

Asking Better Questions

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Study the prompt questions and use them as a resource with students. Do not be too impatient for quick answers after asking questions – give plenty of ‘wait time’ and encourage students not to say the first thing that comes into their heads.

Prompt questions

The key to effective questioning is to ask as many open questions as possible – i.e. those that do not allow students to answer in ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses. The following questions provide examples you might use in classroom contexts.

General The following words can all begin useful questions about the subject matter or concepts you’re teaching What? Why? Where? When? How?

Checking understanding What can you tell me about what you’ve just learnt? What new points have come out of this? Will someone tell me how this works? How much sense has this made? How does this compare with what we learn last lesson?

Asking for more detail

What else can you tell me about that? How can you expand on that point? What examples show you this? Where exactly is this the case? What else do you know that supports this view?

Seeking justification

How do you know this is true? What evidence backs up what you’re saying? Is this always the case? How sure are you about this? How might others see this problem?

Creative thinking

What could be a possible solution to this? How would a practical person look at this situation? How might people solve this problem? How can we think about this in a new or different way? What new ideas could help here?

Evaluation

What information is most useful here? Which approaches worked best? Why? To what extent has this been successful? To what degree was she justified in taking those actions? How important are the lessons that have been learnt here?

Summing up

What is the main message here? In a few words what is this saying to you? What are the most important things you’ve learnt? How would you put this simply? What could be a headline for this?

Source: Best, Brin, and Will Thomas. *The Creative Teaching and Learning Resource Book*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2008. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/senecac/detail.action?docID=601600>

