

Anxiety & Communication



Who we are . . .

The background is a solid teal color. On the right side, there are several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent pie chart with three segments, and several smaller, semi-transparent pie charts of varying sizes scattered around it. At the bottom right, there is a bar chart with four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right.

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Purpose: Increase understanding of anxiety and the role it plays in student communication.

Outcome: Learn strategies to reduce student anxiety and increase student communication.



Be Brave

What are you afraid of . . .

What helps or what is need for you to be comfortable, step out of your comfort zone
or to tackle a fear?

Biology of Fear

- **Amygdala:** processes fight or flight response before the “thinking brain” is aware of anything
- **Hippocampus:** memory center that communicates with the amygdala
 - Bad memories are coded much stronger than good.
 - A “match” to these bad memories results in the amygdala initiating the fight or flight response.

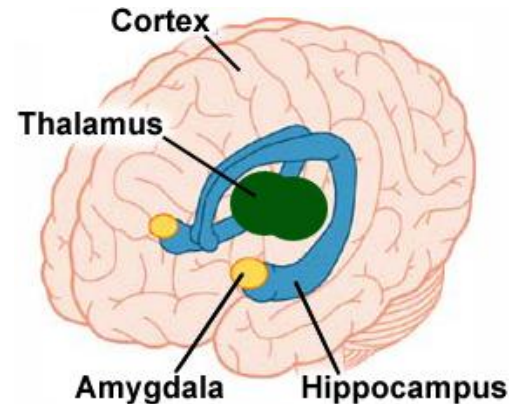
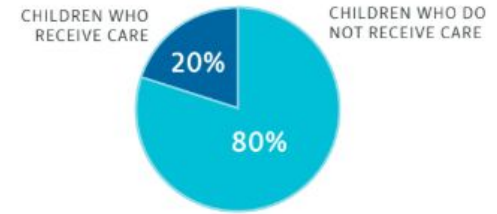


image courtesy of
<http://knowingneurons.com>

Anxiety

PREVALENCE

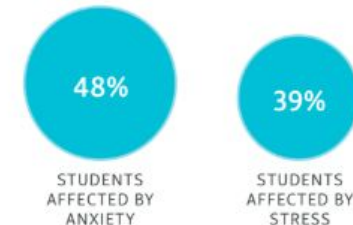
- At some point, anxiety affects 30% of children and adolescents, yet 80% never get help.



- Anxiety disorders are mild for 48%, moderate for 37% and severe for 15%.

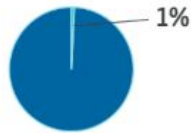


- In college students seeking mental health services, anxiety is the most frequent concern (48%), followed by stress (39%).



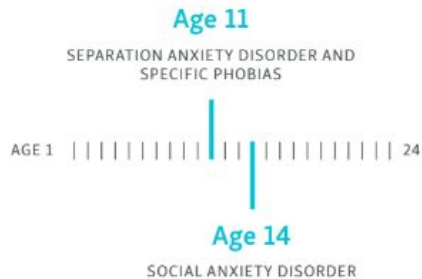
LACK OF RECOGNITION

- As little as 1% of youth with anxiety seek treatment in the year their symptoms begin, and most anxiety symptoms go untreated for years.
- Anxiety is often mistaken for another disorder, resulting in ineffective treatment.



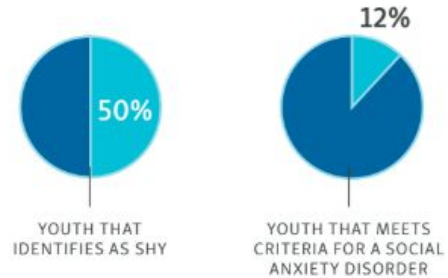
DEVELOPMENT

- Average age of onset:



RISKS

- 50% of teens either consider themselves “shy” or are described as shy by their parents, but only 12% of those shy adolescents meet criteria for social anxiety disorder.



- Anxiety disorders are linked to a two-fold increase in risk for substance use disorder.



- When adolescents have depression alongside social anxiety, it is strongly associated with more suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and more depressive symptoms.

