The Big Questions:

The Why and the How

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The Big Questions: the WHY and the HOW

Overview: Questions…

Exam questions

What "exam-level" is each of these questions? Why?

1 (*Speaking*)
What are some of the issues you have to deal with when you start a new job?

B2

2 (*Speaking*)
A friend has just passed her driving test and you want to buy her a present. What sort of presents would be suitable? Discuss your ideas together, and then choose one.

B1

3 (*Writing*)
"Stereotypes help us understand the world."
To what extent to you agree with this statement?

C1

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Exam questions

What makes these questions "different"? *Topic? Tasks?*

"Stereotypes help us understand the world."
To what extent to you agree with this statement?

C1 **Topic:** abstract, complex
Task: examine + question; draw conclusions

What are some of the issues you have to deal with when you start a new job?
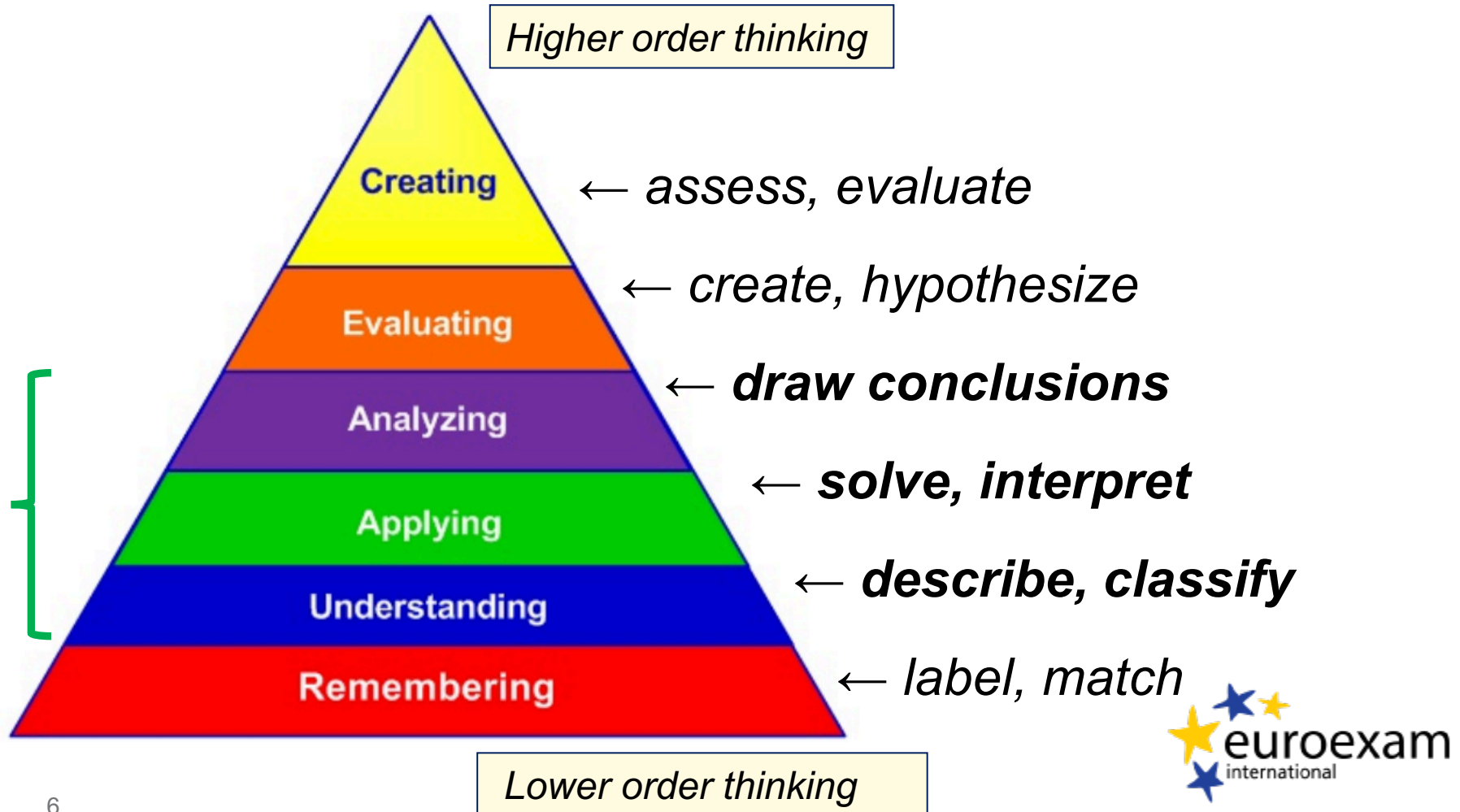
B2 **Topic:** you have probably experienced this, or know someone who has
Task: demonstrate understanding; solve

A friend has just passed her driving test and you want to buy her a present. What sort of presents would be suitable? Discuss; choose one.

