**Week of March 14, 2011**

**Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning**

**Description:**

*Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning* is a FACT in which students question each other about the content they are learning using higher-order, open-ended question stems. The questions are used to promote thinking and generate focused discussions in small groups.

**How this FACT Promotes Student Learning:**

When students ask questions of each other, they activate their own thinking, elicit ideas from others, and promote shared learning within their group. Asking higher-order questions in a mutually supportive peer environment allows students to articulate their thoughts and exchange ideas in ways that differ from their interactions with the teacher. The scaffolded approach to asking questions that they are interested in seeking answers to help them become better questioners. *Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning* supports metacognition as students must think about what they already know or need to know in order to frame their questions.

**How this FACT Informs Instruction:**

Questioning is an essential strategy for monitoring student understanding. Typically, questions are asked by the teacher, and responses are used to inform instruction. In this FACT, the students ask the questions, which provide an additional layer of formative assessment information by allowing the teacher to circulate among groups and note the kinds of questions students ask each other and how they respond. Raising a question is an indication of a student’s need to understand a concept better. Teachers can carefully listen to the questions asked to identify areas to target in their instruction as well as glean information on students’ understanding by listening to their responses to the questions. As teachers circulate among the groups, they can provide feedback on students’ responses, probe further, or redirect to focus on a particular insight, particularly when students in a group are having difficulty with a response or the potential for a misconception arises.

**Design and Administration:**

This FACT is typically used after students have had an opportunity to learn about the concepts in question, drawing on their conceptual understanding developed through instruction. The teacher provides students with a prompt directly related to the lessons or sequence of lessons the questions will target and gives them a few minutes to formulate questions using a list of question stems. For example, the teacher might say, *“For the past few days we have been learning about rocks and the different processes that formed them. Think about what you have learned. Write down two or three questions you would like to ask your classmates that will help you improve your understanding of rocks and rock formations. Use the question stems on the list to make up your questions.”*

Students then form small groups of three or four and take turns asking their questions and discussing their answers. Each small group notes any questions they have difficulty with. The teacher can choose to help individual groups work through the difficult questions, note them for whole-class discussion, or use them to select additional learning opportunities to solidify students’ understanding.

**General Implementation Attributes:**

Ease of Use: Medium Time Demand: Medium Cognitive Demand: Medium/High

**Modifications:**

This FACT can also be used after an inquiry-based investigation or homework assignment. Questions can also be used later for a summative assessment.

**Caveats:**

The task of developing good questions is a complex process for teachers, let alone students. When students are first introduced to this FACT, it is important to give them feedback on the questions they develop to ensure they can be answered by students based on the learning experiences provided in class.

**Disciplines this FACT can be used in:**

This FACT can be used in math, science, social studies, language arts, foreign language, health, and performing arts.

***Sample Question Stems for Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning:***

* *What causes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *How do we know that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *Why does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ happen when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *What is the evidence that supports \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *What if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *How does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ affect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *What is the difference between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *How are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ similar?*
* *What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *What are the implications of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *Why is it important to know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *How does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ relate to everyday life?*
* *How did people historically think about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*
* *How does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ help us understand \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?*

***Keeley, Paige. (2008) Science Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction, and Learning. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press***