

Responding To Children’s Questions To Promote Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

Example: Responses to a child’s question “Why do we have shadows?”

Level of Response	Example of Teacher’s Response
<u>Level 1:</u> Reject the question	“Don’t ask me that now, we are going inside, please line up!”
<u>Level 2:</u> Restate or almost restate the question as a response	“Because everyone has a shadow.”
<u>Level 3:</u> Admit ignorance OR present information	“I don’t know, but that is a good question.” OR “Remember, people are opaque so light cannot travel through them.”
<u>Level 4:</u> Voice encouragement to seek response through authority	“Let’s look that up on the internet.” “Let see if we have a book that might help us find the answer.”
<u>Level 5:</u> Encourage brainstorming*, or consideration of alternative explanations	“Why do you think shadows are shorter at midday than in the morning or afternoon?” <i>*When brainstorming, all ideas and suggestions are valued. Later, you will revisit and determine which ones to keep and which ones to toss out.</i>
<u>Level 6:</u> Encourage consideration of alternative explanations and a means for evaluating	“How might we find out why shadows are shorter at midday than in the morning or afternoon?”
<u>Level 7:</u> Encourage consideration of alternative explanations plus a means of evaluating them, and follow through on evaluations	“Let’s go outdoors and find out if shadows are shorter at midday. We can trace our shadows on the playground over the next three days, when we arrive at school in the morning, again at lunch, and after rest time. Then we can look at our data to see if this is true!”

The levels of responding to children’s thinking are adapted from Thomas, A. & Thorne, G. (2009). How to Increase Higher Order Thinking. Accessed online 2/9/2010 at <http://www.readingrockets.org/articles/34655?theme=print>