B1 **Topic:** simple, factual
Task: describe; explain; list, rank or order

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Bloom's Taxonomy

Encouraging deeper, more meaningful responses

← *assess, evaluate*

← *create, hypothesize*

← ***draw conclusions***

← ***solve, interpret***

← ***describe, classify***

← *label, match*

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Bloom Taxonomy
Action verbs and Activities

develop plans
creative exercises
projects
constructs

CREATE
construct
create
design
develop
formulate
hypothesize
invent
make up
originate
organize
plan
produce
role play

projects
problems
case studies
simulations
appraisals
critiques
debates

EVALUATE
appraise
judge
criticize
defend
compare

problems
exercises
case studies
discussions
questions
test

ANALYZE
categorize
classify
compare
differentiate
distinguish
point out
select
subdivide
survey

practice exercises
demonstrations
projects
sketches
simulations
role play
teach back

APPLY
choose
dramatize
explain
organize
prepare
produce
demonstrate
sketch
solve
use

questions
discussion
review
test
assessments
reports
learner
presentations
writing

UNDERSTAND
restate
summarize
explain
illustrate
give example
match
classify

lecture
visuals
video
audio
examples
illustrations
analogies

REMEMBER
define
list
recall
identify

www.slideshare.net/IidaHokkanen/bloom-taxonomy-action-verbs-and-activities

Questions in course books

Order the stages:

a. Match the verbs + nouns from the text; then complete the sentences with the collocations.

b. What sorts of events can you see in the pictures?

c. What do _you_ think will happen in the world in 50 years' time, and why?

d. Read the paragraphs quickly. What opinion is being expressed in each? Match each paragraph to one of the opinions listed.

e. Which event do you think is most likely to come true?

Logical order: **b, e, d, a, c**

Questions in course books
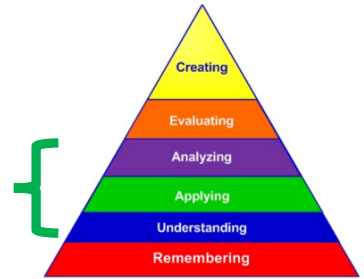
What do these tasks ask students to do?

1. What events can you see in the pictures? describe

2. Which event do you think is most likely to come true?

   personalise

3. Read each paragraph.
   What opinion is expressed in each one? interpret

4. Match verbs + nouns; complete sentences. understand

5. What do *you* think will happen in 50 years' time? Why?

   personalise   draw conclusions

Getting students to think more deeply

Solutions, Intermediate, 'Visions of the future', U5E

E READING
Visions of the future

I can understand and react to experts' predictions for the future.

1 Look at the pictures which show visions of the future fifty years from now. Describe them.

2 Which one do you think is the most likely to come true?

Fifty Years On

1 Sir David King, scientific adviser to the British Government

If we don't reduce carbon emissions, the earth will become warmer, polar ice will melt and the oceans will rise. Cities like London and New York will disappear under the water. By 2100, Antarctica could be the only continent that is suitable for human life – the rest of the world will be too hot.

2 Francis Collins, geneticist

Fifty years from now, millions of people will live past the age of 100 and remain healthy. This will happen because we'll be able to study each person's genetic code and find the best way to treat and prevent illnesses in that individual. In about fifty years' time, the most important question for our society might not be 'How long can humans live?' but 'How long do we want to live?'

3 J Richard Gott, physicist

During the next fifty years, our earth might suffer a catastrophe. Humans could disappear, just like the dinosaurs and hundreds of other species. The best way to make humans safe from extinction is to start a colony on Mars. This is not a prediction but a hope. Will we be smart enough to do it?

4 Ellen Heber-Katz, biologist

I believe that soon we will be able to repair the human body in the same way that we can replace damaged parts of a car or a washing machine. Five years from now, we will be able to grow new fingers, and, a few years after that, new arms and legs. Within fifty years, replacing your whole body will be normal.

5 Peter Norvig, director of research at Google

Today, people all over the world have access to billions of pages of text on the Internet. At the moment, they use search engines to find information, but fifty years from now, people will simply discuss their needs with their computer, and the computer will make suggestions and provide usable information, not just a list of links.

6 Eric Horvitz, principal researcher at Microsoft Research

In fifty years' time, computers will be much more intelligent than today, and this will change people's lives. Computers will help people work, learn, plan and decide. They will help people from different countries to understand each other by automatically translating from one language to another. Intelligent computers will work as scientists, and will start to make important discoveries on their own.