Physiology of anxiety

Sympathetic nervous system =
Fight, Flight, Freeze

- Racing heart
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Temperature change
- Lightheadedness
- Disoriented
- Out of breath
- Agitated
- Stomachache
- Trembling

Parasympathetic nervous system =
Rest and Digest - relax

- Restores body to state of calm
- Decrease heart rate
- Muscles relax

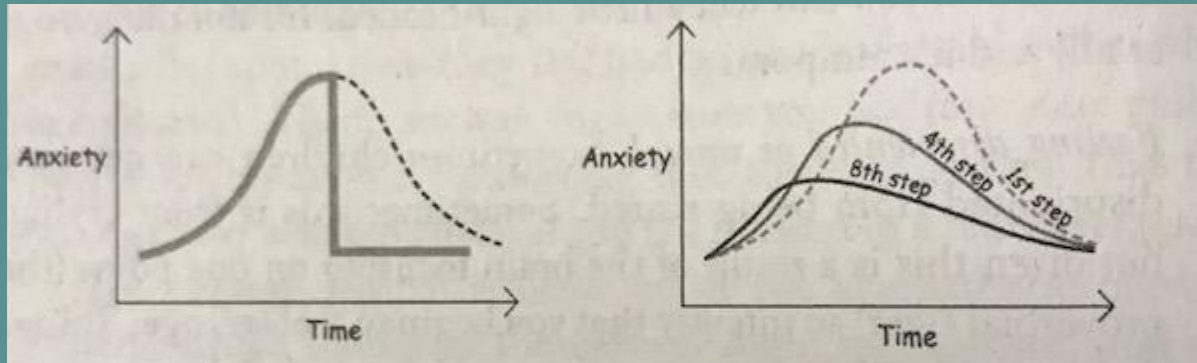
Strategies for reducing anxiety

- Deep breathing
- Movement
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- MINDFULNESS

Remember

1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a student manage it.
2. Don't avoid things just because they make a student anxious.
3. Express positive - but realistic - expectations.
4. Respect student's feelings, but don't empower them.
5. Don't ask leading questions.
6. Don't reinforce student's fears.
7. Encourage the student to tolerate his/her anxiety.
8. Try to keep the anticipatory period short.
9. Think things through with the student - help them formulate a plan.
10. Try to model healthy ways of handling anxiety.

Rescue vs Riding It Out



Rescue Impact:

- Remembers situation at height of fear
- Prevents habituation
- No feeling of mastery
- Negative reinforcement for escaping

Riding It Out Impact:

- Remembers success that allows habituation
- Learns that anxiety passes on its own
- Willing to approach increasingly challenging situations
- Feeling of mastery
- Positive reinforcement - feeling of pride for hanging in

Next Meeting: Sept. 26

Join
us!

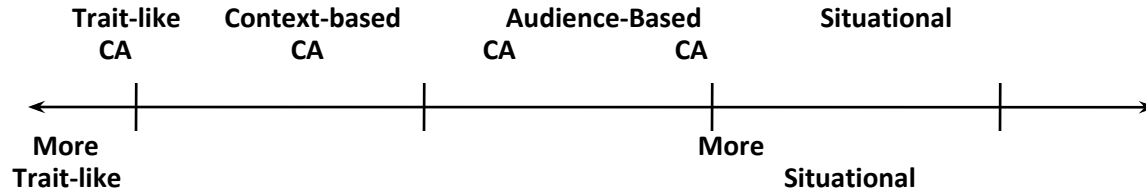


Join
us!

★ during lunch

Communication Apprehension

- An individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons.
- Encompasses all modes of communication
 - Oral is most common



- Trait-like CA (20% each extreme)
 - CA (or no CA) at almost all times
- Context-based CA (80%)
 - CA in a generalized context (meeting, group, dating)
- Audience-based CA (95%)
 - CA specific to a given audience across situations (adults, doctors, teachers)
- Situational CA (~100%)
 - CA with a given individual or group in specific situations (police when pulled over)

Two Types of Communication Apprehension Pressure

I. **Inter** personal

II. **Intra** personal

What is put on or perceived to
be put on - by others....

What is put on by self...

