

Inclusive Teaching Practice

Participant's Book



Source: VSO Image library

Module 6: Effective Questioning and Feedback

Module 6: Effective questioning and feedback

Overview

This is the **sixth of fifteen modules** that look at how we create a positive Inclusive Learning Environment for all. You will see how inclusive teaching practices encourage, develop and use the 21st century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. These modules are for any educators or those studying in education in Myanmar. The terms student and learner are used interchangeably throughout the module.

| Module number | Module title |
|---------------|--|
| 1 | What is an Inclusive School, Classroom and Teacher? |
| 2 | Knowing your learners |
| 3 | Planning learning outcomes for all |
| 4 | Participating through learner centred approaches |
| 5 | Creating a positive learning environment |
| 6 | Effective questioning and feedback |
| 7 | Active participation |
| 8 | Peer, co-operative and collaborative learning |
| 9 | Supporting students' emotional and social wellbeing |
| 10 | Legal framework and policies around Inclusion in Myanmar |
| 11 | Supporting all students through differentiation |
| 12 | Identifying specific learning difficulties |
| 13 | Supporting all learners with differences or disabilities |
| 14 | Positive behaviour management |
| 15 | Assessment for student achievement |

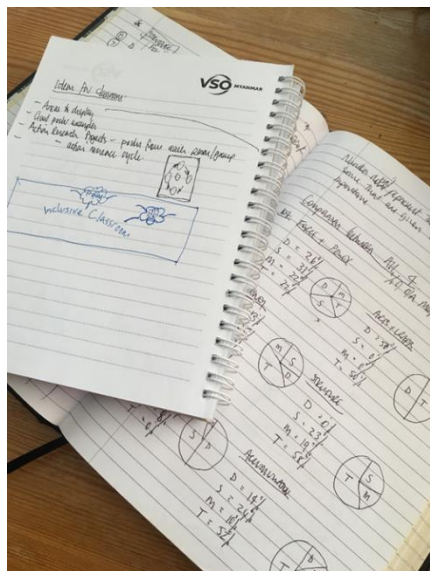
This module helps you to think about the impact of using effective questioning and feedback. It explores the benefits of using a range of questions techniques and explores models of feedback that ensures learners receive the right information about their performance or progress at the right time.

You will also be asked to record your reflections in a learning journal, so it is important to make detailed notes and think carefully and deeply about your current and future practice. This CPD module also encourages you to develop communities of practice between yourself and your colleagues. This will support and extend your own use of inclusive practices in your teaching and will help your student teachers build on inclusion in their learning and future professional practice.

Learning Journal

It will be useful to record your reflections in a learning journal throughout the module.

A learning journal can be digital (e.g. using Word or Google Docs) or on paper. You can also take photos of your learning journal pages if you want to share your thoughts with others. It is important that you record your thoughts and ideas so that you can remember and use them later in activities and in your own teaching.



Here are some useful tips for a good learning journal:

- Use headings and dates for all your journal entries.
- Use the activity number for reflections linked to that activity, e.g. Activity 1.1
- Add references to any other resources you find that help you.
- Record answers to activities.
- Write reflections about your learning.
- Make notes of new vocabulary.
- Identify topics you want to learn more about.

Source: Rose, N. (2018) Personal Learning Journals

The important thing is that it is easy for you to use. You can take notes which answer simple questions like these:

What did I learn today?

How can I use this in my work?

Was this easy or difficult? Why?

How can this help me / my student teachers?

What else do I need to learn about this topic?

These questions follow the LEARN- APPLY- REFLECT model which is used in education globally. You can return to this journal as you progress through your CPD journey and reflect on your progress.

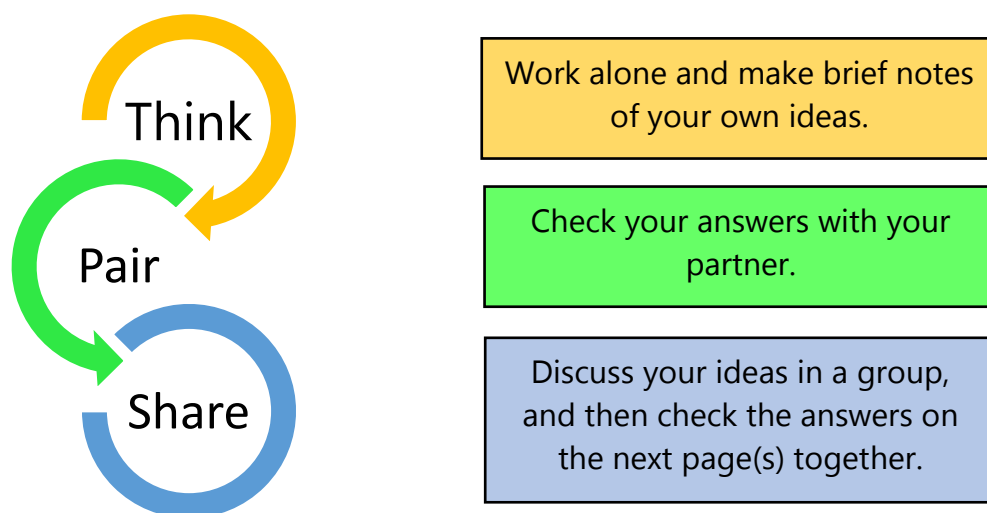
Study tips

Take your time to work through the activities, rather than trying to complete the whole unit at once. Set yourself a timetable and choose a time to work through the tasks, then check and compare ideas with colleagues. Finally, remember to make notes in your learning journal as you go. This will help you remember more about the skills and knowledge you develop as you complete these units.

Working alone or with colleagues

This unit is designed for self-study. The answers can be found after each activity. However, if possible, **we recommend working in a pair or group** so you can share ideas, ask questions, check your work, and give feedback.

If you work in a pair or group, we recommend using **Think / Pair / Share** for each activity.



Learning outcomes for module 6

By working through this module, you will be able to:

- 1. identify and evaluate closed and open questions.**
- 2. explain the use of differentiated questioning.**
- 3. identify the elements of effective feedback.**
- 4. state the benefits of providing effective feedback.**

1. Introduction

The previous module (module 5) focused on positive learning environments and the responsibility of teachers to create it for their learners. It looked at the relationships we build with students and the interactions we have with them and how that mixed with careful consideration of the physical space and established routines, students can feel safe and secure in the learning environment.

This sixth module operationalises **effective questioning techniques** and **appropriate feedback**. It explores how creating a culture of curiosity contributes to the engagement of learners and looks at the effect of various models of feedback. You will feel confident to decide and plan what will be most effective for you and your learners.






This model also introduces the idea of **Action research** and how it might be a helpful tool in your practice. Examples and guidance are provided on where to start and ideas for further research around inclusive education.

You will be asked to:

- ✓ Read about 'learner centred approaches' and effective group work.
- ✓ Watch videos and provide some analysis.
- ✓ Complete activities either alone, in pairs or in small groups.
- ✓ Think about key questions.
- ✓ Answer an end of module quiz.
- ✓ Reflect on your experience and knowledge.
- ✓ Make a promise to your learners.

The module will take **approximately 8 hours to complete**. Take your time to ensure it is an enjoyable learning experience.

Key to symbols

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Activity – this is work you need to complete . |
|  | Question/s – please answer the questions. |
|  | Reflection – think carefully about how you feel about this. |
|  | Learning Journal – please write your answers in your learning journal. |
|  | Read – please read the text provided. Make any notes you like. |



1.2 Link to previous learning - Creating a positive learning environment and using effective questioning and feedback

Think back to module 5 and the activities around creating a positive learning environment.

Decide which statements below are an effective way to create a positive learning environment and **tick** the column next to the statement if you agree. If you need some support, go back to module 5 and remind yourself of some of the key strategies.