Reading tip

When you're looking for specific information in the text, read the first sentence of each paragraph. The first sentence usually shows you what the whole paragraph will be about.

3 Read the reading ... opinions with ex... not need.

a _____ hopes that people will go and live on another p... in case there's a terrible disaster on Earth.
b _____ thinks that computers will find things out without the help of humans.
c _____ predicts that the human race will become extinct.
d _____ predicts that in about 2060 people may be able to determine their own lifespan.
e _____ thinks that the coldest place on Earth might one day have the best climate for humans.
f _____ predicts that medical advances will allow us to grow new limbs.
g _____ thinks that we'll be able to communicate directly with search engines and they'll tell us what we need to know.

4 Match the verbs and nouns to make phrases from the texts.

1 reduce	a	a catastrophe
2 treat	b	information
3 suffer	c	damaged parts
4 start	d	important discoveries
5 replace	e	carbon emissions
6 provide	f	a colony
7 make	g	illnesses

5 Complete the sentences with phrases from exercise 4.

1 You _____ of a machine when it breaks down.
2 They've developed new drugs to _____.
3 The tourist office can _____ about hotels.
4 Computers have helped scientists to _____ about space.
5 We need to use our cars less in order to _____ and stop global warming.
6 Nobody is certain what caused the dinosaurs to _____ and become extinct.
7 In the seventeenth century, a group of pilgrims left England to _____ in North America.

●● Vocabulary Builder 5.3: Verb + noun collocations: p. 133

6 SPEAKING In your opinion, which expert's prediction is:

1 the most optimistic? Give reasons.
2 the most pessimistic? Give reasons.
3 the most interesting? Give reasons.
4 the most likely to come true? Give reasons.

7 Work in pairs. Make three predictions about the world in fifty years' time. Use the ideas in the box to help you.

buildings   climate   computers   education   entertainment   health   space   transport   work

8 SPEAKING Tell the class your predictions. Do they agree or disagree?

Solutions
Intermediate Student's Book
with MultiROM
Tim Falla, Paul A Davies
OXFORD

Questions in language teaching

The purpose of questions – exams, course books, …. ?

- **EXAM** sts: tasks to **elicit their best English**

- **COURSEBOOKS:** help **notice > understand > use new language**

- help sts **focus on language** (*as appropriate*)

- **challenge** sts (*as appropriate*)

- **engage & involve**; **personalise**

- *AND –* manage the class; give choice; motivate; get feedback …

Questions in language teaching

Teacher awareness?

- *Exams*: tasks to elicit their best English, per level
- *Course books*: help students notice > understand > use new language
- *Focus on language*
- *Challenge, engage, involve; personalise, manage the class etc. etc.*

➡️ | . . . the
**best possible
learning experience**
for our students?

How do *YOU* ask Qs?

< - - - <u>N</u>ever – <u>S</u>ometimes – <u>U</u>sually – <u>A</u>lways - - - >

1. I ask a mix of individual / open-class Qs.　*U*

2. *(in this order)* I nominate* a S, and then ask the Q. *(*name)* ⭐

3. If a S doesn't understand, I immediately rephrase the Q.

4. I immediately acknowledge if an answer is correct or not. ⭐

5. I let Ss write down their ideas before they say anything.

6. I ask Ss to discuss ideas in pairs before they answer.

7. I ask a balance of open and closed questions.

Recipes …

If we **know exactly** what we do, then we have a much better chance of being able to **improve** it.

Question types 1 (reminder)

Have you had a good week?	→	What did you enjoy most this week, and why?
Are you having a lovely birthday?	→	How are you spending your birthday?

= Closed / Y/N Qs   **= Open / *Wh-* Qs**

- Give you **facts**
- Are **quick** to answer
- **Check sts' knowledge**
- **Keep control**

- Give **opinions + feelings**
- Elicit **longer** answers
- Ask for **reflection**
- **Hand over control**

Question types 2 (reminder)

Which Q(s) does the teacher <u>not</u> <u>know</u> the answer to?

1. *"What did you get for your birthday?"* ✅

2. *"What other things do people get for their birthdays?"*

3. 'necklace': *"How many syllables does this word have?"*

= Display Questions	= Referential Questions ✅
• **check students' knowledge** / comprehension • teacher **already knows** the answer	• require **info**, or **opinion** • focus on content • T **doesn't** necessarily **know** answer

A "lesson of questions"

Which Q-types do <u>you</u> use, and when, in a lesson?

Questions in course books

What do these tasks ask students to do?

