

Improving the EFFECTIVENESS OF QUESTIONING

Questioning is one of the best ways to create more effective learning, leading to deeper thinking and better understanding. However, there are many misconceptions about what characterises effective questioning...

The problems

- An obsession in literature with classifying questions as 'open' and 'closed' has led teachers to believe that a bank of questions exist which, when asked, will always lead to certain types of thinking.
- Teachers can easily, and understandably, become disillusioned with open questions when they find that a perfectly-formed 'open question' has much the same impact on their students as a 'closed' question.
- Questioning doesn't often take students beyond what they currently know; more commonly, it stops with praise for where they already are.

Average "thinking time"
(before answering)

0.8 seconds

Average "thinking time"
(student talk)

1.3 seconds

Mary Budd Rowe (1972)



Challenging Learning have designed workshops, resources and long-term processes to show you the very best strategies for improving the effectiveness of questioning, including...

The solutions

- **Know your intent:** questions can only be judged in the context of where they are placed in a sequence, and how they help move learning towards the intended goal.
- **Plan your responses:** considering the dialogue beforehand allows you to employ more focused, incisive questioning moves, which promote deeper thinking, better understanding and lead students to ask more of their own questions.
- **Stay silent:** talking is not always the best way to get your students thinking! Listening is key to collaborative inquiry.

"There is no such thing
as a 'good question' or
a 'bad question'.

What matters is the reason we
have for asking the question,
and then how we react to the
responses we get to it..."



Why choose Challenging Learning?

Challenging Learning brings international expertise and evidence to enhance your local context.

We represent a group of six companies with 30 consultants, researchers and administrative staff in six countries. We are the only company in the world to host a set of conferences with Carol Dweck every second year across Europe.

We offer in-school consultancy, study tours and regional teaching networks. Our main focus is on long-term, deep-impact projects. Currently, we have 32 projects with 198 schools, 41 pre-schools and 11 colleges in nine countries.

"Challenging Learning works at every level. Their team are challenging yet encouraging. The examples of how it could be and the insights into what success looks like will leave you wanting to do things differently without a bag of guilt to weigh you down."

Professor Mick Waters, 2016



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