How educators create a positive learning environment?

| | | ✓ |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Make it safe for learners to make mistakes | |
| 2. | Make the environment calm and interesting | |
| 3. | Insist that in every lesson learners sit silently | |
| 4. | Welcome children at the door, by name, as they enter | |
| 5. | Select the children with their hands up to keep the lesson moving | |
| 6. | Provide constructive feedback to help them improve | |
| 7. | Create a sense of order by having routines | |
| 8. | Be flexible with how children work | |
| 9. | Encourage students to ask and answer questions | |
| 10. | Value each child by using their name frequently, e.g. when asking questions and / or giving feedback | |
| 11. | Care about the student and know things about them, e.g. their hobbies, any learning difficulties | |
| 12. | Give children tests regularly to check they understand | |
| 13. | Plan activities to allow children to move around in class | |
| 14. | Plan to use outside spaces to engage children | |
| 15. | Arrive early to class | |

Answers to the recap of Module 5 – Positive Learning Environment

| | | ✓ |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Make it safe for learners to make mistakes The teacher might model making mistakes or celebrate mistakes as part of the learning process. | ✓ |
| 2. | Make the environment calm and interesting | ✓ |
| 3. | Insist that in every lesson learners sit silently Learners might benefit from carrying out some activities in silence, such as a written test or self reflection tasks. | |
| 4. | Welcome children at the door, by name, as they enter | ✓ |
| 5. | Select the children with their hands up to keep the lesson moving Whilst this would keep the pace of the lesson moving, not all children would feel included and many learners may disengage if they know they are not expected to contribute. | |
| 6. | Provide constructive feedback to help them improve | ✓ |
| 7. | Create a sense of order by having routines | ✓ |
| 8. | Be flexible with how children work | ✓ |
| 9. | Encourage students to ask and answer questions | ✓ |
| 10. | Value each child by using their name frequently, e.g. when asking questions and / or giving feedback | ✓ |
| 11. | Care about the student and know things about them, e.g. their hobbies, any learning difficulties | ✓ |
| 12. | Give children tests regularly to check they understand Whilst tests are a good way to check for understanding, educators will find using a range of assessment techniques more effective when trying to create a Positive Learning Environment, such as observations, group work, listening, etc. Regular test conditions can cause stress and anxiety. | |
| 13. | Plan activities to allow children to move around in class | ✓ |
| 14. | Plan to use outside spaces to engage children | ✓ |
| 15. | Arrive early to class | ✓ |

Activity 6.1 Self-assessment

R REFLECTION: How well do you think you understand ‘**questioning techniques for inclusion**’? Look at the scale below and identify the number that best describes YOU. Answer in your learning journal.

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| NOT well | <div> <div>←</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</div> <div>→</div> </div> | VERY well |
|----------|--|-----------|

You will be asked to do this again at the end of this section.

2. Questioning

Inclusion is about valuing the presence, participation and achievement of **ALL** students in every lesson. This includes the effective use of questioning techniques throughout a lesson.

- Questions should engage all learners at an appropriate level.
- Questions should not be either too easy or too hard for the learner.
- Questions should be carefully planned for individual learners.

For feedback to be effective and create a positive learning environment there needs to be trust between the teacher and learners. The discussions around creating a positive learning environment have provided a firm foundation on which trust can be built between teachers and their learners.

In the first section of the module, attention is given to identifying and evaluating **closed and open questions**, and their value in teaching and learning. You will explore the use of **differentiated questioning** to ensure all learners have the opportunity to be challenged effectively linked specifically to their own needs.

2.1 Definitions of closed, open and differentiated questions

Activity 6.2 – Defining closed, open and differentiated questioning (5 minutes)

Match the three definitions to the type of questioning technique

Closed Questioning

Longer responses allow for creativity and deeper assessment of learning

Open Questioning

Questions that are designed for the unique abilities of all learners. They encourage responses at the right level.

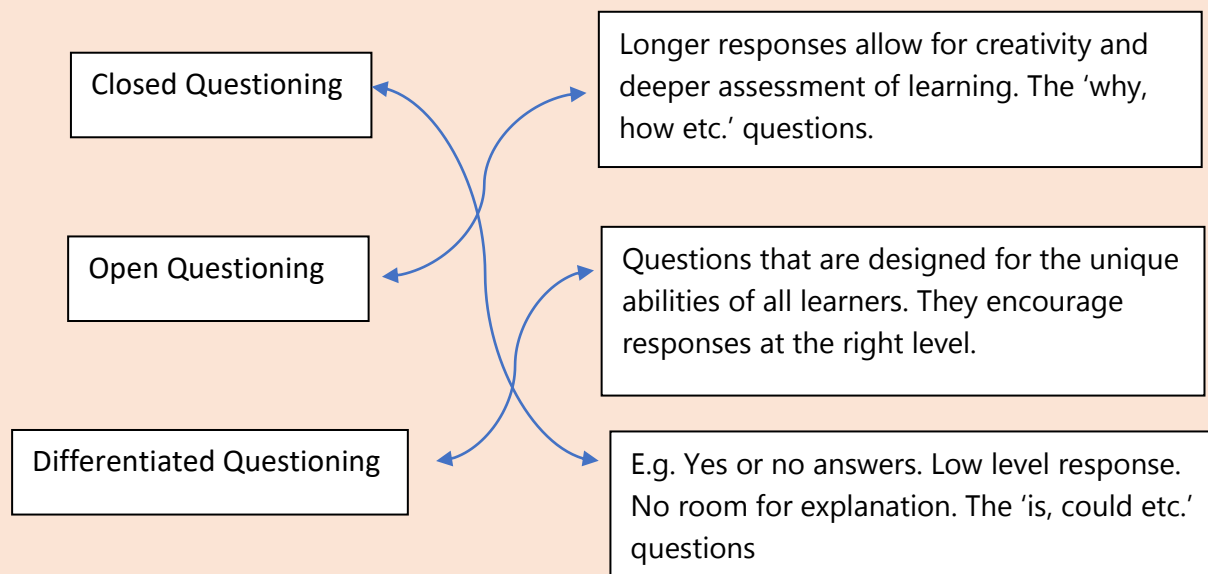
Differentiated Questioning

E.g. Yes or no answer. Low level response. No room for explanation.

Write the answers in your learning journal.

Activity 6.2 answers – Defining closed, open and differentiated questioning.

All three types are useful. Consider Bloom's Taxonomy. Closed questions can check understanding but at a lower level (identify, recall etc). Open questions are a good way to check understanding at deeper levels (analyse, evaluate etc.). Learners have a chance to express their views and opinions. Differentiated questions are specifically designed to support learners' needs.



2.3 Questioning Types

Effective inclusive practice helps learners to achieve their full potential. By thinking about how questions are used in class to develop learners' 21st century skills, we can begin to see the links to developing communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity.

Think back to the discussions around Bloom's taxonomy in Module 3 where we considered the progression in planning inclusive learning outcomes for all and step by step learning. If you remember, in this module, we discussed thinking action verbs from Bloom's taxonomy to promote higher order thinking skills. Higher order thinking skills enable learners to be more actively involved in the learning process. When educators only use lower order questions, students will only use a low level of thinking.



What comes next in the sequence?
(using the 5 x table)



If I invited 5 friends and their siblings for lunch and all my friends have 3 siblings. How many people would come to my house?

In the first examples given, students are asked to simply remember or recall facts – lower order thinking. In the second example, students need to understand the multiplication facts to apply them and draw connections. These questions take more time to plan and a better understanding of the learning process.

Questions need to be asked in different contexts, in whole class situations, when learners are in groups, pairs and when they are working alone.

