Concepts addressed:
Major Categories, Advantages and Appropriate Uses of Instructional Strategies

Types of Communication:
Discussions

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Problem-Solving Discussions
Students may often engage in nonproductive ways to solve problems including difficulty identifying or defining the problem. Teachers can engage students in problem-solving discussions that define a structure for solving problems, which can assist students as they work individually. Problem-solving discussions are structured in the following manner:

1. Define the problem.
2. Without judgment, brainstorm as many solutions as possible.
3. Decide on criteria to judge the listed solutions.
4. Use the criteria to select the best solution.

Discussions that Promote Critical Thinking
The teaching of critical thinking involves creating opportunities for students to become more independent and open-minded. Teachers can support students in thinking critically by providing opportunities for: observation, questioning, distinguishing fact from fiction, judging credibility and authenticity, making inferences, and drawing conclusions.

Teachers can foster critical thinking during lessons by presenting topics and focusing on one aspect of critical thinking at a time through discussions that:

- improve observational skills
- enhance comparing skills
- guide classification skills
- identify assumptions
- encourage Socratic dialogues
- encourage creative thinking
- encourage imagination and inventiveness