

## Robert Marzano on Four Levels of Classroom Questioning

An interesting article summary that lines up fairly well with our work with Jon Saphier. It will be helpful to share this in discussions with teachers whom you are bringing along in the “making thinking visible” work.

In this *Educational Leadership* article, author/researcher Robert Marzano says there are four ways to question students. “Planning a lesson that uses all four of these levels can transform classroom questions into analytic tasks that require students to think at increasingly complex levels,” he says.

- *Level 1: Details* – Recalling or recognizing specific information – for example, “Describe some important features of the Rocky Mountains.”
- *Level 2: Characteristics* – Describing, comparing, or contrasting the qualities of a category – for example, “What are some differences between older mountain ranges like the Rocky Mountains and newer mountain ranges like the Olympic Mountains in Washington State?” Questions at Levels 1 and 2 are usually asked of the whole class, giving all students a chance to respond.
- *Level 3: Elaborations* – Explaining the characteristics of a category – for example, “Tell why older mountain ranges are less jagged” or “What effect does major loss of life in a single battle like Gettysburg have on ending or prolonging a war?” Level 3 questions are best tackled by students in groups and then discussed with the whole class.
- *Level 4: Evidence* – Providing support or evidence for elaborations, including premises, rules, generalizations, or exceptions that students’ conclusions don’t explain – for example, “What sources support your conclusions about why older mountain ranges are less jagged?” This level of question usually requires work outside the classroom and may extend over several lessons.

“Asking Questions – At Four Different Levels” by Robert Marzano in *Educational Leadership*, February 2013 (Vol. 70, #5, p. 76-77)