the linguistic and at the same time cultural needs of ELLs. Please, discuss what some of the best strategies and characteristics of the teacher are, which would provide the best environment, instructions and activities for ELLs. Focus on the significant role of the teacher in enhancing ELLs' motivation for language learning and development as well as personal and career development and adaptation to the new classroom, school, community and society.  | **MC** |
| **Q22** | **Q2:** On p.148 (Valdes, 2001), Valdes mentions seven recommendations for effective schooling for immigrant students. Of all the seven recommendations, which are most commonly practiced in American schools? Please justify your reasons and apply personal experiences too. Also, what recommendations do you think are the easiest and most practical to follow and apply in schools? Furthermore, identify two recommendations that may be difficult to apply.  | **MC** |
| **Q23**  | **Q3:** Please answer one of the following questions and include the number in your response. 1. “Not everyone agrees that the growing presence of ELLs in standard curriculum classroom settings necessarily requires a change in current preparation practices” (de Jong & Harper, 2008 ). Are the needs of ELLs the same as those of native English speaking students? Why do teacher preparation programs require ELL specific courses and not general English language coursework only? How could have Bernardo (Chapter 7, Valdes) benefited from a different educational program at Garden School? Give examples of educational practices that could have been changed and implications the school policies and practices had for ELLs. Suggest recommendation (s) to which would offer better educational practices for the student. 2. According to de Jong & Harper (2008) in terms of educational policy, it is crucial that ELLs are explicitly included in national content standards, accountability guidelines, and efforts of improving pedagogy. Teachers must be able to establish a learning environment based on more than just good teaching. How could you as a teacher adequately support bilingual children in their classrooms, identify and mediate cultural and linguistic needs of your students? Describe how you can address specific cultural and linguistic needs in your classroom and standard curriculum. Support your answers with citations and examples from this module readings. Feel free to share personal experiences and suggestions for supporting bilingual students in our classrooms. | **MC** |
| **Q24** | **Q4:** How do teachers across the curriculum “buy into” becoming language specialists? How do we get our educational community to come into line with the needs of these students?  | **SG** |
|  | **OD#8** |  |
| **Q25**  | **Q1:** In their article De Oliveira and Athanases lay out many of the problems teachers run into when they leave the university and go to the classroom. One of these major obstacles was diversifying curriculum, teachers reported; “Diversifying curriculum, however, was not easy. New high and middle school teachers reported managing a wide range of academic preparation. Numbers on their watch were high for some—32 8th-grade language arts students, 5 times a day; 170 math students over five classes; 130 9th- and 10th-grade English students, half ELLs. Managing so many students on timed class schedules made diversifying lessons difficult and phone calls home fewer. An English teacher described one class: And you have one student who speaks no English and two students are somewhere else in English, and no money for pull-out programs, and you’re one teacher, and you have 32 students. How do you advocate for equity in your classroom? Copying things in my spare time . . . I find myself at the end of the year just going, ‘David, read your book.’ I’m tired. (Leslie, Focus Group, May 29, 2000)” (de Oliveira & Athanases, 209). While it is not ideal, most teachers will find themselves in a classroom with 30 students, no assistance, no pull-out program, and a minimal budget. How can we help pre-service teachers prepare to differentiate their curriculum in a meaningful way to reach the maximum number of students? | **CI** |
| **Q26**  | **Q2:** “Advocacy implies being willing to speak up whenever you see things at your school level not happening that you think should be happening and not being afraid to speak up and make those ideas known. And just remember you are the one there for the kids and that’s your job. Even though people are not going to agree with you, still make your voice know.” (Athanases and de Oliveira, 2007)When thinking about this quote, our curriculum, testing policies, and ELLs, in what ways do we need to continue to advocate for our students? How do we overcome the challenges of advocacy? How do we advocate without confrontation from our colleagues and administrators? | **CI** |
| **Q27**  | **Q3:** Choose one of the following questions to answer:1. Based on examples from the readings or from a personal experience, provide an example of an incident in which a teacher should engage in an act of advocacy for ELL students in the classroom and share how the teacher should respond, and provide an example of when and how a teacher should engage in advocacy beyond the classroom. (This may be a hypothetical classroom and situation if you have not had experience in working with ELL students previously.)2. Discuss at least three key elements of teacher preparation for becoming an ELL teacher, and describe three responsibilities a teacher has concerning advocacy for ELL students. Use examples from the book and support this with an example from your personal experience. | **MIX** |