

Audio 1.1

Teachers question their learners all the time. Good questioning helps you to find out what learners know; and is important in assessing their progress. Questions can be divided into two broad categories:

The first is lower-order questions. These involve the recall of facts and knowledge previously taught. They often involve **closed** questions (that is questions requiring a short yes or no answer, or a single word). For example:

- Did you play football yesterday evening? Or
- What is the capital of Zambia? Or
- Does water heated to 100 degrees become steam?

All these questions only require short answers and it's easy as a teacher to find out if your students have understood the content.

Higher order questions: these are generally open ended; and encourage learners to think beyond yes or no answers and elicit different responses from learners. These help the teachers to assess the learners' understanding of content.

Some examples of higher order questions are:

- What are the advantages of living in a large city? Or
- How do animals protect themselves from predators? Or
- What did you do on the weekend?

As you can see these are all questions that require longer answers and they will vary from student to student.

When you feel comfortable with the concept of lower order and higher order questions, do Activity no. 5

Audio 1.2

Many teachers don't give enough time for learners to answer a question and end up answering it themselves. Try and give your learners time to think. By waiting after asking a question, there is an increase in:

- the length of the learners' answers
- the number of learners offering responses
- the frequency of learners' questions
- the number of responses from less capable learners, and
- positive interactions between the learners.

If one learner has the wrong idea you can be sure that many more have as well, and there are many ways to correct wrong answers and misconceptions. Try and encourage your learners to try again by using the following techniques:

- Pick out parts of the answer that are correct and ask the learner to think a bit more about their answer.

This helps your learners to learn from their mistakes. For example, you can respond to an incorrect answer in a supportive way. As in... 'yes you were right about evaporation forming clouds, but I think we need to explore a bit more what you said about rain. Can anybody else offer some ideas?'

By responding in this way, you do not discourage the initial student, but you encourage others to participate.

- You could also write on the board all the answers that learners give and then ask the class to think about them. What answers do they think are right? Are there other correct answers? This helps you to understand the way your learners are thinking and gives them a chance to correct any misunderstandings they may have without feeling threatened.

It's important that you, the teacher, listen carefully. If you ask for further explanation for answers, whether they are right or wrong, learners will often correct their answers themselves. You don't want your learners to feel afraid of giving the wrong answer.