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ECAD6008 Assignment: Part 2

This essay will briefly outline the pedagogical principle of assessment for learning and specifically discuss whether Questioning as an Assessment for Learning (AFL) strategy effectively accelerates a student's progress through considering the four key elements identified as fundamental to questioning. These are Hinge questions, cold calling, probing, planning and waiting times.

The essay also identifies and discusses the next steps in integrating questioning into my professional development. I have chosen to explore this aspect due to the feedback received from my mentor. Focused on building my skills and knowledge for effective questioning and, in turn, effective assessment strategies.

I have been inspired to increase my understanding of what the literature says about this aspect to support my development as a teacher.

The assessment reform group stated that

Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their practitioners to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (Broadfoot and Daugherty, 2002, p 2).

Amongst many strategies and voices in the education field, it is proposed by research from Paul Black and Dylan Williams that if AFL is used effectively by a teacher in their daily practice, this will have a positive impact on students' learning and, in turn, will raise standards (Black and Wiliam, 1998). In their booklet, *Inside the Black Box*, the results of their research revealed that "a gain effect of 0.4 would improve pupils' performances in GCSE by between one and two grades" (1998, p.4).

Further research also supported this theory, revealing that frequent assessment feedback supports students with low attendance or additional learning needs and enhances their learning (Fuchs et al., 1997). This demonstrates the value AFL can have in the classroom, as gains for these students would have a greater impact on their futures.

The four AFL strategies are

- sharing criteria with learners,
- quality of questions/quality of talk

- use and quality of feedback and
- peer and self-assessment.

As stated, this essay will focus on questioning. Questions have been used as a method of teaching for centuries.

The Greek philosopher Socrates developed the Socratic method of questioning in the 5th century BC. He believed that to teach well; an educator must reach into a student's prior knowledge and awareness to help the student reach new levels of thinking. The tool to achieve this was questioning (Paul & Elder, 2016).

Questioning is an integral part of the teaching and learning experience. It is used to “stimulate the recall of prior knowledge, promote comprehension and build critical thinking skills” (Tofade, Elsner and Haines 2013, pg 1).

How effective questioning is achieved both in terms of its ability to stimulate higher-order thinking skills and to assist the teacher in their assessment of current levels of student knowledge and understanding, has attracted extensive research across the decades. This has resulted in well-established questioning frameworks that help teachers improve their questioning techniques. The most well-known and cited is Bloom's Taxonomy (Benjamin Samuel Bloom and Krathwohl, 1968).

He theorised that there were six kinds of thinking and then created six (cognitive) categories that he saw as useful for assessments and, thus, also for questions.

The framework is cumulative in that successful completion of previous lower-order thinking levels needs to occur (recall, understanding, application) before a student can progress to the higher-order thinking levels (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

However, critics of the theory draw attention to the issue of the hierarchy model, as the teaching profession has linked this to year levels, which could impact the cognitive challenge presented at the lower levels (Berger, 2018). In addition, neuro-science would discredit the presented linear learning method and argue that it devalues basic skills such as comprehension, instead promoting higher-order thinking (Booker, 2007).

Despite this, Bloom's work continues to be taught and encouraged in teacher training as it provides a clear scaffold for student teachers as they consider using questions to achieve successful learning outcomes for their students (West, 2023).

We will now consider the four key elements identified as fundamental to using questioning as an AFL strategy.

A hinge question

The concept of a hinge question has come from the work of Dylan Wiliam, who explains it to be “designing a lesson with a hinge somewhere in the middle and using specific kinds of questions—what I call hinge questions—to quickly assess students' understanding of a concept before moving on” (Wiliam, 2015, para.3). Wiliam suggests that if students do not demonstrate their understanding by getting the question correct, you do not move to the next stage but review the topic again. These questions can be easy to implement, and the assessment process can be introduced into every lesson so that a student's understanding is reinforced as the lesson progresses.

Hinge questions work effectively if all students have the opportunity to answer, e.g. using a mini-whiteboard or a multiple-choice question. These questions then allow the teacher to make an effective decision in reaction to the whole class. (Wiliam, 2015)

Further, Matt Bromley suggests that the teacher has a predetermined percentage of the class they want to get right before the class moves on. Ensuring they “consider what to do to support the 20 per cent who got the question wrong” (Bromley, 2017, para 25).

