In this action research study of three 8th grade pre-algebra classes, I investigated what students say helps them feel more comfortable talking about mathematics in small group and whole class discussion. I also investigated the effects on student participation in whole class discussion when a hidden questions strategy is used. The data collected for this study consisted of pre and post students surveys on comfort levels and grouping, student interviews, videos of small group and whole class discussions and teacher journaling. The pre and post surveys were used to collect data on how students preferred to be grouped and what the teacher’s role is in helping with comfort level. The surveys and interviews revealed that most students were most comfortable working in groups as long as they had a friend or someone they knew with them. The students also reported that the teacher’s role was to make sure that they understood the mathematics and to keep the class quiet during group presentations. Over the course of the study, students were asked to do group and team building activities and then create classroom norms to help foster an environment for having good mathematical discussions. Once the norms were set, each group worked together on a problem and then had to present their findings to the class. During these presentations the hidden questions strategy was used to investigate the effects the questions had on student participation and whether they helped lead to deeper understanding of the mathematical concepts.