

**COMMUNICATING
HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

Asking In-Depth Questions of Reluctant Learners

THE **MARZANO COMPENDIUM** OF
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



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555 North Morton Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

888.849.0851
FAX: 866.801.1447

email: info@marzanoresearch.com
marzanoresearch.com

Visit marzanoresearch.com/compendium to access the Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies to view additional resources related to this element and others.

Director of Content and Resources: Julia A. Simms

Editorial Manager: Laurel Hecker

Production Editor: Ming Lee Newcomb

Editorial Assistants / Staff Writers: Elizabeth A. Bearden & Christopher Dodson

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INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Dr. Robert J. Marzano published *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. The framework, composed of three lesson segments, ten design questions, and forty-one elements, was based on research showing that teacher quality is one of the strongest influences on student achievement—that is, an effective teacher can positively and significantly impact student learning. As such, *The Art and Science of Teaching* sought to identify specific action steps teachers could take to improve their effectiveness.

In 2015, Dr. Marzano updated *The Art and Science of Teaching* framework to reflect new insights and feedback. The Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies is based on this updated model, presenting forty-three elements of effective teaching in ten categories. Each folio in the series addresses one element and includes strategies, examples, and reproducible resources. The Compendium and its folios are designed to help teachers increase their effectiveness by focusing on professional growth. To that end, each folio includes a scoring scale teachers can use to determine their proficiency with the element, as well as numerous strategies that teachers can use to enact the element in their classrooms. Indeed, the bulk of each folio consists of these strategies and reproducibles for implementing and monitoring them, making the Compendium a practical, actionable resource for teachers, instructional coaches, teacher mentors, and administrators.

ASKING IN-DEPTH QUESTIONS OF RELUCTANT LEARNERS

This element involves teachers asking questions of reluctant learners with the same frequency and depth as with high-expectancy students. Teachers often have higher expectations for some students than for others. Compared to high-expectancy students, students for whom teachers have lower expectations are less frequently called on to answer questions, allowed less time to answer questions, and more frequently “given” answers to questions. If a reluctant learner cannot answer a question, teachers often call on a different student instead of helping the reluctant learner answer. While these actions rarely have malicious intent, they can have a negative effect on students’ learning and self-esteem over time. This element asks teachers to make sure they are challenging all students and helping them succeed.

Monitoring This Element

There are specific student responses that indicate this element is being effectively implemented. Before trying strategies for the element in the classroom, it is important that the teacher knows how to identify the types of student behaviors that indicate the strategy is producing the desired effects. General behaviors a teacher might look for include the following.

- When asked, students say the teacher expects everyone to participate.
- When asked, students say the teacher asks difficult questions of every student.

Desired behaviors such as these are listed for each strategy in this element.

Teachers often wonder how their mastery of specific strategies relates to their mastery of the element as a whole. Successful execution of an element does not depend on the use of every strategy within that element. Rather, multiple strategies are presented within each element to provide teachers with diverse options. Each strategy can be an effective means of implementing the goals of the element. If teachers attain success using a particular strategy, it is not always necessary to master the rest of the strategies within the same element. If a particular strategy proves difficult or ineffective, however, teachers are encouraged to experiment with various strategies to find the method that works best for them.

Scoring Scale

The following scoring scale can help teachers assess and monitor their progress with this element. The scale has five levels, from Not Using (0) to Innovating (4). A teacher at the Not Using (0) level is unaware of the strategies and behaviors associated with the element or is simply not using any of the strategies. At the Beginning (1) level, a teacher attempts to address the element by trying specific strategies, but does so in an incomplete or incorrect way. When a teacher reaches the Developing (2) level, he or she implements strategies for the element correctly and completely, but does not monitor its effects. At the Applying (3) level, a teacher implements strategies for the element and monitors their effectiveness with his or her students. Finally, a teacher at the Innovating (4) level is fluent with strategies for the element and can adapt them to unique student needs and situations, creating new strategies for the element as necessary.

