

## Questioning ideas and tactics

Some questioning tips and tactics have been included in previous sections. The questioning ideas and tactics included in this section have been gathered from a range of sources and are not presented in any particular order. It will be necessary to select those that best suit your purposes. Further information about each of these strategies can be found on the internet.

The questioning ideas have been loosely organised into the following two categories:

- Hands down questioning
- Engaging all students.

### Hands down questioning

#### Whiteboards

Students have small white boards at their desks or tables and write their ideas/thinking/answers down and hold up their boards for teacher and/or peer scanning.

#### Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce

The teacher **poses** a question, **pauses** to allow students time to think, **pounces** on any student (keeps them on their toes) and then **bounces** the student's response onto another student. E.g.

T: How might you describe a hexagon?

S: It's a shape with 6 sides

T: (to second student) How far do you agree with that answer?

#### Hinge Questions

- A hinge question is based on the important concept in a lesson that is critical for students to understand before you move on in the lesson.
- The question should fall about midway during the lesson.
- Every student must respond to the question within two minutes.
- You must be able to collect and interpret the responses from all students in 30 seconds.

## APPLE

**Ask:** Questions should be prepared in your lesson plan in advance.

**Pause:** Let the students think about what you are asking. Give them 3-5 seconds to respond.

**Pick:** Pick a student by name to answer the question. Do not always pick on the first student that raised his/her hand. You may also pick someone that hasn't raised his/her hand in order to force participation.

**Listen:** Listen to the answer, make eye contact with the student, provide praise and encouragement when the answer or an aspect of the answer is provided. Mix your effect words, nothing sounds more phony than a teacher that always says "very good" whenever a student answers a question.

**Expound and Explain:** Generate a dialog based on the student's response. If the student's response was incorrect, redirect the question back to the other students. That's an interesting response can anyone else provide a different answer?

## Engaging all students

### Cold Call

- Name the question before identifying students to answer it.
- Call on students regardless of whether they have hands raised, using a variety of techniques such as random calls, tracking charts to ensure all students contribute, name sticks or name cards.
- Scaffold the questions from simple to increasingly complex, probing for deeper explanations.
- Connect thinking threads by returning to previous comments and connecting them to current ones. In this way, listening to peers is valued, and even after a student's been called on, he or she is part of the continued conversation and class thinking.

### No Opt Out

- Require all students to correctly answer questions posed to them.
- Always follow incorrect or partial answers from students by giving the correct answer themselves, cold calling other students, taking a correct answer from students with hands raised, cold calling other students until the right answer is given, and then returning to any student who gave an incorrect or partial answer for complete and correct responses.

### Think or Ink-Pair-Share

- Students are given a short and specific timeframe (1-2 minutes) to **think** or **ink** (write) freely to briefly process their understanding/opinion of a text selection, discussion question or topic.
- Students then share their thinking or writing with a peer for another short and specific timeframe (e.g. 1 minute each).

- Finally the teacher leads a whole-class sharing of thoughts, often charting the diverse thinking and patterns in student ideas. This helps both students and the teacher assess understanding and clarify student ideas.

### Turn and Talk

When prompted, students turn to a shoulder buddy or neighbour and in a set amount of time, share their ideas about a prompt or question posed by the teacher or other students. Depending on the goals of the lesson and the nature of the Turn and Talk, students may share some key ideas from their discussions with the class.

### Hot Seat

The teacher places key questions on random seats throughout the room. When prompted, students check their seats and answer the questions. Students who do not have a hot seat question are asked to agree or disagree with the response and explain their thinking.

### Fist-to-Five or Thumb-Ometer

To show degree of agreement or commonalities in ideas, students can quickly show their thinking by putting their thumbs up, to the side or down; or by holding up (or placing a hand near the opposite shoulder) a fist for 0/Disagree or 1-5 fingers for higher levels of confidence or agreement.

### ABCDE Cards

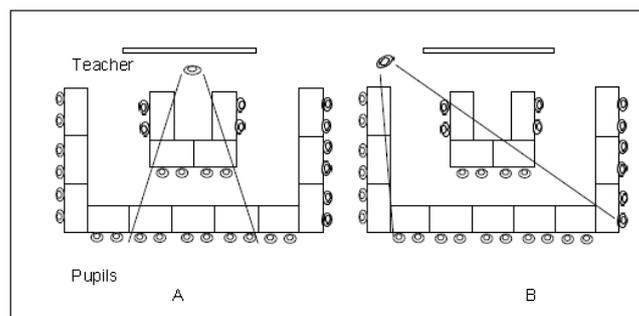
The teacher asks or presents a multiple-choice question, and then asks students to simultaneously (“on the count of three”) hold up one or more cards, labelled A, B, C, D, or E, as their individual response.

### Voter’s Choice

Give students a choice of possible answers to a question and have a vote on the correct option.

### Scatter Questions

Scatter questions over the whole class. Move around the room to make sure questions are more likely to be evenly distributed. Teachers tend to ask questions of students in their line of immediate vision.



### Who Has Answered?

Distribute slips of paper/card at the beginning of the lesson. As students answer a question, they hand over one of their cards. Teachers can see clearly who has still all their cards and can target an appropriate question! This technique also allows teachers to engage reluctant students, who may be given fewer cards.

### Bouncing Ball

Address a question directly to a named student. Keep others involved by asking them to consider what they could add/ whether they agree etc. e.g. "John, do you think that Macbeth really wants to kill the King at this point? Sam, do you agree? What evidence can you find? Does anyone think something different?"

### Audience Choice

Ask a student who often answers to select two or three others to answer - thus keeping them involved.

### What's The Question?

"The answer is 42 - what could the question be?" or " The answer is Henry VIII, how many questions can you think of that this could answer?"

### Quiz Programs

Use quiz-type formats on the whiteboard – Million Dollar Minute; Who wants to be a Millionaire; Family Feud, etc.

### Four Corners

Students form four groups (vary the number based on your purpose) based on commonalities in their responses to a question posed. In those groups students discuss their thinking and one student shares their ideas with the class. Students in other groups/corners may move to that corner if they change their thinking based on what they hear.

### Thunks

Thunks, such as: "If I ask if I can steal your pen and you say yes, is that stealing?" Or "Can I ever step on the same beach twice?" are great fun and thoughtful starters. These clever questions can simply be used to spark thinking or dialogue, or they can be more targeted towards the topic or subject at hand.