



The Learning Institute

The use of questioning

Overview

Questioning is an important technique used to support learning in the classroom. It is a technique that is used for a variety of reasons and this CPD is intended to give you an understanding of some of the different purposes of questioning and then consider how your own questioning techniques might be developed to promote learning and understanding.

Target audience

Teaching Assistant +

Duration

Approximately 1 hour

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.

Introduction

Have you ever stopped to consider how many questions you ask learners in a day? But have you ever considered the purpose of all these questions and how worthwhile they actually are?

Effective questioning is a skill that can be developed over time and one way that you can improve your own practice is to consider the different purposes of questioning and the situations in which they might be used. An understanding of different types of question and how and when to use them can also help you to support your learners and enhance their learning.

This CPD will broaden your understanding of the use of questioning and help you to reflect on your own practice with a view to making it more effective in supporting the learners that you work with.

Objectives

- To understand different purposes of questioning
- To be aware of different types of question and their appropriate use
- How to make questioning more effective
- To support personal reflection on the use of effective questioning

Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- Ted Wragg - types of questions [video] available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffP9ocNQ6SU
- DfES 'Pedagogy and Practice:Questioning' [document] available at https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110812095832/http://nsonline.org.uk/node/96041?uc=force_uj

Task 1: Understanding some of the different purposes of questioning

Research shows that hundreds of questions are asked in classrooms every day. This task will help you to consider some of the different purposes of questioning used within a classroom.

1. Make a list of as many different reasons as you can for asking learners questions
2. Sometimes you ask questions because you need some information. At other times your questions will extend the thinking and learning of your learners. Can you think of two examples of each type?

Task 2: Different types of questions

Questions often fall into two categories: closed (or lower order questions) and open (or higher order questions).

Closed questions

These are questions that usually require a brief answer, e.g. What time is it? They are often based on recall to which there is a right or wrong answer, e.g. What is 7 multiplied by 9?

Open questions

These are usually longer questions that need more consideration and can extend and challenge thinking. Because of this, learners will need to be given a longer time to think about their answers, e.g. What do you think might happen if children could choose whether to go to school or not?

Watch the video clip [3:08 min] of Professor Ted Wragg talking about different types of questions, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffP9ocNQ6SU>

Make notes on the following:

- What is the third category of question that Professor Wragg discusses? Why do you think there are so many of these questions asked?
- Why is it important to ask a variety of questions?

Task 3: How to make your questioning more effective

Now read pages 8 - 9 of the *Pedagogy and Practice: Questioning* document that can be found at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110812095832/http://nsonline.org.uk/node/96041?uc=force_uj.

Although this was produced by the Department for Education and Skills as training material for secondary schools, it is equally as relevant for primary schools and other educational settings.

- Which do you consider to be the three most useful tactics?
- Consider how you respond to learners' answers. Do you think your responses match any of those given?

Task 4: Reflection on learning

Note down your responses to the following questions:

- What knowledge did I already have that has been refreshed by this CPD?
- How has this CPD developed my knowledge and understanding?

- How can I apply what I now know to my practice?
- Consider how you can record your goals/targets so that you will make use of them when you are able to return to the classroom.

Sources

Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Pedagogy and practice Unit 7: Questioning*. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110812095832/http://nsonline.org.uk/node/96041?uc=force_uj (Accessed: 15 April 2020)

Valiant Technology (2015) *Types of questions - Ted Wragg*. 4 November. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffP9ocNQ6SU> (Accessed: 15 April 2020)

Further reading

West Lothian Council Educational Psychology Service (no date) *Effective questioning*. Available at: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/2681/Questioning/pdf/Questioning.pdf> (Accessed: 15 April 2020)

William, D (no date) *Effective questioning in the classroom*. Available at: <https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/teacher-podcast-dylan-william-on-effective-questioning-in-the-classroom> (Accessed: 15 April 2020)

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