

Effective questioning in teaching essay



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Effective questioning serves a range of purposes, it involves the learners in the lesson, it all allows the teacher to know if the students possess specific knowledge, to make students think deeply and to inspire creativity and imagination therefore contributes significantly in learning. Intellect develops when there are increased number of neurones in the brain connecting with each other, this happens when we think, therefore to make learners intellectually capable we must make them think. In order for questioning to be effective, the technique must be considered.

Wragg and Brown (2001) emphasise the importance of questioning techniques by saying that ‘ undirected questions often lead to chorus answers...hence importance of directing questions...distributing questions around the group rather than concentrating on one or two willing respondents not only involves more pupils but reduces the risk of losing attention’ For example questions must have appropriately levelled vocabulary and hardness to ensure challenge and success, the question typology needs to be correct also.

Teachers should refrain from seeking out students who can answer their questions and instead aim to get all students to participate. They should also be aware of asking numerous unrelated questions which do not serve a purpose and avoiding the use of rhetorical questions with young children as well as being mindful of how to respond to incorrect answers. Considering each of these aspects it can be said through observations, it is evident that teachers who re-phrase a question to a students often correct their choice of vocabulary allowing learners to better understand the question.

Also, it can be said that teachers (without realising) often have the same eager learners putting their hand up to answer questions, perhaps to make them feel secure that learning is taking place. To counteract this and ensure all students participate and benefit, I have observed teachers use a no-hands-up approach and random name picking. This works particularly well when a question is presented for students to discuss in pairs (pair talking) and of course sufficient thinking time.

Regarding incorrect answers there are a number of responses a teacher can display, for example using the incorrect answer to see which learners agree and disagree and why (useful in highlighting misconceptions), using the incorrect answer as a foundation to build the correct answer on, being positive and reassuring the learner that they have the correct answer to next question (student is a mind reader).

With the former, learners are put in the spotlight and may find it embarrassing if they have the incorrect answer, thus preference may be given to latter methods of dealing with incorrect answers. Firstly through observing practice it can be said that for any learning to take place students require a safe learning environment. study explains that the human physiological brain is made up of three parts or layers. The outer most is called the neo cortex, then there is the thinking part of the brain known as the.... the inner most is called the reptilian brain and is the part which is activated during a flight or fight response. It causes adrenaline to be released and thus renders one unable to think logically or rationally. A study carried out by Rowe (1974) shows that teachers typically give one second

thinking time for students to answer questions and if no answer is given then to ask another question or end up answering it themselves.

Thus considering the findings from these studies it can be said that teachers should not fire questions at students or ask students questions when they are unprepared and should allow sufficient thinking time. Looking at what Hayes (2006) states in *Effective Questioning in Primary School*, 'they (learners) benefit from being asked a range of questions' lead me to read further and come across Bloom's taxonomy (1956) who found that 95% of questions asked by teachers requires learners to think only at the lowest cognitive ability namely recall, state and identify type questions.

Observing Bloom's taxonomy questions which cover a range (knowledge, skills and attitude) being used in the classroom, teachers could ask high quality questions which made students think and respond with high quality answers, thus being very effective in learning. Questioning can be effective in learning when questions are targeted at learners with a particular ability in order to stretch them. Higher order thinking questions can be planned and integrated into a lesson to maximise learning.

For example, from observations, teachers may start the lesson with a detailed question which can only be answered at the end of the lesson by doing each activity throughout. Edward De Bono uses thinking hats as a means of being more productive, focused, and mindfully involved where each thinker puts forward his or her thoughts in parallel with the thoughts of others mind fully not attacking the thoughts of others. The thinking hats offer practical method of constructive thinking.