Scale for Asking In-Depth Questions of Reluctant Learners

4 Innovating	3 Applying	2 Developing	1 Beginning	0 Not Using
I adapt behaviors and create new strategies for unique student needs and situations.	I ask questions of reluctant learners with the same frequency and depth as with high-expectancy students, and I monitor the quality of participation of reluctant learners.	I ask questions of reluctant learners with the same frequency and depth as with high-expectancy students, but I do not monitor the effect on students.	I use the strategies and behaviors associated with this element incorrectly or with parts missing.	I am unaware of strategies and behaviors associated with this element.

The following examples describe what each level of the scale might look like in the classroom.

Not Using (0): A teacher avoids asking in-depth questions of reluctant learners.

Beginning (1): A teacher tries to make sure she calls on all of her students, even the reluctant learners. However, she does not do this consistently and often finds herself simply asking another student when the first person she calls on doesn't give the right answer.

Developing (2): A teacher asks in-depth questions of reluctant learners with the same frequency as he does other students. He intentionally uses follow-up questions and wait time to make sure they have a chance to answer, but he hasn't tried to figure out if these techniques are having the desired effect.

Applying (3): A teacher uses effective questioning techniques to ask in-depth questions of reluctant learners. He also monitors their responses and is able to see that their confidence is increasing over time and they are more likely to give complete answers with less prompting.

Innovating (4): A teacher is utilizing various strategies and monitoring their effects. She sees success with most of her reluctant learners by using encouragement and follow-up questions, but one student is still struggling. To help this student succeed, the teacher implements extra scaffolding when asking for evidence and support.

STRATEGIES

Each of the following strategies describes specific actions that teachers can take to enact this element in their classrooms. Strategies can be used individually or in combination with each other. Each strategy includes a description, a list of teacher actions, a list of desired student responses, and suggestions for adapting the strategy to provide extra support or extensions. Extra support and extensions relate directly to the Innovating (4) level of the scale. Extra support involves steps teachers can take to ensure they are implementing the strategy effectively for all students, including English learners, special education students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and reluctant learners. Extensions are ways that teachers can adapt the strategy for advanced students. In addition, some strategies include technology tips that detail ways teachers can use classroom technology to implement or enhance the strategy. Finally, each strategy includes further information, practical examples, or a reproducible designed to aid teachers' implementation of the strategy.

Question Levels

The teacher asks questions that require students to analyze information, evaluate conclusions, or make inferences. For example, a teacher might present a short reading and then ask students to determine whether the author has given sufficient evidence for the conclusion. These types of questions are more complex than questions that test recognition or recall of correct answers. The teacher should ensure that he or she frequently asks reluctant learners complex questions, even if these students may need help or encouragement to respond.

Teacher Actions

- Creating complex questions that require students to analyze information, evaluate conclusions, or make inferences
- Asking reluctant learners to answer complex questions frequently
- Giving reluctant learners encouragement and helping them answer complex questions

Desired Student Responses

- Analyzing information, evaluating conclusions, or making inferences in response to teacher questions
- Trying to answer complex questions, even if they are unsure of the answers
- Explaining their answers to questions

Extra Support

- Breaking complex questions into small parts and asking a different student to answer each part

Extension

- Asking one student to summarize his or her peers' answers to different parts of a question and synthesize them into one answer to the whole question

Questioning Sequences

An effective way to ensure that students are exposed to in-depth questions is to use *questioning sequences* rather than individual questions. Questioning sequences are a more reliable method for eliciting higher-order thinking from students than individual questions. A questioning sequence is a series of questions that lead from basic information to complex and rigorous thinking. Questioning sequences have four phases: (1) detail questions, (2) category questions, (3) elaboration questions, and (4) evidence questions. The detail phase asks students to recall discrete facts and information as a way of activating their existing knowledge about a topic. Types of details about a topic include people, objects, places, events, human constructs, and so on. The category phase focuses the sequence on a particular category of content and asks students to create connections by identifying examples within the category, coming up with general characteristics of the category, and making comparisons within and across categories. The elaboration phase asks students to make a claim about the characteristics they identified in the category phase by explaining reasons, describing effects, and making predictions. The evidence phase asks students to support their claims by identifying sources, explaining reasoning, qualifying conclusions, finding errors in reasoning, and examining elaborations from various perspectives.

