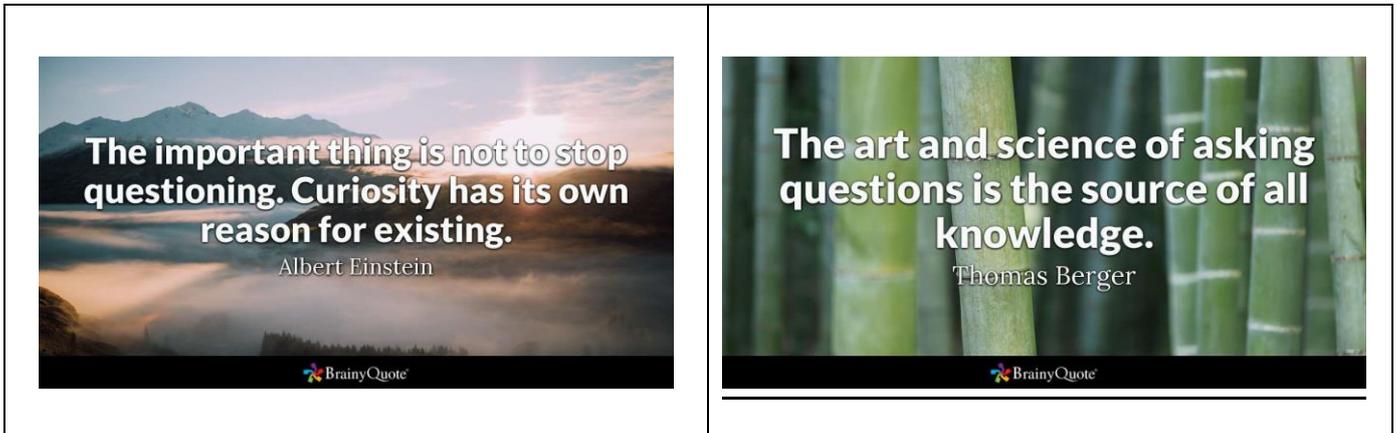


More on ... **Questioning Techniques (81)**

Also See Issue 5 (March 2013) and Issue 45 (October 2016)



SUMMARY OF THE TWO PREVIOUS ISSUES ON QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

Issue 5: March 2013	Issue 45: October 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching should comprise a set of well-structured questions; • Effective questioning enhances communication; • Questions as an intellectual challenge; • Questions should be varied and differentiated; • Types of questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking challenging and thought provoking questions; • Three cardinal principles when asking questions; • Formulating questions; • Lower-order questions; • Higher-order questions; • Which type of questions to ask; • Two famous quotes on questions.

Asking questions should form part of any lecture because, when well-planned and formulated, it is an interesting way to encourage students to think and share their own views with others.

Educators also ask questions to help students take an active part in the lecture and so sustain an active role in the teaching-learning process. Questions also help educators to assess how much learning has taken place so as to be in a better position to structure, organise and present future learning.

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However, according to research, given the time limitation, educators usually only give an average of 0.9 seconds for students to formulate their answers. It is obvious that this wait-time is not enough and that we need to develop questioning approaches that would give our students enough time to think individually, collaboratively and more deeply.

Traditionally, most educators asked closed questions the aim being to check what has been understood and learnt, to gauge and review past learning and assess whether time is ripe to move forward with new information: an approach where the educator asks a question and accepts an answer whether from a volunteering or a selected student.

However, in a student-centred pedagogical scenario, educators also need a range of ‘open’ questioning strategies not only to cater for different learning needs and situations, but also to be able to pitch their questions effectively enough to challenge their students to think and, at the same time, target specific students or groups within their class.

What follows is a detailed list of why educators use questions. It has been found that, on average, educators ask around 400 questions a day. They usually ask questions to:

- Encourage students to participate more actively in the lecture,
- ensure that the flow of the lecture is maintained,
- assess and gauge what has been learned,
- test student memory and comprehension,
- kick-off individual and collaborative thinking,
- sound students’ views and opinions,
- empower students to share their opinions with their peers,
- encourage students to be more creative, imaginative and innovative,
- enhance a sense of shared learning,
- provoke higher levels of thinking...

TEN STRATEGIES TO QUESTIONING

What follows are ten suggestions and ideas we can think of when preparing and formulating our questions. Each questioning technique is unpacked on three levels, namely: strategy, process and benefits.



STRATEGY 1: WAIT (THINKING) TIME	
<i>Educator consciously waits for a student/ class to formulate answer</i>	
PROCESS	BENEFITS
Gives students sufficient time between setting the questions and expecting an answer.	Prompts students to think more deeply and enhances levels of challenge.

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STRATEGY 2: NO HANDS QUESTIONING
Using the 'no hands' up rule

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Students know that those required to give an answer will be selected by the educator.	Keeps students on their toes, enhances engagement and challenges them to think.

STRATEGY 3: BASKETBALL QUESTIONS
Moves questions and discussions between students

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Educator establishes movement of ideas around the class thus building gradually on students' ideas and comments.	Engages a bigger number of students while at the same time enhances connected thinking and development of ideas.