Bloom's Taxonomy

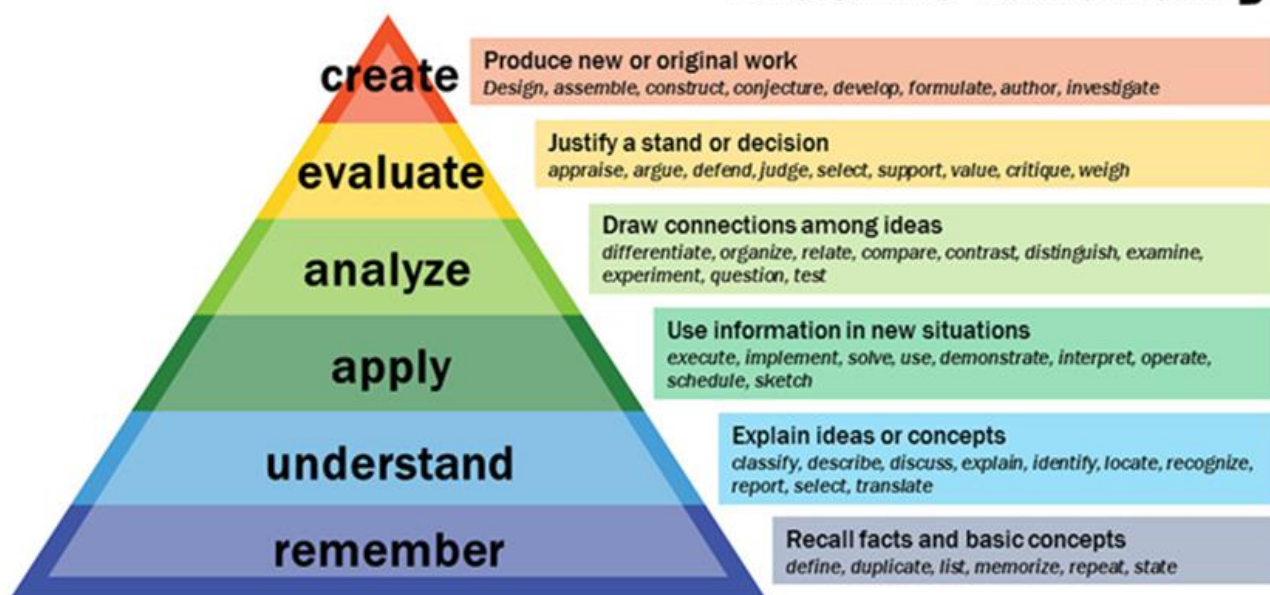


Image source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vandycft/29428436431> (Creative Commons)

2.3.1 Closed questions

These are questions that normally have one clear answer and sometimes require a yes or no response. They are useful to check understanding during explanations or recap sessions with students. For example, educators might use a closed question to clarify facts, to extract detailed information or identify someone's position.

Closed questions can also be helpful to ask a group of learners if they are ready to move on or if they have had enough time to discuss a point in groups or with peers.

However, closed questions will not provide a student with the opportunity to offer an explanation or justification for their answer and doesn't given any guidance on the student's understanding.

Teachers can use closed questions at any point in a lesson but they are commonly used at the start to assess students' understanding of a topic or to check their understanding from a previous lesson.



What is this part of the flower called?

For example, if the student is learning about plants, it would make sense for the teacher to ask a closed question, such as, 'what is this part called?' to check students have remembered. There is no real need for a discussion to be had in this instance around what the student believes the part is called, or what the student thinks it should be called. The part of the flower has a name and the student simply needs to know this piece of information.

Closed questions can be effective, if they are used in the right way. When used in a test, it might be helpful to see if all students have put the same thing and compare. Short, closed responses make this an easier task.

Discussion - The problem and solution with closed questions



The problem

Teacher Daw Thin Than has finished a lesson in geography and asks her group of grade 4 children if Asia is a country. They are asked to put their hands in the air to answer. 50% answer yes and 50% answer no. Clearly 50% of the group get the answer right. However, 50% are wrong.

There are two issues here. The first relates to 50% being right. How does Daw Thin Than know whether their answers were just guesses? The second relates to the 50% who were wrong. These too could have been guesses.

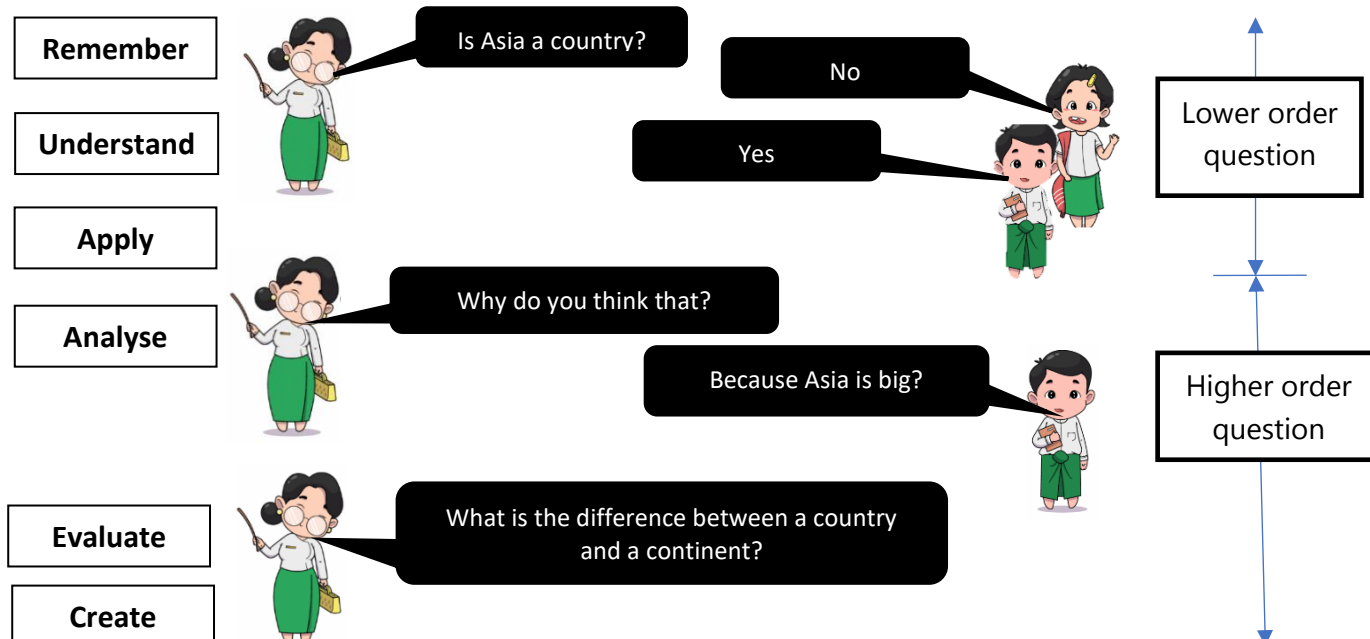
There is a definite weakness shown here when using closed questioning techniques on their own. Imagine, 100% of the class could actually have guessed their answers and the teacher would not know.

The solution

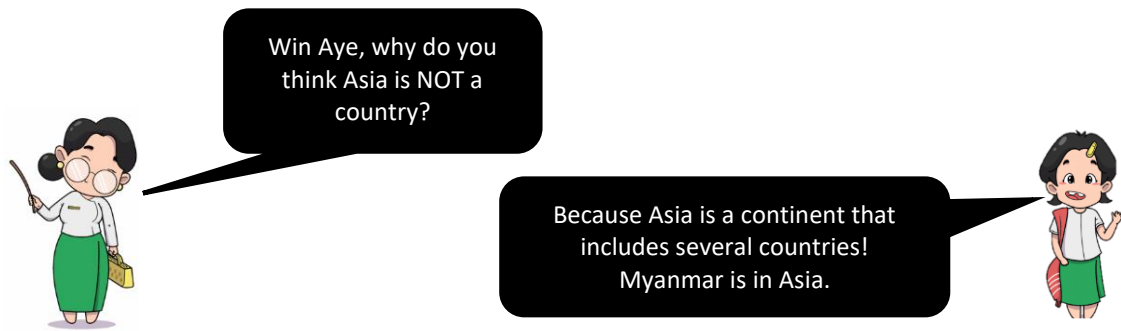
Daw Thin Than needs to extend her questioning to include a range of open questions. This works for both those that agree and those that disagree that Asia is a country. Asking open questions to learners randomly can begin to identify those that understand and those that do not, for example the teacher could ask Soe Su Khaing 'why' they think Asia is or is not a country.

Read the discussion between a few learners and the teacher below.