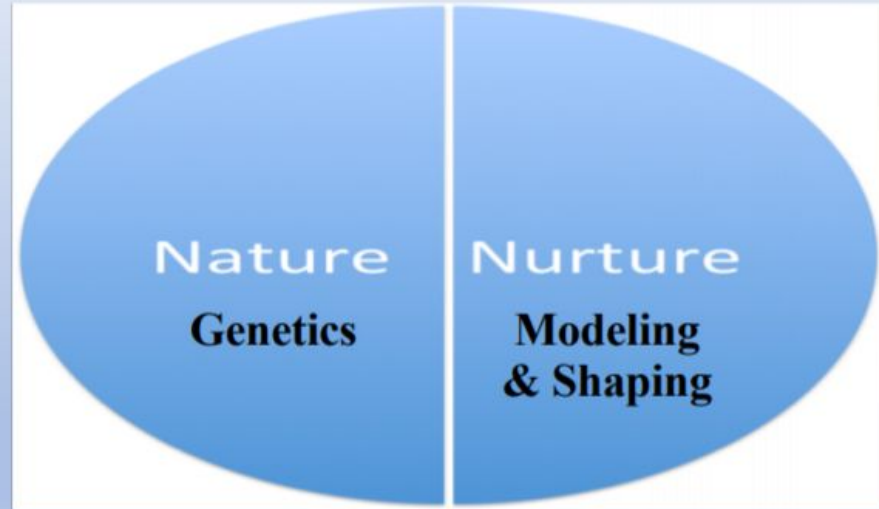
Willingness to Communicate

The degree to which people are willing to initiate talking.



Selective Mutism

Current Conceptualization of SM



Willingness to Communicate

- Determined at an early age
- If child is rewarded for talking - will talk more
- This will lead to higher WTC
- If talking is not reinforced child will talk less
- If reinforcement is unpredictable, learned helplessness may lead to talking only when necessary.
- This will lead to lower WTC

Willingness to Communicate

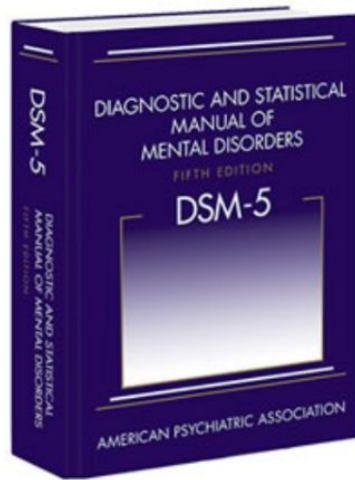
- Individuals with High WTC
 - communicate more often
 - work harder to be effective
- Individuals with Low WTC
 - communicate less
 - are less effective
- In the US talk is highly valued.
- An individual's WTC affects how others perceive and react to that person.

Factors Associated with Low WTC

- Genetic factors
- Childhood reinforcement
- Skill deficiencies
- Social introversion
- Social alienation
- Ethnic or cultural divergence