STRATEGY 4: HOT SEATING
To handle with care and discretion

PROCESS	BENEFITS
A student is placed in the 'hot seat' to answer questions put to him/her by educator and students.	Encourages active participation and engagement. Inversion of roles. Very student-centred.

STRATEGY 5: PAIR REHEARSAL

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Students work in pairs to discuss and agree responses in tandem.	Encourages more interaction, engagement and depth. Learning by sharing.

STRATEGY 6: EAVESDROPPING
Deploying specific targeted questions

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Educator listens to group discussions and targets specific questions to groups and members of the group.	Facilitates informed differentiation. Reaches more students at small group and individual levels.

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STRATEGY 7: STAGING OR SEQUENCING

Asking questions with increasing levels of difficulty and challenge

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Educator increases the level of difficulty from low to higher order questions.	Helps students to recognize, appreciate and choose the range of possible responses.

STRATEGY 8: BIG QUESTIONS

Educator sets substantial thought-provoking questions

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Often set at the beginning of a lecture to be answered at the end of the lecture using all the thinking based on all the contributions to the lecture.	Often based on moral or speculative issues, these questions develop deeper and more profound thinking.

STRATEGY 9: FOCUS/LEADING QUESTIONS

Help students to arrive at the right answer

PROCESS	BENEFITS
When students find it difficult to provide an answer, the educator models or leads the thinking by asking focus questions to lead the student through the steps of the thinking.	Students are helped to be more confident and develop sequencing of small steps in thinking and responses. Enhances self-esteem.

STRATEGY 10: HIGH CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

Phrasing questions on Bloom's taxonomy higher challenge areas

(See issue 42, June 2016 re-Maslow taxonomy on thinking)

PROCESS	BENEFITS
Usually, these questions need to be pre-planned. Questions are focused to address analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creativity based on Bloom's taxonomy.	Positively differentiates for the more talented students in that such questions provide high challenge thinking requiring possible collaborative thinking and more detailed responses.

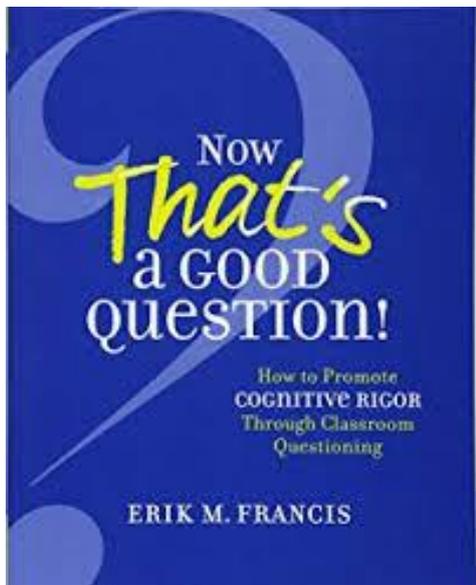
CONCLUSION

The aim behind effective questioning is to promote active learning and enhance the thinking of our students. Indeed, by making it a point to ask increasingly more challenging questions, using various strategies, we, educators can model more complex thinking and guide our students towards becoming independent thinkers and enriching and developing their own perceptions.

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Suggested Reading


ISBN: 978-1416620754

Publication: ASCD

Now that's a Good Question!

How to promote cognitive rigour through classroom questioning.

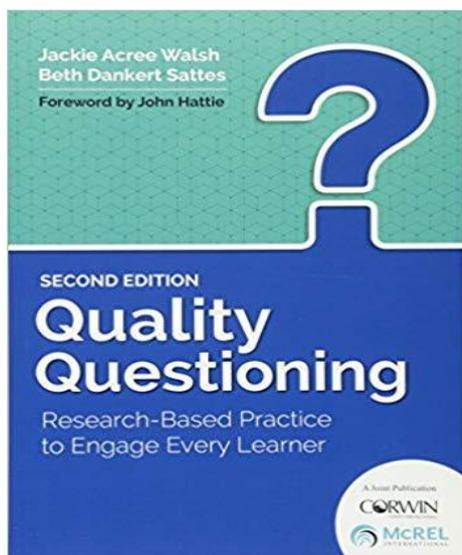
By Erik M. Francis

In this book, Erik M. Francis explores how one of the most fundamental instructional strategies—questioning—can provide the proper scaffolding to deepen student thinking, understanding, and application of knowledge. You'll learn:

Techniques for using questioning to extend and evaluate student learning experiences.

Eight different kinds of questions that challenge students to demonstrate higher-order thinking and communicate depth of knowledge.

How to rephrase the performance objectives of college and career readiness standards into questions that engage and challenge students.



ISBN: 978-1506328874

 Publication: SAGE Publications Inc,
 Imprint Corwin Press Inc

Professional Learning Communities: Divergence, Depth and Dilemmas

By Jackie Acree Walsh & Beth Dankert Sattes

Jackie Walsh and Beth Sattes present quality questioning as a process that begins with the preparation of questions to engage all students in thinking and culminates in the facilitation of dialogue that takes learning deeper. This new edition of the bestseller organizes questioning practices around the 6Ps framework, composed of Prepare and Present the Question, Prompt Student Thinking, Process Student Responses, Polish Questioning Practices, and Partner with Students. It extends and expands on timeless principles while adding significant new research-based practices and insights derived from the authors' own learning with and from classroom teachers.