Questions and answers between the teacher and student



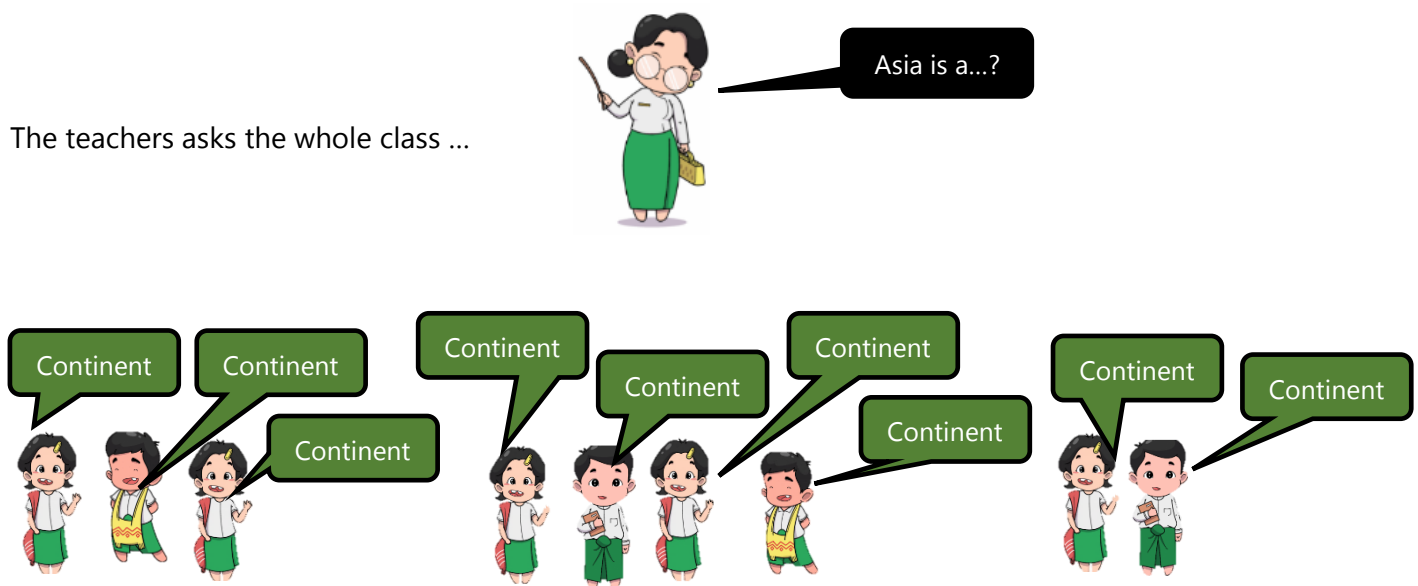
By asking an open question after the closed question about Asia the teacher can see that one learner is right (Win Aye) and the other wrong (Aung). She knows now that Aung does not understand and needs to find out whether Win Aye understands her answer even though she was right. The teacher can identify misunderstandings and correct them. Also, Aung will be involved in the following group discussion.



In this example the teacher realises that Win Aye understands that Asia is a continent because she is encouraged to elaborate her answer following Daw Thin Than's question.

2.3.2 Choral answers to questions

The use of closed questions is similar to the situation where teachers' illicit responses from the whole class where they recite answers to questions as a whole group. How can a teacher possibly know what each student understands? They may say the right answer but this shows only rote learning – remembering facts! There is rarely any critical thinking, communication or creativity in their answers. Hypothetically, every learner might not understand 'why' Asia is a continent even though they have all answered correctly. See the example below.



All the learners answer at the same time.



Activity 6.3 – Choral answers (5 minutes)

A

W

Q

Thin Than is pleased that all the students appear to understand.

1. Do you agree with Thin Than's statement?
2. Why?/Why not? Write the answers in your learning journal and suggest an alternative way to find out if all the students understand.

Activity 6.3 answers – choral answers

1. Thin Than's response to the whole group choral answer is **probably not** correct.
2. The reason why – She doesn't know whether any one of the learners understands the answer. It is possible that some students may listen to others' responses and copy (especially if they are unsure or if they feel that others have a different answer to them). She needs to be confident, in this example, that all learners know 'why' it is a continent.

Notice the first question was closed – requiring a yes or no answer. The second was an open question which **allowed** you to answer in more detail.

The detail enables the educator to make an **assessment** of the students' understanding.

Activity 6.4 – Organising questions into Bloom’s Taxonomy (15 minutes)

Read the following questions and place them from high to low order by matching the numbers. Closed questions will be classed as lower order whilst open questions are classed as higher order.

High order

1 Create

1 Draw the largest and the smallest animal you know.

2 Evaluate

2 Explain why some animals cannot be kept as pets.

3 Analyse

3 Compare a lion, a cat and a monkey.

4 Apply

4 Rank any 10 animals for how dangerous they are.

5 Understand

5 Identify three animals people have as pets.

6 Remember

6 Invent two new animals and explain.

Low order

Draw the table in your learning journal. One answer has been given.

| Remember | Understand | Apply | Analyse | Evaluate | Create |
|----------|------------|-------|---------|----------|--------|
| 5 | | | | | |

Answer to Activity 6.4 – Organising questions into Bloom’s Taxonomy

By changing the action verb in a question the answers from the learners require higher order responses. More use of higher order questions can help to develop critical thinking skills in **all** learners.

High order

1 Create

6 Invent two new animals and explain your choice.

2 Evaluate

4 Rank any 10 animals for how dangerous they are.

3 Analyse

3 Compare a lion, a cat and a monkey.

4 Apply

1 Draw the largest and the smallest animal you know.

5 Understand

2 Explain why some animals cannot be kept as pets.

6 Remember

5 Identify three animals people have as pets.

Low order

| Remember | Understand | Apply | Analyse | Evaluate | Create |
|----------|------------|-------|---------|----------|--------|
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

2.3.3 Open questions

The importance of asking open questions in class is central to teaching and learning in the 21st century. Open questions allow the learners to think and explore different possibilities by developing and creating individual and/or group answers. They can be used to open conversations and inspire deeper intellectual thought. These can be posed either individually, in pairs, in small groups or with whole classes. They explore the ‘how’, ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘why’ or ‘what’ of problems. Using effective questioning techniques does not happen by accident. Careful planning before the lesson is required to ensure, by using the correct type of question, learners understand the key elements of the topic linked to the learning outcomes. Instead, there are multiple potential responses that could be provided by students that are usually more detailed and varied which supports greater discussion and debate.

Activity 6.5 – Reflecting on closed, open and differentiated questioning (15 minutes)

Think about the use of Open-ended questions and the development of critical thinking skills.

How do you as an educator use questioning to encourage an inclusive positive learning environment?

Q

W

Write your thoughts in your learning journal. Consider the following when making notes.

- Do you question female and male learners equally?
- Do you make the environment safe for learners to make mistakes?
- How often do you give positive reinforcement?
- How often do you ask the whole class a question or encourages each learner to participate by asking a directed question?
- Do you ever gently challenge answers or ask follow up questions to correct mistakes?
- Do you link questions to the learners' own experiences?
- How much time is given for learners to respond?
- Do you plan questions in advance?

These strategies help the learners to **improve self-esteem** and **confidence**

Examples of open-ended questions

Using the example from earlier we can expand the use of questions to engage more learners in the group.



Win Aye, why do you think Asia is NOT a country?



Because Asia is a continent that includes several countries! Myanmar is in Asia.



Aung, can you think of other countries that might be in Asia? There are 48 in total.



Thailand, Vietnam, Laos,



Very good Aung. Naing Myat, why is Spain not in Asia? Which continent is Spain in?



Spain is much further West I think on a different continent. Perhaps Europe but I'm not sure.



Can anyone explain why Naing Myat thinks Spain is on the European continent?



Notice that the teacher asked a lower order question of Aung. This is because she realised he found it hard to answer the 'why' question earlier. The teacher differentiated her question to him to make him feel comfortable and not frightened to answer. Also notice the teacher asked Naing Myat, a different learner, to answer further, more difficult questions about the same subject. This type of questioning can be extended and directed to different learners in class. Open questions can also be asked to the whole class. By 'knowing your learners' (module 2) you have the information needed to adapt questions to suit your learners' needs. Learners can be carefully grouped or paired together by ability, interests etc.

