Table 4 Strategies to Elicit Democratic Contributions

- **Popcorn Selection:** Ask a preselected student to report a response and then "popcorn" to another student from another section of the room using a complete sentence. Provide a list of appropriate expressions: I select __; I choose __; I nominate __; I would like to hear from __. The second student reports and selects the third reporter, etc.

- **Preselect Initial Reporters:** Preselecting an initial response takes the pressure off the teacher and students alike. The awkward silence as the teacher initially requests contributions only serves to heighten anxiety for less prepared and confident class members. Monitor independent writing and partner interactions in preparation for a class discussion. Preselect one or two students with representative responses to launch the discussion. If a highly reserved student has a particularly thoughtful response, invite that individual to volunteer at the end of the discussion when you open it to volunteers. More often than not, she will rise to the occasion. Speak softly and use neutral language as you preselect contributors to avoid distracting or disappointing students sitting nearby. For example, 1) I am planning to call on you first to report your perspective; 2) You will be our discussion jumper cable with this response. Read it over carefully to prepare to report; 3) I would greatly appreciate it if you volunteered this specific idea at the close of our discussion when I ask for voluntary responses.

- **Name Cards:** Randomly select students using name cards. Include all student names each time you choose, or some students will fail to see the point of paying attention or attempting to contribute.

- **Voluntary Reporting:** Invite contributions from students who have not yet had an opportunity. Specify how many more responses you expect from different areas of the classroom (particularly in very passive or loquacious classes). This is an ideal opportunity to enlist contributions from preselected volunteers.

- **Partner Nominations:** Ask students to "nominate" partners who have different responses than those already contributed in the class discussion. Require use of a complete sentence when nominating: I nominate my classmate __. For younger students and immigrant youth, clarify the meaning and use of the verb. When you nominate a classmate for a particular job such as school president or student council representative, you officially choose that person because you think she or he would be a strong, responsible candidate. Make a point of affirming the attentive student who recalled that the partner’s response was different than those previously shared in the unified-class discussion.

- **Partner Reporting:** Invite partners to report their partners’ ideas if they are different than the ones already contributed. Assign language for citing/reporting: My partner __ (shared, pointed out, emphasized, indicated, concluded) that __.

- **Standing Reporters:** Cue all partner As or Bs to stand. Then call on one of the students standing to respond. Ask students with similar responses to be prepared to compare using appropriate language: My idea is similar to __’s. My idea builds upon __’s. Call on a few students until at least one has had a chance to compare ideas. Invite partners with the opposite letter to stand if they have a novel idea that has not yet been contributed. To make the selection process more engaging, consider different means of identifying standing reporters. For example, Partners, quickly determine the following: Who is younger or older? Younger students, you can relax. Older students, stand and prepare to report. Whose birthday is closer to today’s date? Birthday celebrants, stand and prepare to contribute.