

# Teaching & Learning Newsletter

## Previous Learning: Modelling and Scaffolding

[\(Athecology 2024 pp23-6\)](#)

The focus of the last newsletter was 'modelling and scaffolding'. On the SWA learning ladder this is adapting practice to challenge all students through collaborative practice that ensures progress. This was exemplified by the idea of adaptive teaching, defined in the teaching standards and ECF, as the need to 'adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of pupils'.

## SWA Ladder Focus: [\(Questioning and discussion 2024 pp29-32\)](#)

The focus of this newsletter is 'questioning and discussion'. Roseshine and Sherrington see effective questioning as being at the heart of great teaching. Questioning and discussion, can not only be a census check for knowledge, but can also probe the depth of student understanding, as well as address any misconceptions, and provide instant feedback. This then allows students to progress.



## Key Learning...

- Questioning and discussion has a low implementation cost, but has a high impact on learning.
- It provides opportunities to check prior knowledge and current understanding.
- It can be adapted to challenge ALL students.
- It can be used to address misconceptions and promote progress.

## Why is questioning and discussion important and what should it look like in our classrooms?

Using Q & D to gain high quality verbal responses from our students allows us to assess, adapt our teaching, probe for greater depth and prompt the use of subject specific language. We can promote progress through immediate verbal feedback and create an active learning environment. By developing oracy skills we are also improving student written responses.

SWA used Rosenshine's 'Principles of Instruction' to develop the Teaching and Learning Ladder, a central principle is effective questioning, which is an 'interactive, dynamic and responsive process' (Sherrington 2019). To promote this, our school has a hands down policy to foster whole class interaction and engagement. We also promote targeted and adaptive questioning, enabling us to challenge and ensure progress.

Pedagogical research promotes five effective questioning methods. Cold-calling and no-opt-out (Lemov 2015) are shown to increase student engagement. If this is set up with reasoning and clearly explained, students recognise they have to remain on task as anyone could be asked. No-opt-out needs to come with the understanding that students can answer even if unsure, so that a secure answer can be built towards. This can also be very successful if combined with 'thinking time' (Busch et al 2023). Thirdly, 'Say-it-again-say-it but better by doing X' gives students a chance to improve their response using immediate teacher feedback. Fourthly, think-pair-share is an excellent opportunity for students to prepare a good answer, gaining confidence and preventing difficult silences. Lastly, whole-class response or census checking using multiple choice questions or mini-white boards can serve as a hinge point at any point in the lesson. Further detail on these questioning types can be found [here](#).

Three effective discussion activities are described in the Teaching to The Top section of the [Anthecology 2023](#): Teaching Triads, Socratic Circles and Gallery Critique to develop students oracy and understanding.

## Questioning in Action: English and PE Spotlight

- 1) "Why? Why? Why?" – ensuring after every student response you extend by asking "Why?" to encourage greater depth, further explanation and promote deeper analysis.
- 2) "Say it again but..." - PE's insistency on all responses including subject specific vocabulary or the response is not accepted.



## Recommended Reading

For more articles, podcasts, blogs and research click [here](#).