In October 2022, Estyn produced “Effective Approaches to Assessment That Improve Teaching and Learning” (Estyn, 2022). It contained case studies from schools across Wales that had found teaching and learning improved when practical AFL practices were implemented. The hinge case studies highlighted its positive impact on teachers deciding when formative assessment should occur (Estyn, 2022).

However, the literature raises some questions about potential difficulties in using hinge questions. The main issue raised is around the process and pace of learning. Graham Nuthall suggests that, “Learning takes time and is not encapsulated in the visible here-and-now of classroom activities.” (Nuthall 2005). This would put a question mark around this AFL strategy to provide accurate information on what has been learnt, and it could be argued that a correct answer thirty minutes after learning something will not support the proposition that a student will be able to answer this question weeks or months later in an exam. Kirschner, Sweller and Clark

also agree with Nuthall and highlight, “If nothing has changed in long-term memory, nothing has been learned” (Kirschner et al., 2006, p.77).

Nuthall also believes that a teacher will need more information than a single question to judge authentic learning. “It is impossible for teachers to judge what their students are learning without much more detailed and individually differentiated data than they have available in the classroom” (Nuthall, 2007). Nuthall argues that we must find alternative ways to go deeper around this AFL strategy.

However, Williams rebuts this by stating,

This is true, and it would be a valid criticism of the idea of a single hinge question—if teachers were going to make high-stakes decisions on the basis of students' responses (William, 2015, para 14).

Cold Calling

Cold calling is a teaching strategy where any student can be called on to answer. It is a technique within the great teaching toolkit (dimension 4) under activating hard thinking. Through the evidence review, it is clear that creating a learning environment where any student can be called on to answer is beneficial for a student's progress (Coe et al., 2020, p.34).

This approach encourages students to consider their potential answers if they are called to respond. In regards to being an effective assessment tool, it allows for the teacher to gain a broader response from the class, as they will not only be hearing from students who are confident in the answer but instead may receive a range of reactions, allowing them to decide on the best way to proceed with the lesson.

The Welsh government has also suggested the no hands-up strategy to support teachers in developing effective AFL in the classroom. This technique specifically can support improving the quality of questions and the quality of talk (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010).

Doug Lemov would agree, his research presented in *Teaching Like a Champion* shows the impact cold calling has on a classroom environment. Lemov explains that it will support the creation of an inclusive learning environment and, in turn, support students' progress. They may

be called on at any stage, so they need to prepare an answer, but there is also an opportunity for the teacher to support contributions (Lemov, 2016, para 30).

However, education lecturer Alfie Kohn has been outspoken in his views opposing cold calling. He believes that this method does not respect a student's choice to speak, that the teacher is dictating the classroom environment, demanding a child to speak when they say so, and that this method may benefit the teacher more than the student. He proposes that a model of facilitating discussion is the best way to create an environment where a student shares when they want and a sense of self-governing and demand more social skills from them as they choose when to share, which allows them to feel a sense of trust from the teacher (Kohn, 2016).

Also, a paper released by the University of Maryland agrees that the teacher needs to consider the classroom atmosphere, whether it is conducive for a discussion, do students feel safe and confident to share openly or whether the classroom is seen as intimidating, hostile or unwelcoming. "A psychologically unsafe environment will prevent students from expressing their thoughts and opinions aloud" (Tofade et al., 2013, para 21).

Probing

Through the research, it is clear that probing is an effective questioning strategy that would support a student in developing their knowledge and give the teacher a clear indication of what the student has understood, allowing them to facilitate AFL.