Jason Wrench 2015

Selective Mutism



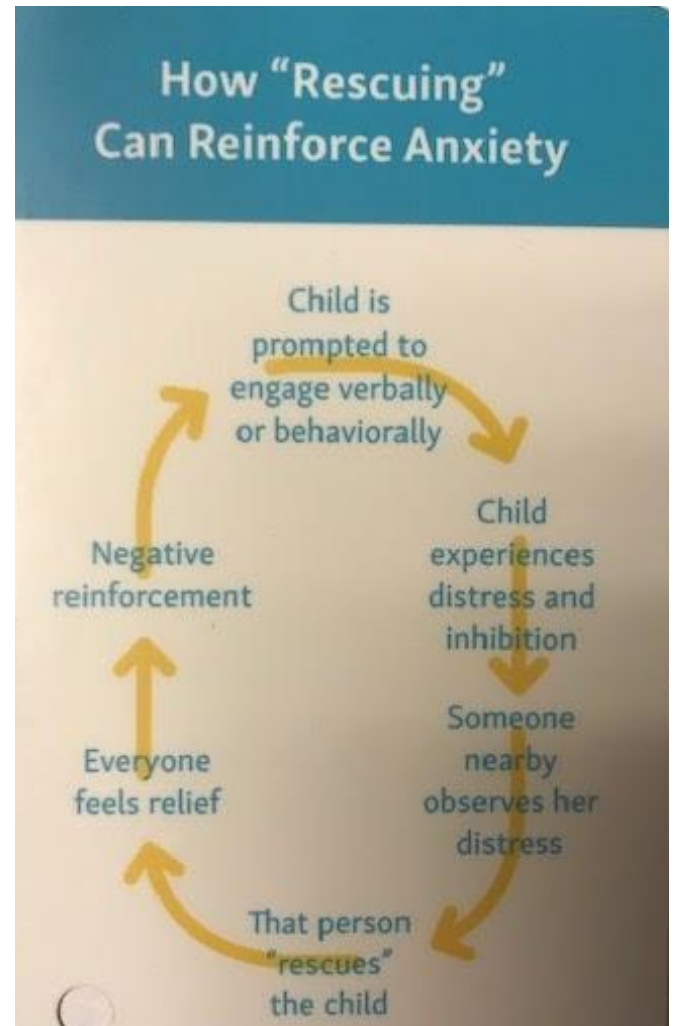
Comorbid Diagnoses

Social anxiety disorder	76%
Separation anxiety disorder	31%
Generalized anxiety disorder	28%
Specific phobia	10%
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	7%
Enuresis	7%
ADHD	7%

Well-meaning adults' contribution

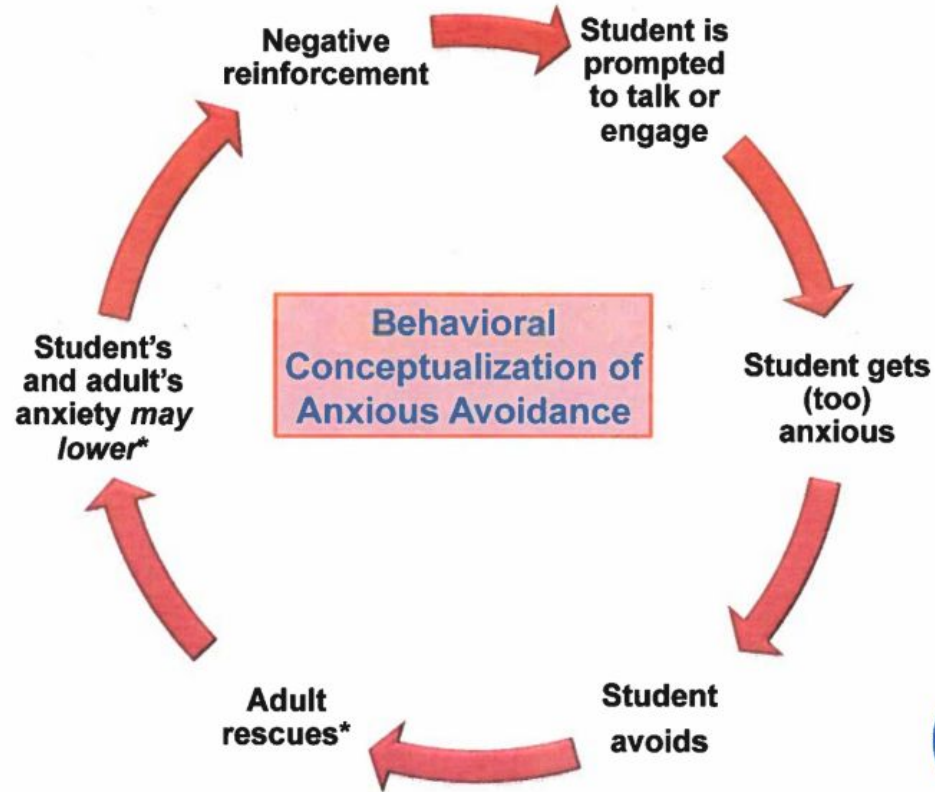
Avoid labeling child as:

- Quiet
- Shy
- Doesn't talk



Behavioral Conceptualization of Selective Mutism and Treatment

Used with permission from Steven Kurtz, Ph.D., ABPP, Kurtz Psychology Consulting, P.C.



Understand this...

Individuals with communication apprehension know this to be absolutely true:

Questions = Interrogation

Comfort proceeds communication

- Social comfort with adult and classroom peers is needed in order for a student's communication to progress
- Progress does not occur in a group - build comfort and use of strategies one on one then in small group and then large group
- Be transparent in process & expectations; provide options:
Awareness & Choice = Control

Rapport building . . .

