

“To what extent does using a question matrix impact the quality of talk?”

Questioning can be a term attributed to a person who is “enthusiastic or eager for philosophical or other investigations; intellectually stimulated and alert and questioning mind” (Collins, 2020). Developing these attributes is encouraged by the Welsh Government (2020a) as it is a critical element of being an ambitious capable learner which is one of the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The definition of a question alters dependant on the setting as in a summative assessment setting such as an exam the purpose of the question is to test an individual’s ability or knowledge (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Meanwhile, a question outside this setting is a “sentence or phrase to find out information” (ibid). Volger (2008) highlights that it would be challenging to imagine a classroom where the practitioner does not ask questions. This could be due to the teachers asking approximately 300-400 questions within a single school day (ibid). Black (2001) identifies that questions are utilised to evaluate pupil’s learning and review and summarize lessons. It is believed that through questioning learners can be motivated and develop their thinking skills (ibid).

There are many structures and taxonomies that are associated with questioning which can be implemented in the classroom one example of a taxonomy that is prominent within education is Bloom’s taxonomy. Before the implementation and reform resulting from Bloom’s taxonomy teachers would often ask questions without first considering the type of question they are asking (Raisch, Hunt and Lansley, 2010). Bloom’s taxonomy brought a structure to questioning allowing teacher to think about the questions being posed (ibid). Bloom’s original taxonomy followed the structure of the knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom et al. 1956). Questions based on evaluation were considered to be the higher order and critical thinking questions whereas the recalling of facts and knowledge were determined to be the lower thinking questions (Raisch, Hunt and Lansley, 2010). In 2001 a group of professionals including researchers, cognitive psychologists and curriculum theorists revised Bloom’s taxonomy (Armstrong, 2020). The revised taxonomy followed a new structure which included remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create (ibid). When Bloom’s taxonomy is employed within the classroom thinking skills are challenged which is needed as through the challenge learners can grow and learn (Conklin, 2009). However, Well and Kinchele (2004) view the taxonomy as inflexible where few learners start at the bottom.