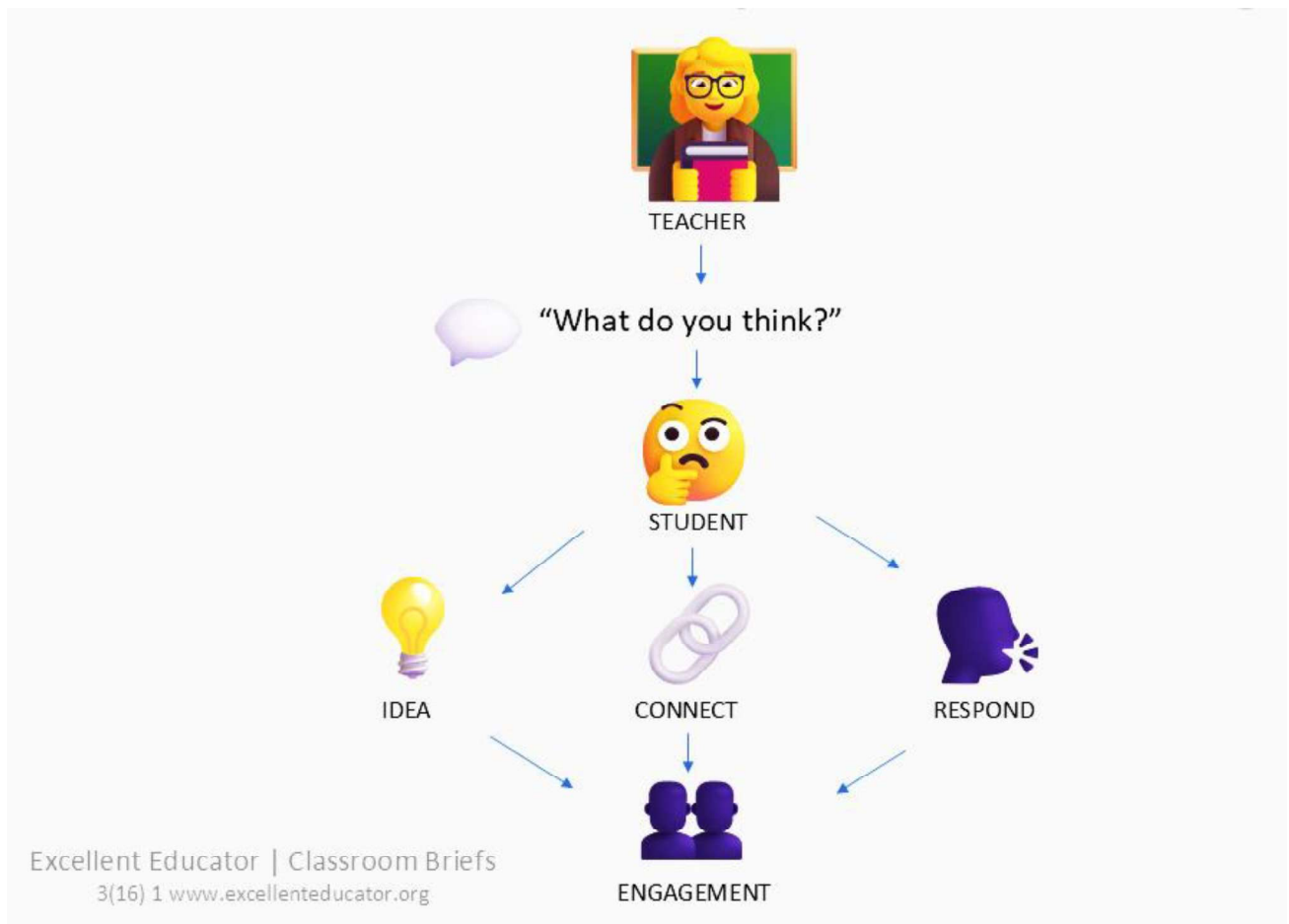


The Question That Keeps Students Thinking

Questions can do more than check an answer.

Excellent Educator, 3(16), 1-2, 2026



💡 Visual Insight

A classroom question can either close a conversation—or open one.

Research in Brief

Classroom questions are not all used in the same way. Research examining 755 tag questions in classroom and workshop teaching found that their function changed according to the teaching context. In whole-class teaching, many questions functioned more like statements, helping teachers focus students' attention, encourage reflection or seek acknowledgement. In practical workshop settings, teachers used more question-like forms to seek information from students and involve them in problem-solving.

The important point for teachers is that questioning is part of classroom interaction, not simply assessment. A question can make students pause, connect an idea with prior knowledge, acknowledge understanding or contribute their own knowledge.

✓ Try Tomorrow

- Replace one factual question with a question that invites thinking.
- Ask students to connect the new idea with something they already know.
- Use questions during explanations—not only at the end.

★ One Key Takeaway

Good questioning does not merely find out what students know; it can help keep them intellectually involved in the lesson.

Keywords

Classroom questioning, classroom discourse, student engagement, teacher talk, participation, classroom interaction

Original Research

Parkinson, J., & Whitty, L. *The role of tag questions in classroom discourse in promoting student engagement. Classroom Discourse.*