

1. Design for Intellectual Curiosity

Support teachers to:

- Open units with authentic provocations (primary sources, dilemmas, artifacts, or “mystery facts”)
- Use inquiry stems that prompt thinking (“What do you notice? What do you wonder? What might explain this?”)
- Replace “do you know?” questions with “how might we think about...?”



Implementation Tip: Provide banks of curiosity-based prompts that teachers can embed in daily questioning.

2. Make Engagement Visible and Shared

Encourage teachers to:

- Incorporate quick-turn active response routines (turn-and-talk, chalk talk, stand-vote-share, write-then-trade)
- Mix modalities intentionally (oral, tactile, visual, collaborative, reflective)
- Track who is engaging and whose participation patterns change over time



Implementation Tip: During observations, script student talk time vs. teacher talk time and reflect on ratios with staff.

3. Invite Creativity as a Path to Understanding (Not Decoration)

Support teachers to:

- Ask students to represent ideas in unconventional forms (podcast, diagram, metaphor, sketchnote, debate, prototype)
- Build in “revision rounds” where students improve a creative attempt using feedback or new learning
- Teach mini-lessons on creative thinking moves (combine, adapt, reframe, exaggerate, reverse)



Implementation Tip: Choose one upcoming lesson and redesign a portion to *require* a creative representation of thinking rather than offer it as optional enrichment.

4. Normalize and Celebrate Healthy Risk-Taking

Students pursue the unknown when they sense psychological safety. Support teachers to:

- Model thinking aloud through uncertainty and mistakes
- Publicly label risk acts (“That was a bold revision choice—let’s look at what we can learn from it”)
- Use grading practices that reward revision, iteration, and evidence of trying strategies



Implementation Tip: Facilitate PLC conversations using student work that shows *learning through attempt* rather than only polished outcomes.

5. Embed Choice that Requires Thinking (Not Just Preference)

Students who see abilities as something they can develop are more resilient. Guide lesson planning that:

- Offers decision points with cognitive consequence (“choose your method/claim/representation and justify it”)
- Invites multiple pathways to demonstrate understanding
- Builds in student-designed questions and investigations



Implementation Tip: Host a “choice audit” reviewing current tasks to ensure they generate thinking—not just variety.

6. Design Structures for Safe Challenge

Encourage routines that:

- Set shared norms for critique and dissent
- Use protocols that separate idea from identity
- Frame mistakes as data that moves the learning forward



Implementation Tip: Co-construct and post class language for productively responding to error (e.g., “let’s rewind,” “what changed your mind?” “try a second attempt”).

Reflection Questions for Teachers

Use these prompts in coaching, PLCs, or self-reflection:

- Where in this week’s lessons did students visibly wonder about something, not just answer it?
- When did students take an intellectual risk—and how did you respond in the moment?
- Who consistently “plays it safe” in your room? What barrier might be holding them back?
- What redesign would make tomorrow’s lesson more hospitable to risk, not just correct performance?