Through his observations and research, Tom Sherrington believes that probing questions create an excellent lesson where a whole class discussion can occur (Sherrington, 2013). Through the study, it is clear that facilitating a discussion and extending students' responses is vital to creating an opportunity for students to think to a deeper cognitive level. Dylan Wiliam emphasises the need to move away from initiating a question, responding to it, and then evaluating it. He highlights the importance of not just accepting a student's answer initially but probing and prompting for accurate and correct responses so students can work at a higher cognitive level (NSW Government, 2021). In his research, it was clear that posing a compelling question resulted in higher attainment as the AFL strategy engages higher-order thinking for students. (Wiliam * et al., 2004). It also showed that students developed more critical thinking skills when using probing questions effectively. When it was modelled, it encouraged students to

ask themselves questions, developing a student's independence on their learning journey (TEAL, 2014).

However, probing is criticised for its links to Socratic methods. As Robert D. Dinerstein states, “its fostering of passivity on the part of those students not involved in the dialogue, and its privileging of the professor as the sage on the stage — are serious impediments” (NTY, 2011, para 2).

Planning

The research shows the potential power a good question can have on a student's progress. If this question is planned, it will most likely have a greater effect. In their recent paper, Kimberly Alexander and others propose that an effective questioning model begins with a well-structured item (Alexander et al. 2021).

From their research, questioning frameworks are brought to light. The two that will be explored further are the Question Formulation Technique and ThinkTrix (Alexander et al. 2021)

The Question Formulation Technique (QTF) follows four rules to support teachers in structuring their questions and encouraging students to form their own. These four rules are most effective when students form questions based on a specific topic they have yet to explore. Using these rules at the beginning of a new topic allows students to start to question and consider before they are given any information by the teacher. Subsequent lessons then sustain student engagement as their questions support the exploration of the topic (Glasser, 2014).

The four questions of the QTF model are as follows:

- “1. Ask as many questions as you can
2. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any questions
3. Write down every question exactly as it is stated
4. Change any statement into a question.”

(Right Question Institute, 2018, para 6)

The ThinkTrix framework was developed by Frank Lyman. He proposed seven category types, which are not hierarchical, which opposes Bloom's taxonomy.

He aimed to get students to think for themselves and have knowledge of how their minds work. The result was metacognitively aware, critically thinking students (Lyman, 1987).

His seven category types are as follows

- “Recall
- Cause and Effect
- Similarity
- Difference
- Example to idea
- Idea to Example
- Evaluate” (Lyman, 1987)

An example of a question under difference would be: “How does this differ from what I do know?’ (Lyman, 1987). Each of Lyman's categories encourages teachers to pose questions that engage students in higher-order thinking. The research suggests that the types of questions and how they are used are important to support the teaching of higher-level thinking skills. It also allows students to model (Bridger, 1988).

Wait Time

The literature shows that a teacher's use of wait time is critical in creating an environment where classroom discussions can occur. The Welsh government's guidance, published in 2010, advised teachers of the benefits of a wait time to support a student's deeper thinking and enable them to give effective assessments for learning. They state,

If we want learners to think about a question, we must provide time for this to happen and develop an atmosphere in which everyone is expected to think. If the wait time is increased to a mere 3 seconds, there is a considerable increase in the number of learners responding, the depth of the answers, and the range of language used in their answers (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010, p 25).

There are two moments that the research has discovered teachers need to wait; the first is once you have posed the question, and the second pause needs to happen once a student has responded. These two wait time factors were researched by Mary Budd Rowe and published in her paper in 1986, supporting the benefits of a 3-second wait time on both occasions. (Rowe, 1986) The research highlighted that the number and kind of questions teachers asked changed when they increased their wait time. As they waited, they also benefited from time to think and

consider their responses and where to take the next question, which meant the questions asked were more cognitively advanced.

It further highlighted that teacher's expectations of certain students started to increase. It "found that student questions increased in number and that a more significant proportion of their questions tended to be at a higher level of complexity" (Rowe, 1986, p 46). This outcome indicates the power of wait time on AFL and the information you can gain as a teacher when asking a question in this method (Rowe, 1986).

However, other research has criticised this technique, finding that in some instances, the effect of the wait time is just that other interactions occur between students instead of the desired thinking. Ingram and Elliott suggest that a "more nuanced understanding of wait time, desired student behaviours and the interaction of the two" (Ingram & Elliott, 2015, para 1) is understood by teachers to have success with this strategy.

The literature review has identified key areas that I could incorporate into my teaching practice so that I can question effectively and use it as an assessment for learning strategy.