Questioning sequences are flexible in that they can be used in a brief period of time, like one lesson or part of a lesson, or over a longer span of several lessons. In either case, the teacher uses scaffolding and support to guide students through the sequence toward complex thinking about the topic.

Response Opportunities

The teacher reinforces high expectations for all students by giving them equal response opportunities. That is, no student should have significantly more or fewer opportunities to answer a question than any other student. There are many ways to give opportunities to respond and to increase overall response rates; this strategy focuses on equitable distribution of those opportunities.

Teacher Actions

- Asking reluctant learners to answer questions with the same frequency used for high-expectancy students
- Using strategies for managing response rates

Desired Student Responses

- Answering questions regularly, regardless of personal expectations
- Mentally preparing answers to all teacher questions
- Describing the teacher as someone who expects everyone to participate

Extra Support

- Letting students know that you are going to call on everyone equally, including students who don't raise their hands
- Creating procedures that help students collect their thoughts before being called on

Extension

- Creating procedures that allow students who typically volunteer answers to express their answers even when they are not called on

Technology Tips

- Ask for responses via polling technology to allow all students to answer questions in a low-risk manner.
- Use random name generators to give all students an equal chance of being called upon.

Response Strategies

Teachers can use group and individual response strategies to provide students with opportunities to respond.

Group Response Strategies

- **Near partners:** Students stand up and walk at least seven steps from their seat to find a partner. Partners take turns sharing their responses.
- **Table groups:** Students work with others at their table or desk group to create or share responses.
- **Give one, get one:** Students write down their response, then find a partner and take turns sharing their answers.
- **Jigsaw:** Students form groups and assign numbers within the groups. Then, the student numbered 1 in each group meets with the 1s from all the other groups, 2s meet with 2s, and so on. Each number group learns a different piece of the content. Finally, students go back to their original groups and share what they learned in their number groups.
- **Peer instruction:** Pose a question and have students consider the answer individually. Then, students form groups and each member tries to convince the rest that his or her answer is correct. See how many students have changed their minds, then discuss the correct answer as a class.
- **Vote with your feet:** Students move to different locations depending on which answer they choose. Groups discuss their answers and choose a spokesperson to share with the rest of the class.

Individual Response Strategies

- **Random names:** Write each student's name on a slip of paper, popsicle stick, or other item. When asking a question of the class, draw a name. That student answers the question. Return the student's name to the cup so that students' chances of being called on are always equal.
- **On your own:** Students think of an answer individually and write it down.
- **Response chaining:** Call on a student to answer a question. Select a second student to elaborate on or respond to the first's answer. Continue the chain as long as needed.
- **Whip around the room:** Each student quickly shares an answer or a piece of information with the class.
- **Exit slips:** Students write down an answer and turn it in before leaving class.

Follow-Up Questioning

If a student is having trouble answering a question, the teacher restates the question, encourages collaboration, or gives hints and cues. For example, if the teacher asks a question about the traits of a character from a story and a student isn't sure of the answer, the teacher might ask the student to think about it in terms of comparing that character to another. Teachers can also let the student opt out temporarily. If the teacher does allow the student to opt out, it is important to follow up with the student using a different question or in a one-on-one conversation at a later time.

Teacher Actions

- Restating a question if a student is having trouble answering
- Asking students to collaborate if a student is having trouble answering a question
- Giving a student hints or cues if he or she is having trouble answering a question
- Letting a student opt out temporarily if he or she is having trouble answering a question

Desired Student Responses

- Answering questions correctly in response to restatement of the question, collaboration, or teacher hints and cues
- Answering questions correctly at a later time if they opt out temporarily

Extra Support

- Using pictures or other media when giving hints or cues to students

Extension

- Asking students to explain how their thinking about a question changed because of the teacher's follow-up questioning

Evidence and Support for Student Answers

To reinforce high expectations for all students, the teacher requires similar levels of evidence and support for answers from every student. If a student makes a claim, the teacher asks him or her to provide grounds and backing for that claim, regardless of whether or not the student is typically a reluctant learner. If a student must make inferences in order to answer a question, the teacher asks the student to explain these inferences, even if the teacher has generally low expectations of the student.