. . . this is about **ADULT** behavior

Building relationships with students and facilitating student relationships

Need to create an environment that is

- safe and comfortable
- where it is okay to mess up and even fail
- Where there are opportunities to improve

Accommodating - do what a child needs in that moment. Ex. *When a child isn't able to ask to use the bathroom, using a special signal to ask is an appropriate accommodation.*

VS

Enabling - doing something that is below what a student can do. Ex. *When a child is able to ask to use the bathroom, she should practice asking. Using a hand signal would be enabling.*

Strategies for the Classroom Teacher to Increase Talking and Decrease Communication Apprehension

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM SET-UP

- Teacher Selection
- Large and Small Group Settings
- Remember “Wait Time I and II”...
- Utilize “Think-Pair-Share”...
- Ask “Follow Ups”...
- Withhold Judgment...

Continued...

- Ask For Summary...
- Survey the Class...
- Allow for Student Calling...
- Encourage Reciprocity...
- Ask Students to “Unpack Their Thinking”...
- Call on Students Randomly...
- Student Questioning...
- Cue Student Responses...

***PROMOTE “ COLLABORATIVE
GROUP/STUDENT” INTERACTION &
SHARING.***

Collaborative Talking Strategies

Remember “wait time I and wait time II”: Provide at least 3 seconds thinking time after a question and after a response.

Utilize “think – pair – share”: Allow individual thinking time and discussion with a partner before the class discussion.

Ask “follow-ups”: Why? Do you agree? Can you elaborate? Can you give me an example?

Continued

Allow for student calling: “CC – Will you please call on someone else to respond?”

Encourage reciprocity: Require students to defend their reasoning against different points of view and to defend both sides of an issue.

Ask students to “unpack their thinking: “Describe how you arrived at your answer.” “Think aloud.” “Unpack that suitcase?”

Continued

Withhold judgment: Respond to student answers in a non evaluative fashion.

Ask for summary (to promote active listening): “Could you please summarize John’s point?”

Survey the class: “How many people agree with the author’s point of view?”
(thumbs up, thumbs down)

Continued

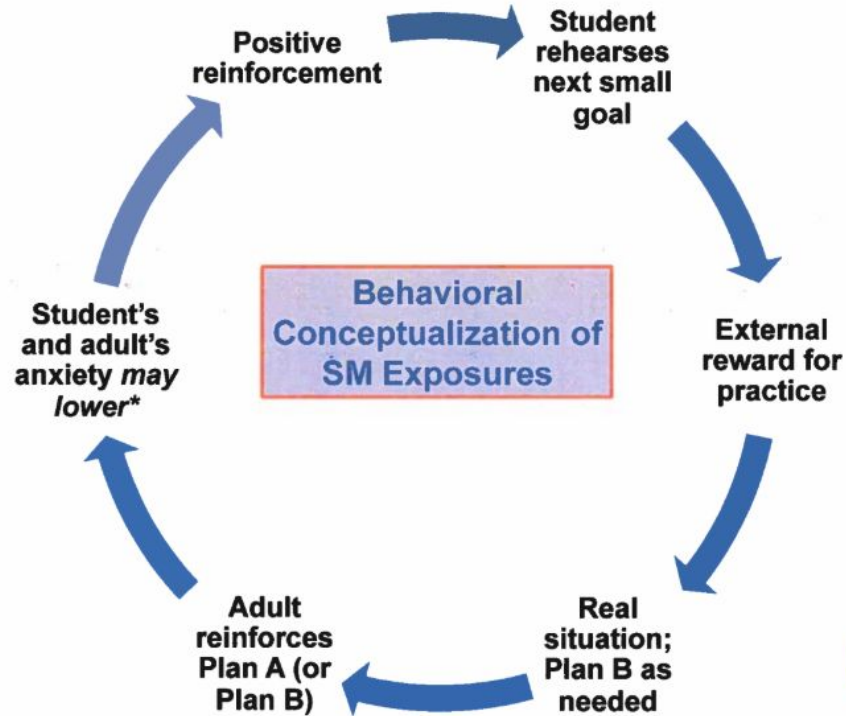
Call on students randomly: Not just those with raised hands.

Student questioning: Let the students develop their own questions.

