

How do teachers use questions?

Questions are an important part of your classroom discourse and can be used for a range of purposes. When asked, teachers identify that questions can be used for:

- assessing pupils' existing knowledge
- reviewing what has been learned in a previous lesson
- improving pupil participation in the lesson
- asking children to articulate their reasoning
- generating ideas
- promoting thinking and problem-solving
- differentiating by directing specific questions to certain children.

Evidence and reflection

You might like to explore the range of questions you use in your classroom. You could tape record a session or ask a colleague to listen in and then use the categories above to record the purpose of each question you use. Which categories do you tend to use most and least? Are there any additional categories that you use? Would you wish to change your pattern of asking questions?

Moving forward

You could work with colleagues to brainstorm a wide variety of questions on any given topic. After discussing the purpose of each question, you could plan to use specific questions in class and make a mental note of pupils' responses. What are the effects of different types of questions? What types of questions seem to increase the quality of your pupils' answers? What types of questions provoke them to think more deeply? What types of questions help to uncover aspects of the topic that pupils may have misunderstood?

Find out more

Myhill, D., Jones, S. and Hopper, R. (2006) Talking, listening learning: effective talk in the primary classroom, Open University Press, Maidenhead

Developing learning through talk: research report

<http://www.ex.ac.uk/~damyhill/talk>

GTC Research of the Month summary at:

http://www.gtce.org.uk/research/romtopics/rom_teachingandlearning/effective_talk/