

# Questioning techniques to challenge your students

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‘In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.  
The important thing is not to stop questioning.’

*Albert Einstein*

# It's a fact that...

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- An average teacher asks 400 questions in a day
- That's 70,000 a year!
- One-third of all teaching time is spent asking questions
- Most questions are answered in less than a second

*Steven Hastings*

*TES 4 July 2003*

# What is the purpose of questions?

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- To interest, engage and challenge
- To check on prior knowledge
- To focus thinking on key concepts and issues

# The purpose of questions

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- Interaction
- Challenge
- Influence
- Progress
- Assessment

# What are the pitfalls of questioning?

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- Asking too many closed questions
- Yes or no questions
- Short answer recall-based questions

# Reflect on your questions

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- Allow students time
- Use challenging language
- Value students' responses

# Questioning

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- Self understanding
- Planning and classroom practice
- Differentiate questions



# Types of questions

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- Empirical
- Conceptual
- Value questions
- Bloom's taxonomy

# Bloom's taxonomy of questioning

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- Knowledge – describe, identify, who, when, where
- Comprehension – translate, predict, why
- Application – demonstrate how, solve, try it in a new context
- Analysis – explain, infer, analysis
- Synthesis – design, create, compose
- Evaluation – assess, compare/contrast, judge

# Three Little Pigs

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- What would you have done?
- Can you think of a different ending?
- What happened in the story?
- What would you have built your home from?
- Give examples of how the third pig showed his cunning?
- How did the wolf manage to blow down the two homes?
- Why did the three little pigs have to leave home?
- How would you defend the wolf's action?
- Which part of the story did you like best?

# Dalton's questions

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- Quantity questions
- Change questions
- Prediction questions
- Points of view questions
- Personal involvement questions
- Comparative association questions
- Valuing questions

# Checklist

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- What is the question trying to achieve?
- Looking for overall patterns and relationships
- Making decisions and judgements
- Creating something new
- Solving problems

# Tips

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- Plan for questioning
- Wait for an answer – use think/pair, share sessions
- Ask open questions
- Use questions to develop collaborative work
- Know the answer to your questions
- Start a lesson with a question
- Review the questions in the plenary session

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Teaching is the art of asking questions.

*Socrates*

Good learning starts with questions, not answers.

*Guy Claxton, Bristol University*