However, I want to first note the unique environment of a drama classroom compared to other subjects. The most significant difference is how a drama class demonstrates learning and knowledge through performance. The performance presents a fantastic opportunity to assess what students have learnt; it gives clear insight into their progress. It is also an environment where they must think deeply to create, considering all aspects of the world around them. "The play activity of drama has content that reflects the social world, permitting the kinds of empathic exploration" (Winston, 1999, p 466).

However, even though drama has unique elements, aligning learning and assessment is still essential. Creative subjects are assessed primarily through "a judgement of the outcome of artistic styles of learning, discovery and creativity rather than a confinement of students into responses that are predictable and iterative" (Jacobs, 2016, p 10).

This makes it even more imperative that a drama teacher has clarity on what is being assessed in a student's work/performance and that the creation process is also valued and assessed alongside the final performance piece.

Informed by the literature, it is clear what questioning elements can be incorporated to support a student's learning. I will now identify and justify the actions I will take in my future practice as a teacher.

From the literature, probing questions are viewed as effective at encouraging higher-order thinking skills. To support the school's pedagogical practices and develop my own, I will specifically use the Pose, Pause, Pounce and Bounce to pose questions. This technique moves a question around the room so students can share their ideas and then agree or disagree with each other's views. This creates valuable discussion between peers, deepening thinking and progressing learning. (William * et al., 2004).

Hinge questioning is another key questioning technique I want to incorporate. When considering this practice, I feel that a hinge question will work well when students work practically and create. A hinge question could evolve into a pivot moment. The principle is the same: to take a moment during the lesson to assess and consider the next step in their learning journey (William, 2015).

Another technique I will endeavour to take into my practice is 'think, pair, share.' This is where students are given time to think before turning to a partner and discussing (Sherrington, 2012). So far in my placement, I have seen the positive impact of wait time on a student's ability to provide a more detailed answer when given time to think. The literature shows that teachers do not give students enough time to think before answering.

I value the impact of cold calling due to the learning environment it creates in the classroom. As the research demonstrates, if students know they can be called on, they consider an answer. Every student is engaging in the thinking process.

Furthermore, within the Drama classroom, Cold calling is a great method for peer feedback, as the students must engage critically with what they have seen. (Coe et al., 2020, p 34).

The research has indicated that planning for effective questioning is key, including the types of questions asked. I am eager to introduce more questioning methods into my practice.

I intend to utilise a range of questioning frameworks throughout my teaching career. However, for my next placement, I will focus on planning questions that align with Bloom's taxonomy to have a foundation for those higher-order thinking questions.

In conclusion, it has become clear through the literature discussed that effective questioning is an AFL strategy that can potentially promote learning and higher-order thinking skills in students. However, what effective questioning looks like in every instance in the classroom is less clear. There are some fundamental principles, that a teacher can use in the classroom to develop a student's higher-order thinking and, in turn, accelerate their learning. Questioning also has a positive effect as a modelling tool for students to be lifelong learners, questioning others and the world around them wherever life might take them. Furthermore, for students in the 21st, problem-solving and questioning are required in order for students to succeed (Costa and Kallick, 2015).

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Assignment: Part 1

	Professional Experience Template 1
Pedagogy Standard	Assessment for Learning
What did you do and why?	I used two assessments for learning strategies. Firstly, I focused on the quality of my questioning and used the following techniques: • Cold calling • think, pair, share • Turn and talk • pitch, pause, pounce, bounce This had been discussed during feedback from my mentor, so I wanted to focus on developing this aspect of my practice. Secondly, I focused on supporting peer and self-assessment, ensuring I created a collaborative learning environment. This is a key aspect of drama, being able to reflect and give feedback and is also an excellent assessment technique. This is why I chose to focus on it. (This has also been evidenced through my mentor's feedback and evidence from the star sheets referenced.)
What have you learned?	Through focusing on questioning strategies and peer and self-assessment techniques, I have observed the benefits of when think, pair, share and questioning are used effectively. When used students had a variety of clear responses after their thinking time. This demonstrates the importance of getting the students to consider their answers independently before discussing. Also, cold-calling students allowed me to find out which students were not as certain about the answer and would allow me to re-cover topic areas as needed.