Activity 6.6 – Open or Closed questioning (15 minutes)

Look at the examples below and decide if you think they are open or closed questions.

1. questions will allow students to express a range of views and thoughts on a specific topic allowing for agreement, disagreement and discussion.
2. Using questions at the start of a lesson provides the teacher with an opportunity to assess the views and understanding of the class. This will inform the lesson ahead.
3. questions are used when the teacher wants to check a students' understanding of a topic. Specifically, when there is a right or wrong answer.
4. questions are also commonly used at the end of the lesson to explore some of the key themes discussed in the lesson.
5. questions can be used at any point in a lesson where the teacher feels the students would benefit from discussion and debate.
6. questions are used when factual information is being taught, such as historical dates or when something has a specific name, the stages of a process, etc.
7. questions encourage higher order thinking skills in students such as analysis, evaluation and critical thinking.
8. questions can be used at the start of a lesson to assess student understanding of the topic to be taught in that lesson or to check what the students can remember from the previous lesson.

Part 2 - If you can work with a colleague, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using open and closed questions with students.

Activity 6.6 answers

| | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| open | open | closed | open | open | closed | open | closed |

Part 2

Closed questions

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|
| Easy for students to answer | Students with no prior knowledge might not be able to answer. |
| Accessible for all students as they require lower-order thinking skills (they could be an effective way to include all students who are working at different levels) | Students could guess their answer and the teacher would not know if they have understood the question or not. |
| Provide an opportunity for the teacher to check learning. | There isn't an opportunity for students to explain or elaborate on their answer. |
| Quick and easy to administer for the teacher. | Students have to respond in a pre-determined way. |
| Limits the amount of irrelevant responses. | |
| Easy for teachers to analyse responses & assess. | |

Open ended questions

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--|---|
| Opportunities to explore topics in more detail. | Different responses given can be difficult to analyse and summarise. |
| They promote higher-order thinking skills. | Educators need to plan for more time to allow for thinking, responding and discussion. |
| Allows time for students to explain, justify and elaborate on their answer. | Not all children are able to participate if they find it difficult to use higher-order thinking skills. |
| As there is no single correct answer students can be more comfortable to provide a response with the knowledge it won't be perceived as incorrect. | Some students can find these questions intimidating, particularly if others disagree with their own perspective. They may choose not to answer and participate. |
| | Students can fail to make a clear point as they offer too much detail and elaboration. |

Discussion –

Having explored open and closed questions, consider how you might use them in lessons and whether you feel it is necessary to provide a combination in lessons.

For example:

- Were there enough meals for everyone in the story? (closed)
- Why do you think there weren't enough meals for everyone in the story? (open)

This use of open and closed questions in combination allows you to ask clarifying questions to students using closed questions. You might decide to ask specific students those questions to help build their confidence in a lesson or if you are not sure if they understand the conversation.

By using open questions, in combination with closed questions, you can ask students to justify their opinions, explain their thoughts and challenge other students in a constructive way.






2.3.4 Differentiated questions

Each learner's individual needs (after a short period of time) will be known to you (revisit module 2 – Know your learners). *This will be a challenge if you are teaching large numbers of students, but it is the heart of being an inclusive teacher.*

This is where questions can be used even more effectively to challenge and support individuals at their own levels. **It is important to have high expectations for all learners to answer higher order questions, not just those who understand concepts quickly or easily.** It is how the teacher asks the questions that makes higher order questions easier to answer for everyone. See the example below. An example of a higher order open question asked in two different ways

Evaluative question

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | <p>Khine Oo, when else do people wear a uniform? What impact does it have on the role they carry out or how they are seen in the community?</p> | <p>High order question Harder to answer</p> |
|  | <p>Mi Wai, what is good and bad about wearing school uniform?</p> | <p>High order question Easier to answer</p> |
|  | <p>Cho Lei, what do you think about wearing school uniform?</p> | <p>High order question Even easier to answer</p> |

A

W

A

W

W

- W

W

- W

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Date... | | | | Class... | | | | Teacher observed... | | | |
| | | | | Number of learners... | | | | Teacher observing... | | | |
| Closed questions | | | | Open questions | | | | Differentiated questions | | | |
| Teacher asks | | Learner asks | | Teacher asks | | Learner asks | | Teacher | | | |
| F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | | M | |
| How many times does the teacher ask a closed Q ? | | How many times does the learner ask a closed Q ? | | How many times does the teacher ask an open Q ? | | How many times does the learner ask an open Q ? | | How many times does the teacher ask a differentiated Q ? | | | |
| Questions asked to the whole class | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

Activity 6.7 Discussion / analysis - research about type and frequency of questions in class

This is an example of how to complete the table above.

Results table

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|---|---|-----|--------------|----|---|---|
| Date...29 th July 2021 | | | | Class...Physics Yr 1 Number of learners...35 (17male and 18 female) | | | | Teacher observed...Eaint Chit Teacher observing...Mya Chan | |
| Closed questions | | | | Open questions | | | | Differentiated questions (teacher only) | |
| Teacher asks | | Learner asks | | Teacher asks | | Learner asks | | teacher | |
| F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M |
| 111 | 1111 111 | | 1 | | 111 | 1 | 11 | | |
| Questions asked to the whole class | | | | | | | | | |
| 1111 1111 111 | | 1 | | 111 | | 1 | | | |

This activity gives you the chance to spend time thinking deeply about your use of questions in your class.

What does the data tell you about Eaint Chit's use of questions in her class? Mya Chan and Eaint Chit discussed the table and came to the following conclusions:

Data analysis

- Eaint Chit asks a lot more closed questions than open questions
- Eaint Chit asks more questions to the males
- There were very few questions from the learners
- No differentiated questions were asked at all
- Males are more likely to be asked an open question

What needs to be improved?

They decide there needs to be more use of open questions to challenge learners more deeply and these need to be equally distributed between males and females. Learners need to be encouraged to think of and ask more questions. Also, careful consideration needs to be given to ensure questions encourage all learners by differentiating them to suit their individual needs.

Reflection

Both Eaint Chit and Mya Chan have learnt from this small action research project. They have decided to develop their questioning techniques in their own classes and do another observation of each other using the frequency table. They will then compare the results with the first. Further improvements will follow. Colleagues in their school are very interested in doing similar research.

3. Introduction to Action Research

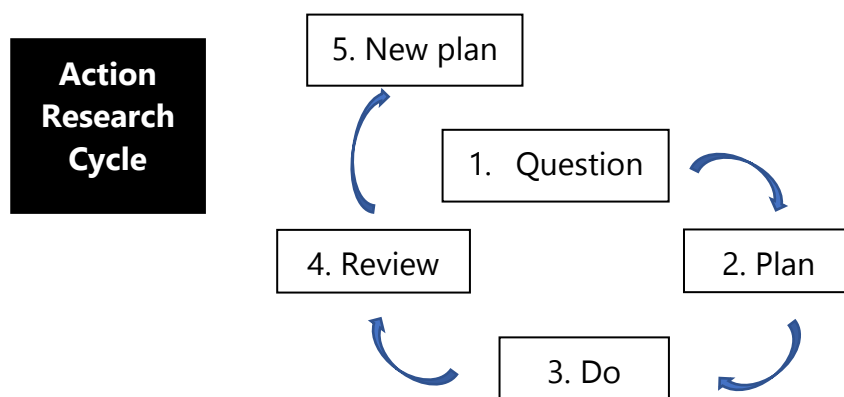


What you have just attempted, by researching the types of questions and their frequency in your class was an example of a small-scale **action research project**.

You can use this approach to help you improve your classroom practice in the future if you have other questions. The diagram below shows the action research cycle.

Notice how you

- 1) decided on the question
- 2) planned how to answer it
- 3) did the observation of teaching
- 4) reviewed the data
- 5) planned if/how to improve. The cycle then continues until you are confident with your use of questioning.



Activity 6.8 Self-assessment

REFLECTION: How well do you think you understand '**questioning techniques for inclusion**' NOW?