Teacher Actions

- Asking all students to give evidence and support for their answers
- Asking all students to provide grounds and backing for their claims
- Asking all students to explain inferences they made to answer a question

Desired Student Responses

- Giving evidence and support for answers regardless of their personal expectations
- Providing grounds and backing for claims regardless of their personal expectations
- Explaining inferences regardless of their personal expectations

Extra Support

- Providing possible answers when asking students to supply evidence or support

Extension

- Asking students to explain how their thinking about a question changed because they had to provide evidence and support for their answer

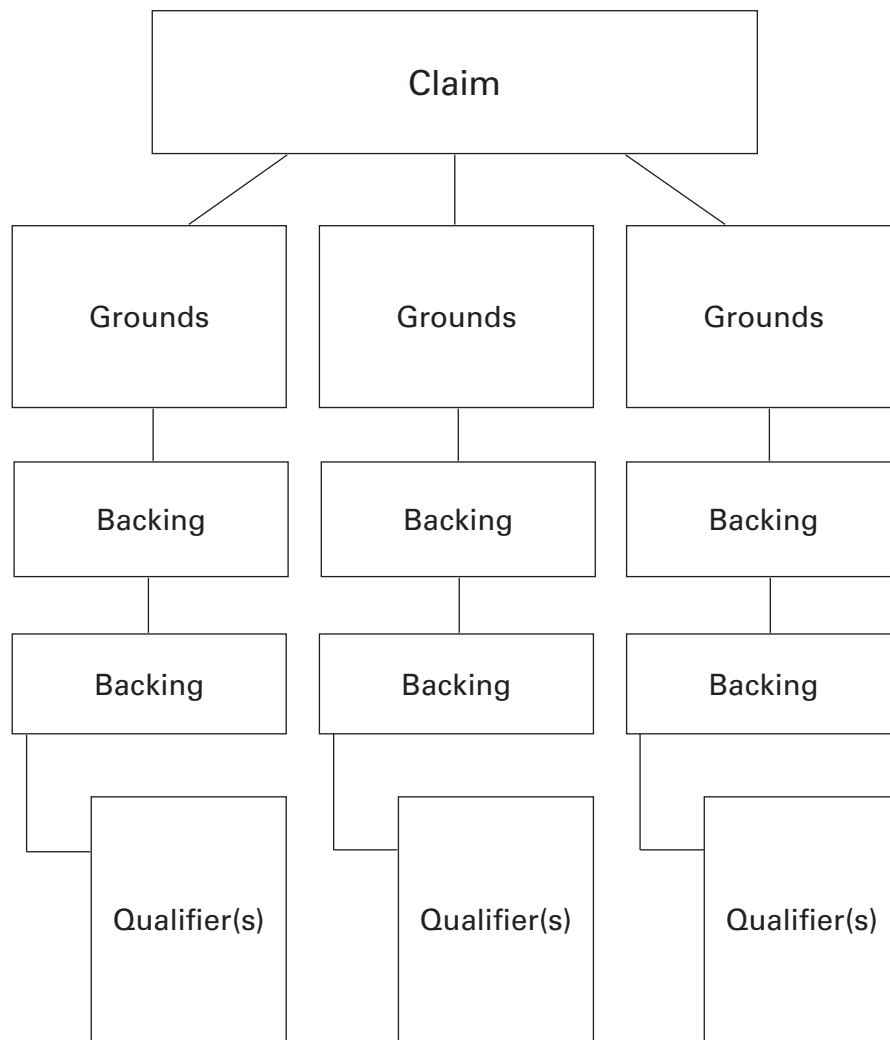
Technology Tips

- Use random name generators to select students from whom to request more evidence and support.

Identifying Sufficient and Relevant Evidence

In terms of evidence, *sufficiency* refers to there being enough evidence to reasonably support the claim. For example, one temperature reading on one day in one city is probably not enough evidence to support a larger claim about the climate of the state. *Relevance* has to do with whether the evidence is truly related to the claim. For example, facts about the population of a state are not relevant to claims about the climate.

