

**Curiosity** is a strong desire to know or understand something. Curiosity is the ability to ask questions like “How?” and “Why?” when presented with simple and complex phenomena.

Explore these strategies to intentionally support Curiosity as a Habit of Mind in your classroom.

## **Fact-Question-Connection Format**

When curious people learn new information, they continue to ask questions and make connections. Develop curiosity by encouraging students to share their learning from secondary resources using a Fact-Question-Connection format. They should share one fact they learned, one question they still have, and one connection from what they learned to something they already know, something they are interested in, or something another classmate said.

## **Greeting Every Kid, Every Day**

If you want students to be curious, they first have to feel that their ideas and their wonderings matter. Make an effort to greet every student every day. Look each student in the eye and welcome them to your classroom. It's a small gesture that makes a big impact.

## **Sticky Note Surprise**

When students feel like they matter, they're more likely to be engaged and curious. To make sure each student knows you value them, use your calendar. Each month, place students' names on a day in your calendar. For elementary, you may have one student per day. For secondary, you may have 3-4 per day. On that day, write a quick sticky note with a positive message for that day's students and leave it on their desks. Each student gets a note from you each month, building the rapport and connection that is required for a culture of risk-taking.

## **Relevant 6**

Students crave relevant content. When they wonder, "Why should I learn this?" it can sometimes be difficult to give a plausible answer. Add any of these 6 elements to a lesson to give it instant relevance and real-world application. \*Critical Thinking \*Communication \*Technology Connection \*Cultural Awareness \*Collaboration \*Creativity

## **Curiosity Journal**

Encourage students to think about questions they have during their day. At the beginning of class, give them 2-3 minutes to record their questions from the previous day. Periodically, ask students to share their most interesting questions. If you have time at the end of the year, have students choose a question from their journal to investigate.

## **Questions Sans Answers**

Resist the feeling that you need to answer every question your students pose. Leave some questions unanswered. Acknowledge the question as interesting, and let it be. Learning to live with unanswered questions builds a sense of intrigue in your classroom and can help activate student curiosity.

## **Wonder Wheel**

When you start a new topic, have students share their questions or wonderings about it. Display these wonderings on a wheel. As you work through the unit, revisit the wheel periodically and challenge the class to discuss it. Having questions visible in the classroom promotes curiosity and student engagement.

## **Question Wall**

Following an investigation, encourage students to voice any questions they have. Affirm the questions and compile them on a “Question Wall.” Periodically, gather and answer the questions using secondary knowledge sources. When there is time, students can design their own investigations to answer a question from the Question Wall.

## **Getting to Know You**

Establishing a safe environment in the classroom is critical for students to take educational risks. One way to practice and affirm risk-taking is to spend a few minutes in class assisting the students in getting to know each other. Regularly have students share information such as their middle names, stories about a pet, or a family tradition. Periodically, play “who in this class bingo,” providing opportunities to take a risk in a supportive environment.

## **Zoom In**

Create a sense of intrigue and mystery in your classroom to boost student engagement and curiosity. Zoom in on a portion of a larger picture (or use a site such as <https://game-solver.com/zoomed-in-answers/>). Have students describe what they see and then make guesses as to what the larger picture may be. Have students support their guesses with evidence from their observation. Zoom out a little at a time and eventually affirm the curiosity of the class as they see the full picture. You can do this all in one setting for, or you can use it as a motivator, showing the zoomed in image at the beginning of a lesson and the reveal at the end of the lesson.

## **Tinker Time**

Allow students some time to tinker with materials or ideas just for the fun of it. They can create a variety of objects out of the same materials. They can expand on ideas in a variety of ways and directions. During sharing time, encourage students to share the results of their tinkering with descriptive and precise language. Tinker Time outside of an investigation promotes risk-taking and student curiosity.

## **Messing About**

Before moving directly into an investigation, allow time for students to “mess about” with materials and supplies to begin exploring and building interest in phenomena. During this experience, students can brainstorm questions they are interested in exploring later, while also building the prerequisite knowledge and experience they need to be successful in the investigation. Messing about builds curiosity and engagement.

## **Demo Day**

Use a demonstration to begin a new topic. It can be a discrepant event which is counter-intuitive. It should be something that stimulates thinking and gets students asking questions. A demonstration can also be used for review after new concepts have been taught. See Science Demonstration Sites for websites with good ideas for science demonstrations.

## **Mystery Box**

Pick an object, for example, a banana. Observe it carefully. Place the object in the box. Have students take turns asking yes/no questions about the object. When they think they know what the object is they should ask a question to prove it. When a large number of your class believes they know the answer, count to three and have them speak the answer out loud. You can pick students to take your place as the leader.

## **3-2-1**

Help students feel connected to the content with the 3-2-1 strategy. Have students share 3 things they already know about the topic, 2 things they want to know about the topic, and 1 way the topic connects to something they care about or 1 question they still have.



# 3-2-1

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

List **3** things you already know about this topic

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List **2** things you want to know about this topic

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List **1** way this topic connects to something you care about

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