R Look at the scale below and identify the number that best describes YOU. Answer in your learning journal.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|
| NOT well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | VERY well |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|

4. Effective feedback

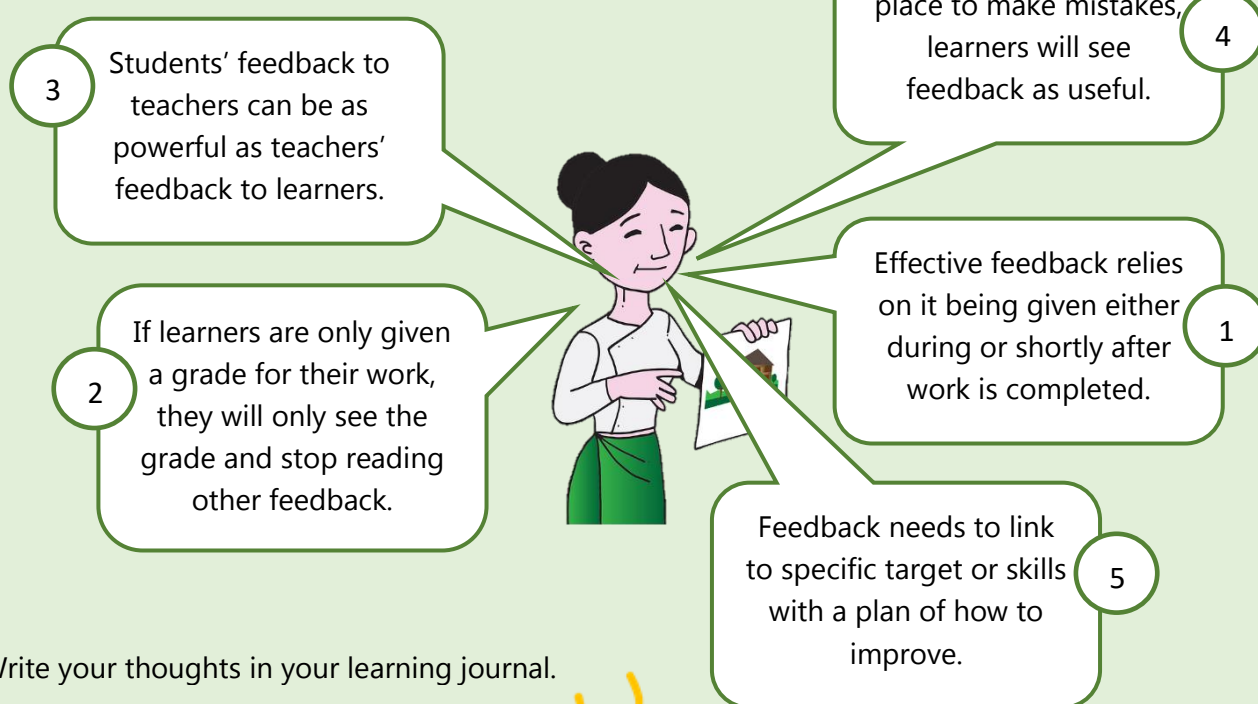
For feedback to be effective there needs to be trust between the teacher and learners. The discussions around creating a positive learning environment in the previous module have provided a firm foundation on which trust can be built between teachers and their learners.

Activity 6.9 – Ranking statements about feedback (20 minutes)

1. Rank these statements in order of importance to you.
2. Explain why you have placed them in that order.

Example:

1. **Most** important to **least** important = 4, 2, 5, 1, 3
2. The **reason why** isetc. etc.



Activity 6.9 answers - Discussion about feedback statements

Each of the statements makes an important point about the elements of effective feedback. There is no right or wrong answer to the ranking exercise. The answers below are in no particular order.

1. For feedback to be effective it needs to be given either during or as close to the task completed as possible. Feedback several weeks later is not useful.
2. Learners tend to focus on the grade (A,B....E etc). They then don't read any written feedback.
3. Like questioning, it's important for teachers to listen to learners' feedback.
4. If learners are happy to make mistakes, they will accept and use feedback to improve.
5. If feedback is not linked to targets or skills, it is ineffective on improving the learner towards their goal.

Activity 6.10 – Importance of feedback (30 minutes)

Watch the following short video about effective feedback and answer the questions in your learning journals.

1. **Summarise** the important points about effective feedback? Use the diagram below to support you.
2. **Thinking time:** think of a time you received effective feedback. What made it effective?
3. How often do you encourage student's peers to give feedback?
4. The video states that effective feedback can improve learning by 8 months. John Hattie has also documented extensive research around the effect of feedback on student's learning. We will explore this further in the next section, but you may wish to look up his research.
5. How do I use the feedback I receive from learners? Does it impact on what I do next and what I teach?



Effective feedback animation -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzbSLyIwI>

What

Where is the learner going?

Goal setting

Where is the learner now?

Gather evidence

How can the learner get there?

Clear steps

Who

Teacher

other students

themselves

About

The task

The
learning
process

Student self-
regulation

Benefits

Increased effort
improved self-regulation

better outcomes
evidence of learning

effective learning strategies
ability to adapt teaching

4.1 Feedback – where to start



We have learnt that effective feedback can increase academic outcomes and the amount of effort students put into their learning. The improvement of self-regulation enables learners to become more independent and confident in using learning strategies that they have been taught. When students receive feedback from their teacher or their peers they take a more active role and more ownership in the learning process. If we think about individual learners here and inclusive practice, it is vital that we know our learners and build that trust for our feedback to have the most amount of impact on students' learning.

Own the feedback



Be specific

Leave the person with a choice

Offer alternatives

Be descriptive

Refer to the behaviour that can be changed

Start with a positive

Activity 6.11 – Ranking statements about feedback (20 minutes)

| Start with the positive | Own the feedback | Leave the person with a choice | Offer alternatives | Be specific | Refer to behaviour that can be changed | Be descriptive |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|----------------|
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|----------------|

Read the descriptions below and match the correct word. Write your answers in your learning journal.

- Most people need encouragement, to be told when they are doing something well. When giving feedback it can really help to hear first what they have done well. e.g. 'I really liked how you provided an opportunity for students to discuss their answers.'
- Try to avoid general comments which are not very useful when it comes to giving feedback: e.g. Saying things like, 'You are excellent!' or 'Your lesson was really bad!' These statements do not give enough information and are not useful. Try to identify what was 'excellent' or 'really bad'
- It is not helpful to give a person feedback on things they can't control. e.g. 'I really don't like your voice/face, etc.' or 'You are a tall/ short teacher'. There is nothing a person can do with this information. Think about how they use their voice and the impact it has on teaching and learning or how their height might be something to think about when talking to students, e.g. getting to the same height as them for a conversation.
- If you do offer negative feedback then try to suggest what the person could have done differently rather than criticising.
- Tell the person what you saw and heard and the effect it had on you, rather than saying something was 'good', 'bad' etc.
- It is very easy to say to the other person, 'You did...' or 'You are...' and give feedback in a way that the person thinks that it is what everyone thinks. It is important to explain that you are feeding back your opinion on what you saw and your experience of it. It may not be a true reflection of their usual performance.
- Good feedback offers information and it is up to the receiver what they do with that information. They will decide how they take that information and if they wish to make any changes.

Activity 6.11 answers

| Start with the positive | Own the feedback | Leave the person with a choice | Offer alternatives | Be specific | Refer to behaviour that can be changed | Be descriptive |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--|----------------|
| 1 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 |



4.1.2 Start with a positive and be specific

Think about how specific your feedback is and how positive you are. Do you **praise** students with general statements such as 'You are clever.' It feels positive but it doesn't link to the learning and can feel like the comment is not genuine. Many cultures tend to emphasise the negative with the focus on mistakes more than the strengths. If we talk about the positive first, any negative feedback is more likely to be listened to and acted upon. See below how the teacher uses feedback and look at what the learner hears or the message they take away.



Very good. You are great! Your last teacher said you were very clever and I agree. Your drawings are colourful and your answers were interesting. Try to be more factual with your answers in your next assignment.

Yes teacher.



Wow, the teachers think I'm clever.

