

Example Phrases for Building a Culture of Error

Expect Error

- “I’m really glad that you made that mistake. It’s going to help me to help you.”
- “Wrong answers are really helpful because we learn from the mistakes we make.”
- “Which of these options do you think this is my *favorite* wrong answer?”
- (After students point out a teacher’s mistake) “Oooh, you all just caught the best mistake I ever made! This is great!”
- “I suspect there’s going to be some disagreement here.”
- After scanning the room to check which answers students picked, say excitedly, “*We have a lot of disagreement on this one!*”

Withhold the Answer

- “For the four options to this question, I don’t want to begin by asking which one you think is right because I want to focus on the explanations that we have.”
- “I see several students picked answer choice X and that several others picked answer choice Y. How can I defend my answer whether I picked X or Y?”
- “I heard some snaps and I heard some stomps. College discussion. Be ready to defend your answer.”

Praise Risk-Taking

- “I love the fact that this is a hard question and that I see so many brave hands in the air. Thank you for taking a risk.”
- “People have debated this question for centuries. Who even knows if there’s a right answer. What’s important is that you’re really grappling with it.”
- “This is a tough question. If you’re struggling with it, that’s a good sign. Now, who will be bold and start us off?”
- “Romele has been brave enough to offer to share his work so that we can revise it because he made a mistake that a lot of us made. So, give him two claps on two. One...two!”