Asking Good Questions

Crafting thoughtful, open ended questions is a combination of

- respect for the learner;
- respect for the domain; and
- understanding the actual grammar of good question STEMS (the verbs in the question statement).

Some basic **Powerful Questions** that tend to prompt good discussions / conversations and get to the heart of how learners know and believe the things they do include the following:

1. What do you think?
2. Why do you think that?
3. How do you know this?
4. Can you tell me more?
5. What questions do you still have?

Good questions can be used to explore support a range of instructional strategies and learning intentions. The following questions are adapted from literature informing coaching and motivation (Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998; Payne & Hagge, 2009; Crichton & Carter, 2015).

Opening Questions

- What is your intention?
- What impact might this have?
- What are some other possibilities?
- What other ideas do you have about it?

Probing Questions

- Can you give me an / another example?
- What have you tried so far?
- How did that work?
- What might be missing?

Action Questions

- What are your next steps?
- What are you willing to do to refine this?
- What strengths do you see with this?
- What would be helpful in assisting you?

Clarifying Questions

- What do you mean? Please tell me more.
- What concerns you most about this?
- What concerns do you still have?
- What more can you tell me?

Options

- What are other possible solutions?
- What would you like to see happen next?
- What else could you do?
- What other opportunities are there for this?

Blocks

- What got in the way?
- What if this doesn't work, initially?
- What's your backup plan?
- Are you prepared to take this further?

Using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to Guide Good Questioning

While Bloom's Taxonomy was originally developed in the 1950s, a revised version was developed in early 2000s to update his original taxonomy and embrace changes in teaching and learning practices.

Level	Definition	Sample Verbs		Sample Questions
Remembering	Exhibit memory of previously learned material By recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers.	Define Find Label List	Name Recall Write	• List the three…? • Who invented…? • Where is…? • When did____happen?
Understanding	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.	Classify Compare Describe Explain	Illustrate Paraphrase Summarize Translate	• What reasons or evidence…? • State in your own words…? • What is the main idea of…? • How would you compare… contrast…?
Applying	Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	Apply Build Choose Construct	Demonstrate Develop Solve Use	• How would you solve _____ using what you have learned…? • What do you suppose would happen if…? • What can you conclude…?
Analyzing	Student distinguishes, classifies, and relates the assumptions, hypotheses, evidence, or structure of a statement or question.	Analyze Categorize Compare Contrast	Examine Separate Test for	• What are the parts or features of…? • How is _____ related to…? • What was the author's purpose or bias…? • What evidence can you find…?
Evaluating	Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.	Compare Create Criticize	Design Hypothesize Rate	• What would you do if…? • How could you modify the plan…? • Can you develop a new way to…? • How would you test…?
Creating	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.	Adapt Build Critique Judge	Justify Propose Predict Theorize	• Which policy will result in the greatest good for the greatest number? • For what reason do you favour…? • How could you assess the value of…? • Why was it better that …?

(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)