Notice: the teacher starts by giving lots of praise to Su Khaing which doesn't relate specifically to the assignment work. Su Khaing only listens to the feedback on how clever she is and doesn't take notice of how to improve her next assignment.

If the teacher started with 'Your drawings are colourful and your answers were interesting' Su Khaing would hear positive feedback to begin with that relates to her work. The specific feedback at the end gives Su Khaing more opportunity for learning.

4.1.3 Be descriptive

When we are more descriptive with our feedback, it can feel more genuine, particularly when it focusses on an actual task and how well it has been completed. See the example below how the teacher uses feedback and what the student is able to take from it.



Naing, your written answers are descriptive and factual and they explain 'gravity' very clearly. However, you do not include any historical context.

The second part – the drawing of Newton is interesting and does link to the correct time period. The tree you have drawn though is a teak tree.

Why don't you go back and add the historical content you feel is missing to the written task or decide how you will redraw the scene to show Newton under an apple tree.

Yes teacher. I clearly know what I need to do to.



Naing, would you please repeat to me what you need to do?

Notice: the teacher starts by telling Naing what he has done correctly for each of the tasks followed by a description of what he needs to correct his work. Another important thing the teacher does is to give Naing options about how he makes his corrections and then asks him to repeat the feedback so that she is sure he understands what he needs to do.

4.1.4 Refer to behaviour that can be changed and offer alternatives

When we give feedback, it is important to discuss the behaviour that can be changed. This takes away any risk of feedback being personal or offending someone.

Try to turn any temptation to give negative feedback into a positive suggestion: e.g. 'I think the students in the back are struggling to hear you. What do you think you could do to ensure they can hear you and stay engaged. Have you thought about speaking a bit louder or moving around the classroom more when you speak?'



You produced two out of three parts of the written task well. Can you spend some time looking at the third part at home as this work really needs to be finished?

What can we do to make sure that you are able to complete the full task next time? Would sitting in a different space help or a reminder of the time you have left to keep you on track?

Yes teacher. I will complete the last section at home. I missed the third part because I got distracted. I think that is a good idea if I move places so I can concentrate more easily.



Notice: how the teacher points out what Su Khaing has achieved rather than saying 'You haven't finished.' She gives Su Khaing some ownership about she thinks will be best for future work, making it her decision and therefore likely to have a bigger impact on the change the teacher would like to see.

4.1.5 Own the feedback and leave the person with a choice

Owning the feedback is about taking responsibility for what we say and the impact it has. You might change the way you give feedback and what you say depending on who is receiving it. For example, some students may need feedback on one important area and another student might be able to cope with more. Giving the receiver choices encourages them to take ownership and responsibility in making a change. It promotes learner autonomy and supports them to develop skills that help them monitor, organise, and plan their own work.



Naing, I can see from your answers you have used several types of resources to help you answer the written question. I feel like you have chosen some very interesting people to interview. How might you develop your knowledge of gravity further? Will you do more research or something more practical?

The drawing you have produced is historically relevant. Since your last drawing you have clearly researched how to paint trees, which was on an earlier piece of feedback I gave you.

Teacher, my uncle is a scientist working at university, I've already asked him if I can visit him and see his lab. I can take a few other learners if they are interested.

I read your last feedback and watched several YouTube clips on painting. I am clear on the areas I need to work on to improve.



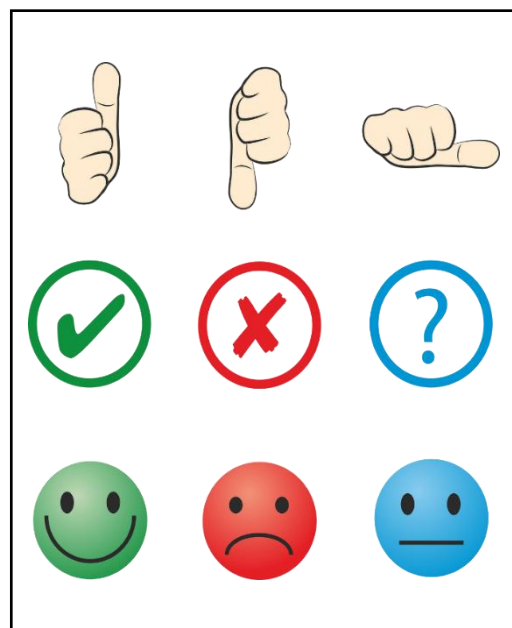
Notice: the teacher shares how she feels in the feedback to Naing. She focusses on his ability to follow earlier feedback from previous assignments and gives him some choices on how he could develop further. Each of the examples demonstrate the learner's self-awareness and ability to improve relatively independently.

4.2 Hidden messages in feedback



In the first example in the previous section around self-level feedback, the learner took away the message 'I am clever' and did not hear the more specific feedback the teacher gave. Whilst praise is a motivator for learning it is important that praise doesn't hide or overshadow the intended feedback that will help students move forward with their learning.

Look at the images, often used when giving younger students feedback. What do you think younger children will want on their work? A smiley face, a tick and a big thumbs up? If we are encouraging learners to give feedback using these images, it is possible that we are also communicating that if students get a cross or a sad face that this is a bad thing. In previous modules we have talked about using mistakes as a learning opportunity, so it is important that we celebrate mistakes with young children, so they are not frightened to take risks or make mistakes as this is all part of their learning process.



Source:
<https://pixabay.com/vectors/feedback-opinion-gut-bad-neutral-1311638/> Creative Commons

4.3 Feedback and inclusive practice

Think about the learners in your educational setting, particularly those who may need extra support. These learners may be performing above their peers academically, they may not be learning in their first language or they might have additional learning difficulties such as a visual impairment. Effective feedback is vital for all children.

Read the list of consequences of effective feedback below.

- The learner feels accepted. Their efforts are recognised and valued.
- Self-esteem and commitment to tasks increases.
- Deep learning is more likely with understanding and improvement. The focus is on goals, success criteria, and tasks.
- Students are more prepared to take risks and accept challenges. This is because their self-esteem comes from their effort and not from comparing them with other learners.
- Increased interest, effort, persistence, self-esteem and self-belief.
- In time – 'learned resourcefulness'
- Empowered learning – I will find a way around this problem and succeed.
- Learning depends on time, effort, corrected practice and using the right strategies.

Adapted from 'Evidence based Teaching (2nd edition)', G. Petty, 2009



Important points about effective feedback

- There needs to be a clear model of success to enable feedback to be given. This may be in the form of a success criteria so the steps for success are clear.
- Feedback needs to follow assessment.
- Assessment and feedback can occur before (initial), during (formative) and at the end or after (summative) a lesson.
- Feedback tells how you are performing in a task.
- Feedback tells you what went well during the task.
- Feedback tells you what to improve and how to improve it.
- Feedback should be given during or soon after the task.
- Targets for improving should be set after feedback.
- Careful checks on progress (on the targets set after feedback) is critical.
- Feedback needs to be constructive and respectful.
- Students should see feedback as helpful and supportive and not a judgement of them personally.
- When a clear assessment criteria and goals are shared with learners the feedback is easier to give and receive. Feedback can be given on how well the learner has met the criteria and goals.

5.Wrap up

In this module you have:

1. Explored different types of questioning and when it might be appropriate to use them.
2. Considered how the types of questions we ask has an impact on lower or higher order thinking.
3. Thought about action research and how they might be useful in reflecting on your practice.
4. explained the importance of effective feedback.
Explored different levels of feedback and considered the most effective.

Key points from this module:

- When questioning is used effectively, all learners are included.
- Educators can use a range of questioning strategies depending on the task to engage, support memory, enable learners to understand and support them in analysing and evaluating.
- Small scale action research can support changes and improvements to teaching and learning.
- Teachers should think about how to structure conversations around feedback to ensure it is useful in moving learning forward.
- Feedback should be specific, timely, actionable and respectful.



6. End of module 6 quiz

Please answer the following questions in your learning journal. You can attempt as many times as you like to reach 100% pass. Some questions require more than one answer.