	I have also seen the importance of peer and self-assessment and how it is vital in gaining a deeper understanding of techniques and allowing for technical terminology to be used by students in the feedback they give. I will share these reflections with my mentor so she can support my professional development.
What next?	I will continue to get students to peer assess verbally and by writing on their star/feedback sheets. I would get students to engage with their targets more purposefully by working into my lesson plan moments for their targets and reflections to be read over. This allows them to have a clear focus and supports the teacher with targeted feedback. I will focus on always giving feedback after a performance, whether specific to some students or a whole class feedback moment. Students must be able to self-assess even if against the verbal feedback WWW/EBI for the whole class. Continue to move forward with questioning techniques and continue to use them so they become a daily practice in my classroom, supporting a student's progress.

	Professional Experience Template 2
Pedagogy Standard	Employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches/ <u>Blended learning experiences.</u>
What did you do and why?	The focus of these lessons was to explore the techniques of Steven Berkoff through the 1912 play Metamorphosis. Different activities were chosen to support a student's engagement in his techniques. I used video clips from interviews with Steven Berkoff and movement clips to inspire students in their choices and support their understanding. I also guided students on using movement effectively as a whole class and set tasks for them to work on a section of the script in groups. Through the various exercises completed,

	the aim was to allow students to explore and gain a new understanding of how they can incorporate Berkoff's techniques into their own pieces.
What have you learned?	Teaching Berkoff required different approaches so that students could experience all the different ways to approach and incorporate his style and method into their work. This approach is important as it makes the work accessible to all students. Each student would have resonated with a different approach or stimulus as part of exploring Berkoff's work, which would have supported them in understanding his methods.
What next?	Through this experience, I see the value in making sure that the teaching approach is varied so that students can engage with the work effectively. In future, I will continue to provide those opportunities to my students. However, I also want to continue to develop my understanding of the best ways to sequence these approaches, the amount of time that each activity needs and which order will best suit a student's growth.

	Professional Experience Template 3
Pedagogy Standard	Real life authentic contexts
What did you do and why?	The students were exploring verbatim theatre to create a short piece based on a historic event, and I chose to provide them with stories about the Aberfan disaster that happened in South Wales in 1966. I first showed them a news segment from the 50th anniversary however, I am aware that they have studied this event in History lessons. Then, they were provided with interviews with survivors and people who lived in the town at the time of the disaster. I did this to allow them to explore the historical event through performance, to extend their cultural understanding regarding the impact of this event.

What have you learned?	The value of exploring the history of Wales is to enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the country they live in and the events that have occurred which have had a great impact on people's lives. I feel that students are given a unique opportunity to explore this event through performance which allows them to engage with this event in a new way and hopefully deepen their understanding.
What next?	I will continue to work alongside not only my AOLE, but other subjects, such as history so that important events in Welsh history and current events can be explored. Reinforcing students' learning and allowing them to develop a deeper understanding of Welsh culture and language through their drama work.

	Professional Experience Template 4
Pedagogy Standard	Cross-curricular themes
What did you do and why?	This lesson required students to use and develop their literacy skills. Specifically their reading strategies. The task was to read first-hand accounts from survivors or interviews with people who were impacted by the event and to turn this into a verbatim piece of theatre. This required them to engage with a new story, using their inference, deduction and analysis skills. Then, having to take what they have read and make it into a performance requires them to start to develop skills that are within the top progress step. Such as interpreting and evaluating meaning, they have to use these skills in order to create a piece of theatre based on the Aberfan disaster.

What have you learned?	I want to continue to give opportunities for Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence to be explored and developed through my drama lessons. This experience has shown me the value of incorporating these themes into my lessons and how it will enable students to progress at a faster pace due to the consistent use of these skills across all subjects. I feel that drama lends itself well to linking in with Literacy specifically and so I want to take any and all opportunities to make this happen.
What next?	To continue to think about how cross-curricular skills can be brought into the drama curriculum and I want to do this by taking more CPD and talking with other departments and collaborating in order to achieve this.