One way to help students concretely determine the relevance and sufficiency of their evidence is to diagram their argument.



As shown, an argument has three parts: claim, grounds, and backing. The claim is the opinion or conclusion that the argument seeks to defend. Grounds are reasons for the claim. Backing is evidence (often facts and data) that supports the grounds. Diagramming an argument in this manner forces students to make explicit connections and enables them to see where the argument is well supported and where it is not.

Encouragement

To encourage participation from all members of the class, the teacher attributes ideas and comments to those who offered them. The teacher also thanks each student who asks a question or provides an answer, even if the answer is incorrect. If a student does answer incorrectly, the teacher acknowledges any correct portions of the response and then explains how the incorrect portion could be altered to make it correct. Alternatively, the teacher states the question that the incorrect response would have answered.

Teacher Actions

- Attributing ideas and comments to the student who offered them
- Thanking students when they ask or answer questions (even if incorrectly)
- Acknowledging any correct portions of student responses
- Explaining how incorrect responses can be altered to make them correct
- Identifying the question that an incorrect response answered

Desired Student Responses

- Describing the teacher as someone who appreciates students' answers
- Explaining which parts of their answers were correct and incorrect
- Revising answers to be fully correct

Extra Support

- Rephrasing the language used in a student's incorrect response to create a correct response
- After rephrasing the incorrect answer, asking the student who gave the incorrect answer to repeat the correct answer

Extension

- Asking students to rephrase a peer's incorrect answer to be correct
- Asking students to identify parts of a peer's answer that were correct or incorrect

Encouragement Phrases and Sentence Stems

Teachers can use phrases and sentence stems such as the following to encourage all students to participate.

- Thank you for your contribution, [student name].
- [Student name], thanks for asking that question.
- As [student name] pointed out earlier, _____ [reference or explain student's earlier contribution].
- I appreciate your response, but that's not quite what I was looking for. [Call on another student.]
- I can tell you've been thinking hard about this; can I give you a slightly different perspective? [Explain correct response.]
- Might it instead be that _____ [explain correct response]?
- You said _____ [paraphrase correct parts of response]. That's exactly right. However, let's talk more about _____ [paraphrase incorrect parts].
- I like the way you expressed _____ [paraphrase correct parts of response], but I'd like to tweak the other part of your answer. [Paraphrase incorrect parts and explain correct response.]
- If I had asked _____ [question that the incorrect response would have answered], that would be absolutely correct. But let's try to answer _____ [repeat question]. [Let student retry or call on another student.]

Wait Time

The teacher provides appropriate wait time after asking a question and appropriate pause time between student answers to allow all students adequate time to process information and formulate responses. To use wait time, a teacher would pose a question, wait several seconds depending on the complexity of the question, and then call on a student to respond. Wait time also applies when a student pauses to collect his or her thoughts while speaking and between individual answers when multiple students are responding.

Teacher Actions

- Pausing for at least three seconds after asking a question
- Prompting students to wait at least three seconds if a student pauses while answering a question and between student answers
- Prompting students to think about their answers during wait time

Desired Student Responses

- Waiting at least three seconds if a peer pauses while answering a question
- Waiting at least three seconds between peers' answers
- Thinking about their answers during wait time

Extra Support

- Using gestures to remind students of wait time, such as counting on one's fingers to signal the time

Extension

- Asking students who know the answer to a question right away to use wait time to think of support for their answer or examine their initial answer for errors

Technology Tips

- Polling technologies allow students to think about the question and send in responses at their own pace.

Wait Time

Teachers often feel awkward standing in silence for a few seconds when giving wait time, especially if they are new to the strategy. The following list gives examples of what a teacher might do to occupy him- or herself during wait time and reduce awkwardness.

- Count the number of seconds
- Make eye contact with students around the room
- Move from one place in the room to another
- Take several deep breaths
- Scan the classroom for student engagement
- Think of three good answers to the question
- Think of a cue or hint to give if a student answers incorrectly

Tracking Responses

The teacher ensures that all students have fairly equal opportunities to respond by calling on any student instead of only selecting those who raise their hands. The teacher also keeps track of which students have answered or been asked questions, perhaps by placing a checkmark on his or her class chart next to their names. To focus on specific students, the teacher circles those students' names on a list or seating chart and then tracks how often they ask or respond to questions throughout a class period.

