Behaviors Associated with Effective Questioning

1. Ask focused, clearly-worded questions that give students a clear indication of expectations for responding.
2. Speak clearly and loudly so questions can be heard everywhere in the classroom.
3. Use varied and dynamic vocal patterns.
4. Covey to students a genuine interest in hearing their responses.
5. Allow 5-8 seconds wait time for a response before restating the question or asking another student.
6. Make eye contact with students when asking questions and do not talk over students’ heads, directly to the blackboard, or to just one individual.
7. Call on students by name when eliciting responses from specific individuals.
8. Politely ask students to restate inaudible responses more loudly so the entire class can hear.
9. Do not remain primarily in one place or engage in one-on-one questioning.
10. Call on students in an unpredictable sequence.
11. Frequently ask a question before naming the respondent to encourage all students to dominate the class.
12. Do not allow a minority number of students or more confident and/or impulsive student to dominate the class.
13. Call on students who normally do not respond.
14. Be egalitarian in questioning and attempt to call on as many students as possible.
15. Use a variety of strategies to allow different kinds of learners a chance to answer comfortably;
   a. ask a question and let a student call out answers;
   b. choose one student to answer after asking a question;
   c. let students raise their hands if they have an answer and then choose volunteers.
16. Do not limit more challenging and stimulating questions to students perceived as having higher ability or knowledge.
17. Probe for correct responses to questions rather than give the correct answer.
18. Ask students to justify and further explain responses.
19. Encourage students to answer each others’ questions.
20. Allow time to consider different points of view and multiple responses.
21. Do not overtly or covertly invalidate students’ responses by unnecessarily changing their meaning or wording.
22. Create a safe and supportive atmosphere for students’ questions by answering immediately and politely.
23. Do not make students feel potentially assailed, threatened, and passive by asking too many questions.
24. Make regular comprehension checks in the form of specific questions (not “Is that clear?” or “Does everyone understand?”); try one-minute papers to check for comprehension.
25. Use “think-pair-share” in which students think of an answer, pair with another student, and share their answers before responding to the instructor.