
TEACHING THROUGH QUESTIONING // what, why, and how to do it well...

What is it?

- A teaching approach that involves the regular use of questions to stimulate learner thinking and actively engage the learner in the learning process

Why is it important?

- Using questioning appropriately facilitates the learning process by requiring the learner to participate in the process and achieve higher comprehension skills by acquiring deep, elaborate understanding of the subject. (Nicholl)
- Effective questions asked in a psychologically safe learning environment support student learning by probing for understanding, encouraging creativity, stimulating critical thinking, and enhancing confidence (Gose)
- Questions are among the most powerful teaching tools and adopting best practices can significantly enhance the quality of instruction. (Tofade)

3 Tips to make it effective...

Tips

1. Make it safe

- Advise learner that you use a questioning approach to teaching
- Remind learners that it's okay to answer with "I don't know"
- Adjust question level to learner ability
- Avoid "Guess what I'm thinking" questions (ie. "What is the key to success in managing hypertension?")

2. Mix it up

- Ask both open and closed questions
- Ask questions that target various cognitive levels
- Ask questions that elicit learner attitudes and feelings
- Ask the learner what kinds of questions s/he might ask to gain more insight into a particular topic

3. Maintain the question train

- Provide adequate wait time for the learner to think and respond - avoid the temptation to answer for the learner
- Follow a weak or incorrect answer (or an "I don't know") with another question that helps the learner find a better answer
- Answer learner questions with counter questions that help the learner uncover the answer

References:

- Gose M. 2009. When Socratic dialogue is flagging: questions and strategies for engaging students. *J Coll Teach Learn.* 57(1): 45–49.
- Nicholl, H et al. 2006. Questioning: A tool in the nurse educator's kit. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 7(5): 285 – 292.
- Tofade, T. 2013. Best Practice Strategies for Effective Use of Questions as a Teaching Tool. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 77(7): 155.