Teacher Actions

- Calling on students randomly (rather than on students who raise their hands)
- Tracking which students have already answered or been asked questions
- Focusing on specific students to ensure they are asked to respond to questions

Desired Student Responses

- Answering teacher questions regularly
- Mentally preparing answers for all teacher questions
- Describing the teacher as someone who makes sure that everyone answers questions

Extra Support

- Letting students know that you want them to answer more questions and are planning to start calling on them more often
- Checking in with students to see how they feel about being called on to answer questions more often

Extension

- Creating structures that allow students who typically volunteer many responses to continue to express their responses, even though they are being called on less often

Avoiding Inappropriate Reactions

The teacher encourages reluctant learners to answer questions and share their thoughts by avoiding inappropriate negative reactions to student responses. The teacher should avoid any of the following responses.

- Telling students they should have known the answer to a question
- Ignoring a student's response
- Making subjective comments about incorrect answers
- Allowing negative comments from other students

Teacher Actions

- Never telling a student they should have known the answer to a question
- Never ignoring a student's response to a question
- Never making subjective comments about students' incorrect answers
- Never allowing other students to make negative comments about answers to questions

Desired Student Responses

- Acting respectfully toward peers who answer questions incorrectly
- Attempting to answer questions even if they are unsure of the answer
- Describing the teacher as someone who will help students find the right answer

Extra Support

- Generating and displaying a list of ways students should not react to others' answers as well as ways to help and encourage fellow students

Extension

- Asking students to help create consequences for appropriate and inappropriate reactions to student answers

Alternative Responses

Instead of telling students they should have known the answer to a question, teachers can:

- Prompt them to try again by saying, "I'd like to give you a little more time to think about that."
- Remind them that they've learned the content by saying, "Think back to [day, time, or lesson when content was covered]. Remember when we talked about [topic]?"
- Direct them to the answer by saying, "Look at [page or section of resource]. Where it says [content related to question], what do you think that means?"

Asking In-Depth Questions of Reluctant Learners

Instead of ignoring students' responses, teachers can:

- Make eye contact
- Smile
- Thank them for their contributions
- Explain why the answer is incorrect

Instead of making subjective comments about incorrect answers, teachers can:

- Parse answers into correct and incorrect parts
- Make comments about students' effort
- Thank students for their contributions
- State the question an incorrect response would have answered
- Give students another chance by saying, "I must have miscommunicated what I was asking. I meant to say, [rephrase question]."

Instead of allowing negative comments from other students, teachers can:

- Establish classroom expectations or norms around respect and politeness
- Clearly and firmly convey that negative comments are unacceptable
- Enforce consequences for negative comments

REPRODUCIBLES

Teachers can use the following reproducibles to monitor their implementation of this element. The reproducible titled *Tracking Progress Over Time* helps teachers set goals related to their proficiency with this element and track their progress toward these goals over the course of a unit, semester, or year. *Tracking Teacher Actions* and *Tracking Student Responses* allow observers in classrooms to monitor specific teacher and student behavior related to this element. Teachers themselves can also use the *Tracking Student Responses* reproducible to document instances of student behaviors during class. The *Strategy Reflection Log* provides teachers a space to write down their thoughts and reflect on the implementation process for specific strategies related to this element. Finally, this section provides both a student survey and a teacher survey, the results of which provide feedback about teachers' proficiency with this element.