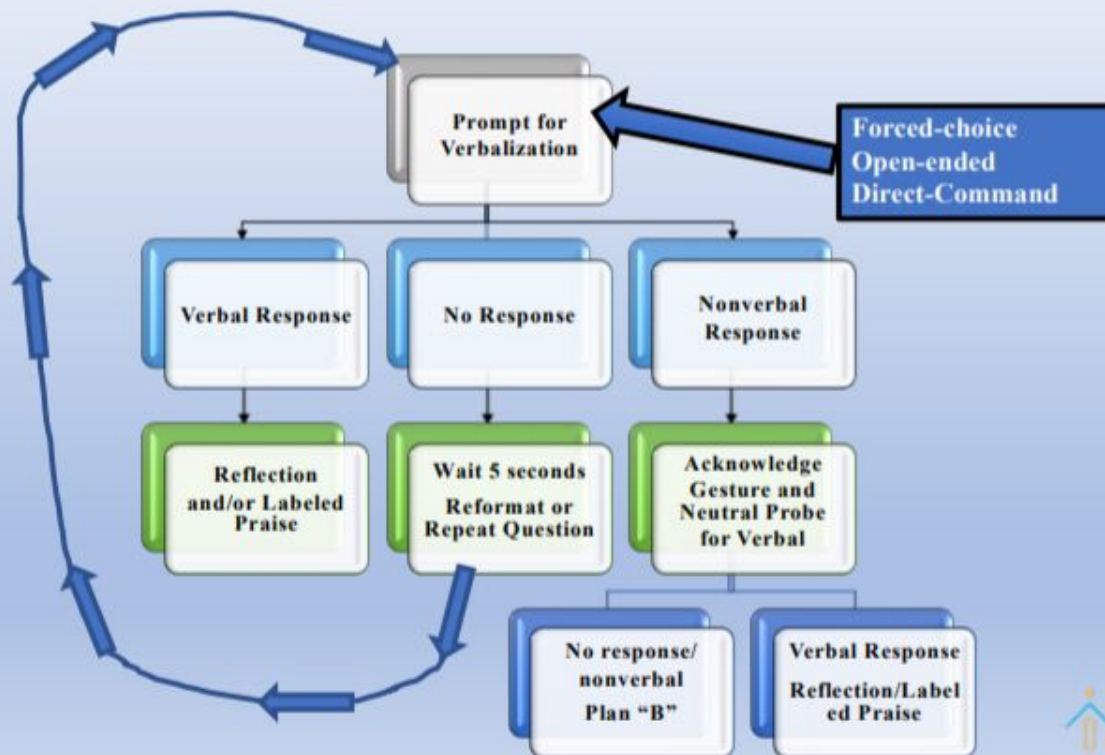
Cue student responses: “There is no single correct answer for this question. I want you to consider alternatives.”

Behavioral Conceptualization of Selective Mutism and Treatment

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Effective Prompting Sequence



Tips for Helping Kids Talk

Describe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Allows student to lead● Shows interests● Models speech and vocabulary	<i>I see you shaking your head. I see you writing.</i>
Wait time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gives students time to respond. 5 seconds, 10 seconds - perhaps more● This <u>will</u> be uncomfortable; get comfortable with being uncomfortable	
Labeled praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Increases the behavior● Shows approval	<i>Great job using your voice to answer. I love that you looked at me when you answered.</i>
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shows interest● Demonstrates acceptance and understanding● Increases verbal communication	<i>Student: I'm hungry. Adult: You said you are hungry.</i> <i>Avoid: "tip-up" in tone of voice - turning reflection into a question</i>

Tips for Helping Kids Talk cont.

Forced Choice Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide the student with the answer within the question, making it easier for student to respond	<p><i>Would you like to present today or tomorrow?</i></p> <p><i>Do you want to play Uno, Hedbanz or something else?</i></p> <p><i>Is the answer oxygen, hydrogen or are you are not sure?</i></p>
Open Ended Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide the opportunity for the student to express own thoughts● Allows student to produce a response on their own	<p><i>Who is your best friend?</i></p> <p><i>What did you learn today in music?</i></p> <p><i>What was your favorite part of the novel?</i></p>
Avoid Yes or No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Should be avoided● Should be changed to a forced choice question	<p><i>Did you do your homework?</i></p>

Even hello and goodbyes

Instead of Hello:

- Nice to see you!
- I like that you are wearing Bomber Blue today.
- I'm so glad you're here!

As alternatives to Goodbye:

- See you next time!
- I enjoyed having you in class today!

Don't be satisfied . . .

. . . with students **not** communicating.
Don't believe that is the best they can do.

ALL students want to communicate
and
deserve to have their thoughts and ideas heard.

Classroom Experience



Thank you

Questions???

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