Q1 - What is the difference between open and closed questions? (choose 1)

- a) Open questions do not need to be planned at all. Closed questions do need to be planned.
- b) Open questions can be answered by the most capable students. Closed questions can only be answered by the least abled.
- c) Open questions can be used to explore any student's knowledge and understanding at a deeper level. Closed questions can generally only find out shallow understanding.

Q2 - Why is it important to differentiate questioning with students? (choose 1)

- a) Equality – all students should be treated the same.
- b) Some students only like to answer easy questions..
- c) So that all students can answer questions at their level of ability.

Q3 - Which of the following are essential for providing good feedback? (choose 2)

- a) Feedback needs to tell you only what you did well in a task
- b) Feedback needs to be given very soon after a task
- c) Feedback needs to tell you 'what' and 'how' to improve after a task

Q4 - What are the benefits of providing effective feedback? (choose 3)

- a) The learner feels accepted and their efforts are being recognised and valued.
- b) The teacher will get 100% achievement of their students at the end of the year
- c) Self-esteem and commitment tend to rise and increase in emotional commitment in tasks.
- d) Teachers achieve one of their responsibilities in the classroom
- e) Students can feel confident to learn from any mistakes.

Answers - end of module 6 quiz

Answers in **bold**

Q1 - What is the difference between open and closed questions? (choose 1)

- a) Open questions do not need to be planned at all. Closed questions do need to be planned.
- b) Open questions can be answered by the most capable students. Closed questions can only be answered by the least abled.
- c) Open questions can be used to explore any student's knowledge and understanding at a deeper level. Closed questions can generally only find out shallow understanding.**

Explanation - Both types of questions are important in the classroom. Open questions can be used to carefully explore a student's knowledge and understanding at a deeper level – the 'why' and 'how' questions. Closed questions can be used to quickly establish a student's thoughts on whether something is either 'right' or 'wrong', 'black' or 'white' for example. These questions give us a limited depth of understanding of our student's knowledge and understanding.

Q2 - Why is it important to differentiate questioning with students? (choose 1)

- a) Equality – all students should be treated the same.
- b) Some students only like to answer easy questions..
- c) So that all students can answer questions at their level of ability.**

Explanation - Differentiating questions allows individual students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a topic at a level that suits them. Also, if a question is too easy, the student will not be able to demonstrate their ability and may lose interest. Similarly, a question that is too hard for a student could easily make them feel inadequate and they might stop trying to answer further questions.

Q3- Which of the following are essential for providing good feedback? (choose 2)

- a) Feedback needs to tell you only what you did well in a task
- b) Feedback needs to be given very soon after a task**
- c) Feedback needs to tell you 'what' and 'how' to improve after a task**

Explanation - Feedback can be given at any stage of a task. This can be formative and/or summative. It needs to be given quickly to the student after a task so that they can identify what they have done well, what they need to improve, and how they can improve it. Feedback needs to be positive and constructive.

Q4 - What are the benefits of providing effective feedback? (choose 3)

- a) The learner feels accepted and their efforts are being recognised and valued.**
- b) The teacher will get 100% achievement of their students at the end of the year
- c) Self-esteem and commitment tend to rise and increase in emotional commitment in tasks.**
- d) Teachers achieve one of their responsibilities in the classroom
- e) Students can feel confident to learn from any mistakes.**

Explanation- Effective feedback can help students feel confident and improve their self-esteem. By identifying what they do well and what they need to do to improve, effective feedback helps them focus on specific ways to develop. Careful regular checks of student progress by the teacher can help them consistently improve and learn from their mistakes.

7. Improving teaching and learning

Activity 6.12 Improving your own teaching practice. (30 minutes)

It is important to reflect on your answers to the activities you completed earlier.

Scenario – Your Head of Department asks to meet you to ask about what you do to create a positive learning environment. They ask you to think carefully about the following questions. Make notes in your learning journal:

What do you do to create a positive learning environment for the learners in your class?

- How do you organise the physical space?
- What routines do you have in place that enable learners to feel safe and comfortable?

Are all learners asked questions during lessons?

- What could you do to encourage some learners to participate or become more actively involved?

Do all learners receive feedback that is specific, timely, actionable and respectful?

- Can you share a few examples?

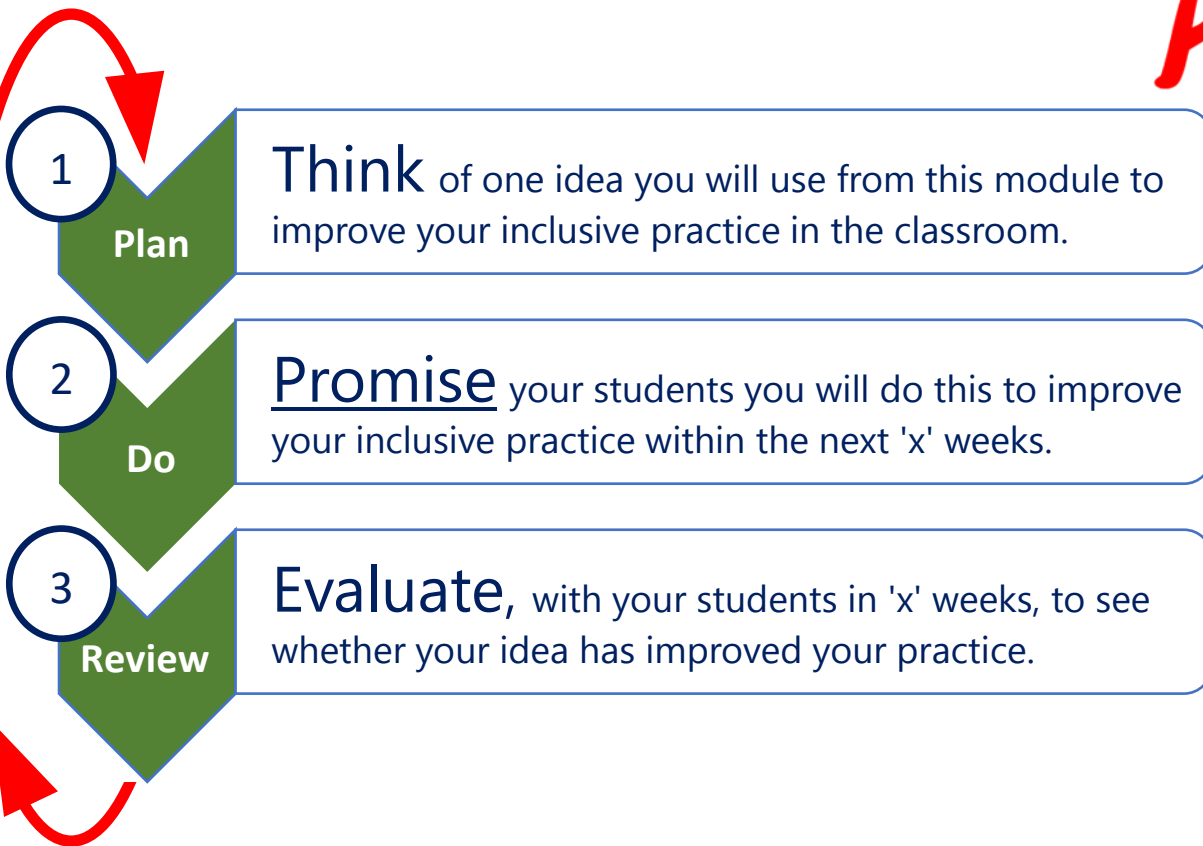
Activity 6.13 - Self-assessment (10 minutes)

REFLECT: How well do you understand the use of **effective feedback**? Look at the scale below and choose the number that best describes YOU.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|
| NOT well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | VERY well |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------|

Compare your self-assessment scores at the beginning and end of the sections in this module. In your learning journal provide a short analysis of your thoughts about any differences.

Your 6th PROMISE to your STUDENTS



Please add your 6th promise to the section in your learning journal entitled 'Promises.'

Each module contains one promise you will make to your learners: you will make 15 promises in total.

References

AITSL - Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2017) - Effective feedback animation

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzbSLyIwI>

Petty,G (2009) 'Evidence based Teaching (2nd edition)'