

# Ways To Help Students Think For Themselves to Promote Independent Thinkers



Teach  
them to ....

- meditate (seeing without thinking during, thinking about thinking after)
- make mistakes without blame and as a natural learning process
- find the common ground between seemingly disparate positions
- set short goals to support the journey towards big goals or vision
- speak in an assertive manner build trust and creative expression

Make sure  
they ....

- are motivated to know themselves
- think frequently about their own thinking, complex ideas, patterns, or situations
- experience “something” in multiple ways from multiple perspectives and voices
- are given the support to self-direct their own learning with meaningful choices
- are able to establish their own relevancy for content
- can explain the significance of an idea, skill, or other academic topic
- are mentored and motivated with love

Guide  
them to ....

- see the value of their own performance
- dynamic spaces characterized by people, thought, and creativity
- the right collaboration with the right “mind” at the right time
- personalized learning and the success of the tribe

Let  
them ....

- watch their predictions play out
- form theories then test and revise those theories based on observation
- play with content or dynamic learning tools–no goals or prompting or rules (other than basic common sense, safety, etc.)

Help  
them to ....

- them honor uncertainty, wait time, and reflection
- not take anything too seriously beyond playful curiosity
- confront and internalize diversity and divergence
- realize the interdependence between content and themselves
- serve others, and learn to value themselves and their own human utility in the process

## Help them to ....

- to write about something complex, personal, emotional, meaningful, or seemingly trite
- start with what they don't know–this will guarantee that they think for themselves, as it provides each student with their own launching pad
- attempt to transfer understanding (prompted)
- explore something they see as mysterious, untamed, or socially “disallowed”
- realize everything is infinitely complex when you see information as a matter of perspective (this causes an endless chain of other realizations if they're willing to consider it long enough)
- sense an authentic need to know or understand
- recognize the nuance in other people's thinking
- honor the limits of human knowledge

## Encourage them to ....

- ask their own questions–and then ask better questions
- seek opportunities for inquiry to meet a motivated mind
- revisit their past mistakes, thinking patterns as opportunities for growth
- trust themselves to fail
- lead themselves into spaces where learning can occur on its own
- operate within their Zone of Proximal Development
- be quiet in the mind and allow that stillness to “sit” in the moment
- play video games or learning simulations
- think critically about the what others perceive as mundane
- believe they can, and make the choice to not be denied

Leave them alone ● Ask them what they  
stand for, and why