Tracking Progress Over Time

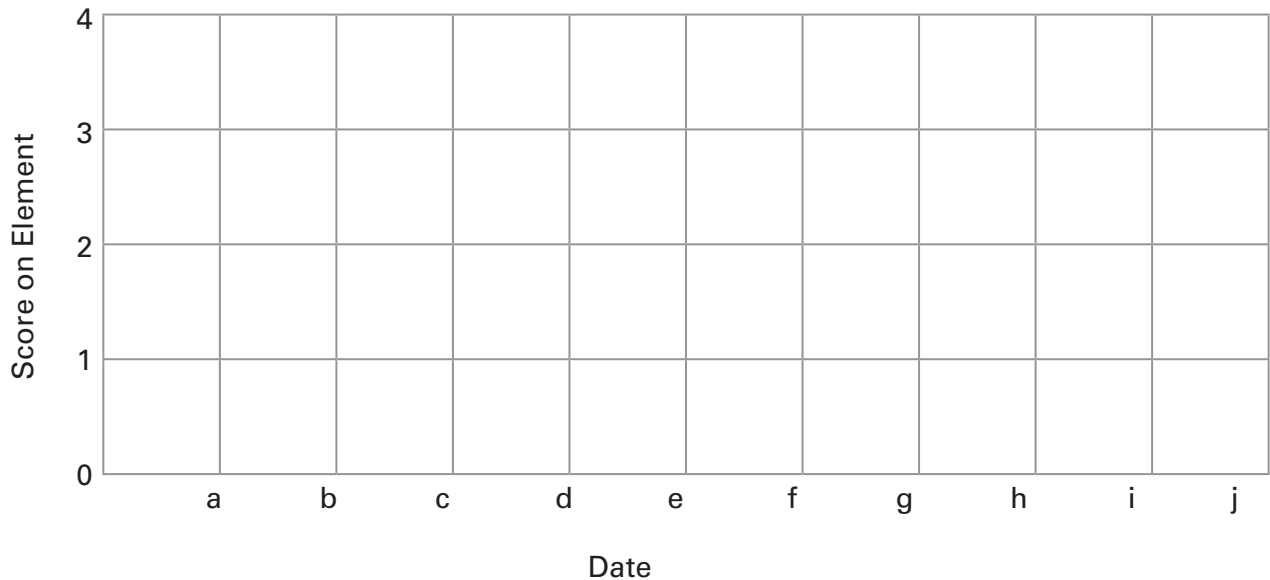
Use this worksheet to set a goal for your use of this element, make a plan for increasing your mastery, and chart your progress toward your goal.

Element: _____

Initial Score: _____

Goal Score: _____ by _____ (date)

Specific things I am going to do to improve: _____



a. _____

f. _____

b. _____

g. _____

c. _____

h. _____

d. _____

i. _____

e. _____

j. _____

Tracking Teacher Actions

During an observation, the observer can use this form to record the teacher's usage of strategies related to the element of asking in-depth questions of reluctant learners.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Check Strategies You Intend to Use	Strategies	Description of What Was Observed
	Question Levels	
	Response Opportunities	
	Follow-Up Questioning	
	Evidence and Support for Student Answers	
	Encouragement	
	Wait Time	
	Tracking Responses	
	Avoiding Inappropriate Reactions	
	Other:	
	Other:	

Tracking Student Responses

A teacher or observer can use this worksheet to record the behavior of reluctant learners in response to questions to inform planning and implementation of strategies associated with asking in-depth questions of reluctant learners. Any item followed by an asterisk is an example of undesirable behavior related to the element; the teacher should look for a decrease in the number of instances of these items.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Behavior	Number of Instances
Volunteering responses	
Trying to answer, even when unsure	
Preparing answers during wait time	
Providing evidence and support	
Answering questions later after initially opting out	
Asking questions	
Refusing to answer questions*	
Avoiding eye contact when questions are posed*	
Other:	
Other:	

Student Survey for Asking In-Depth Questions of Reluctant Learners

1. My teacher expects me to answer difficult questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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2. The teacher of this class encourages me to do my best.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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3. My teacher asks difficult questions of all students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

4. My teacher expects everyone to participate in class discussions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

5. My teacher expects everyone to answer difficult questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------------------	-------	----------------

6. My teacher always answers students' questions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Teacher Survey for Asking In-Depth Questions of Reluctant Learners

1. I pose challenging questions to reluctant learners.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

2. I track responses to make sure I ask in-depth questions of all students at the same rate.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

3. I answer reluctant learners' questions at the same rate as I do other students'.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

4. I encourage all students to respond to in-depth questions.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

5. My students know that I expect everyone to participate.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

6. My students describe me as someone who asks difficult questions of everyone.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know