1. What events can you see in the pictures? describe

2. Which event do you think is most likely to come true?
   personalise

3. Read each paragraph.
   What opinion is expressed in each one? interpret

4. Match verbs + nouns; complete sentences. understand

5. What do *you* think will happen in 50 years' time? Why?
   draw conclusions

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Referential Qs

Open / *Wh-* Qs
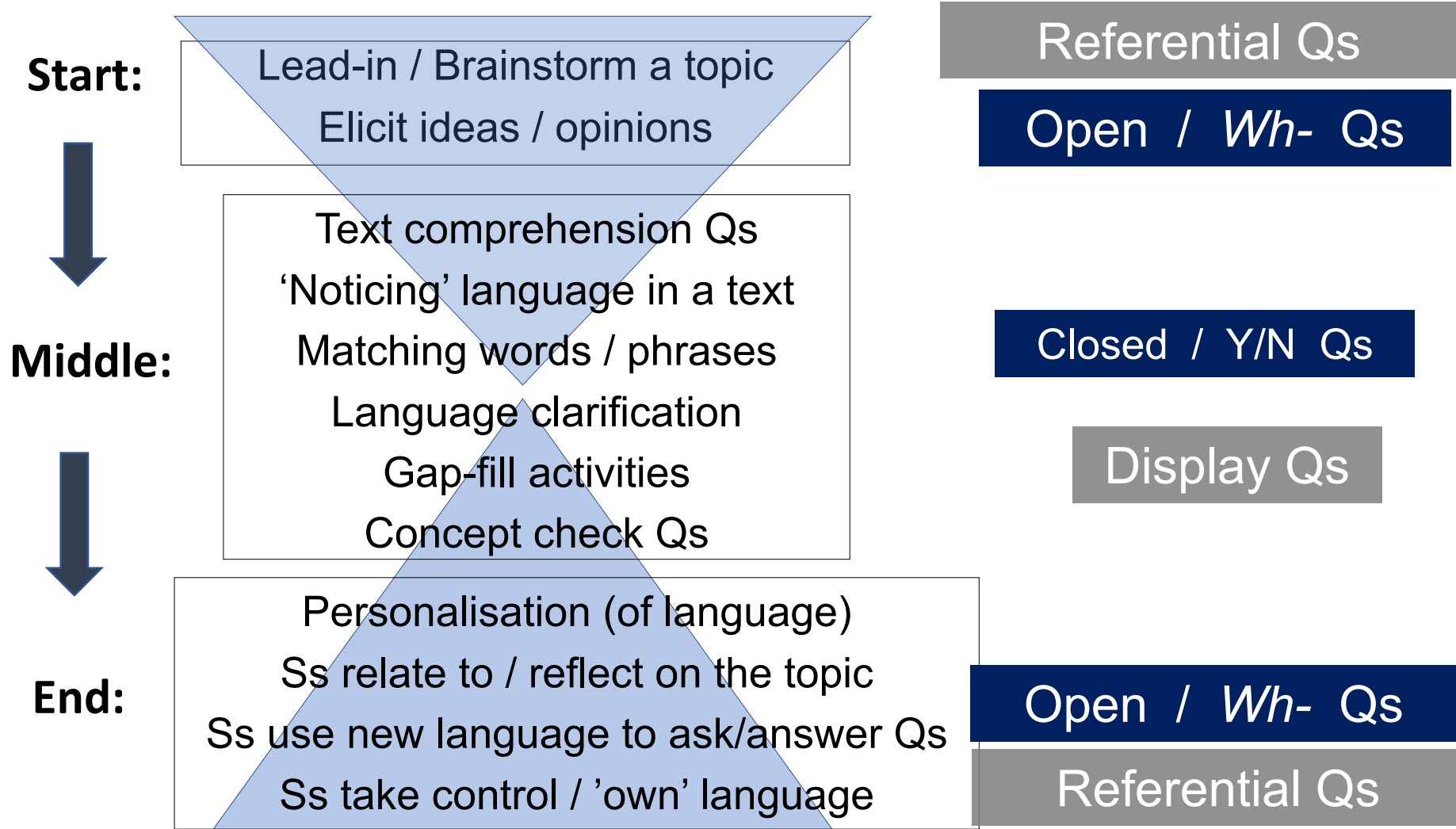
Closed / Y/N Qs

Display Qs

Open / *Wh-* Qs

Referential Qs

A "lesson of questions"

Start:

Lead-in / Brainstorm a topic

Elicit ideas / opinions

Referential Qs

Open / *Wh-* Qs

Middle:

Text comprehension Qs

'Noticing' language in a text

Matching words / phrases

Language clarification

Gap-fill activities

Concept check Qs

Closed / Y/N Qs

Display Qs

End:

Personalisation (of language)

Ss relate to / reflect on the topic

Ss use new language to ask/answer Qs

Ss take control / 'own' language

Open / *Wh-* Qs
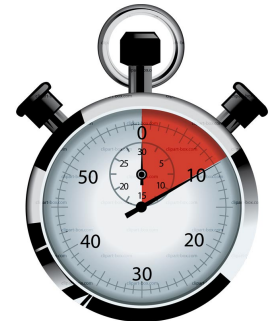
Referential Qs

Facts about Questions, Wait time

Survey in USA; all subjects: **True or False?**

1. On average, a Teacher allows less than 1 second wait time.

2. Trained Teachers allow 3-5 seconds' wait time.

3. Teachers give stronger students longer to answer Qs.
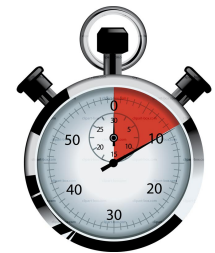
Rowe, M.B. (1974)

Facts about questions

If you wait **l o n g e r** , ...

(*1,000, 2,000, 3,000, ...*)

- **more students** are able to answer

- more answers are **accurate**

- the **length** of student responses **increases**

- **weaker students** are more likely to respond.

Rowe, M.B. (1974)

The Big Questions: the WHY and the HOW

What next?

- KNOW what we are doing ("recipe"!)
- Ask the right Q. at the right time, in the right way
- Enable Ss to express themselves with new language
- Involve and challenge our Ss appropriately

➡️ The **best possible learning experience** for our students !

The Big Questions: the WHY and the HOW

Think of 1-2 things to focus on, e.g.

I let Ss **write down their ideas** before they say anything.

I don't **immediately acknowledge** if an answer is correct.

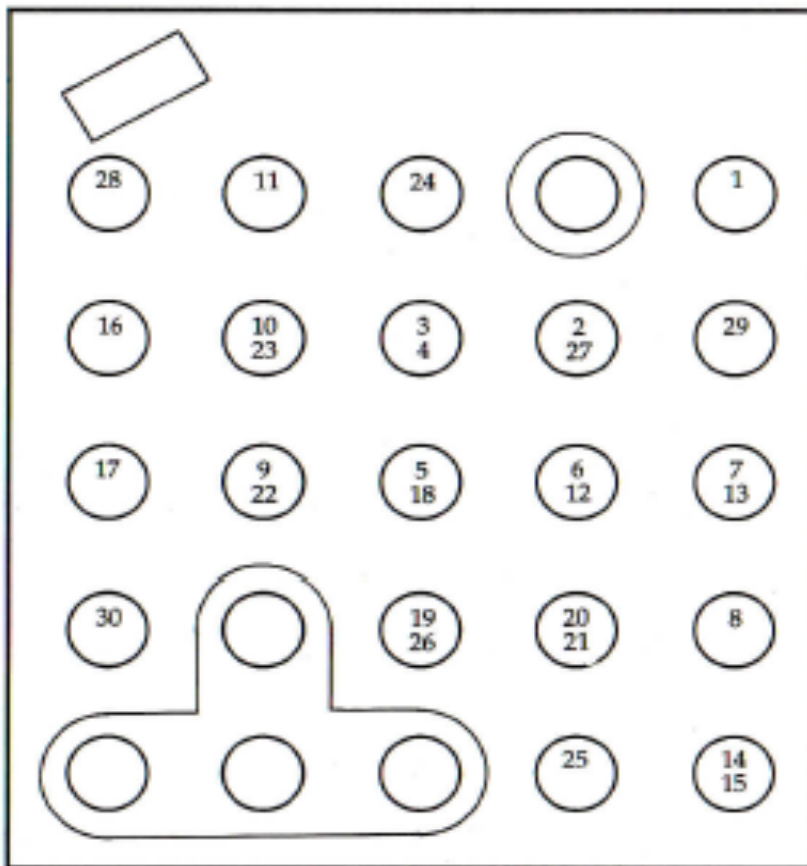I ask the Q., *and only then* nominate a student.

Plan Qs in advance: write them on post-its.

The Big Questions: the WHY and the HOW

"Mapping" your questions

BOX 7.1

Question

distribution

among students

Hopkins, D. (1985).

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The Big Questions: the WHY and the HOW

Recording, and analysing your questions

CLASS: (Level, age, no. of sts etc.)					
T's Q	Q type	Wait time	Purpose of Q	Student response	*Your comments*

Question type & purpose

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Questions ….   for us, for teachers:

- **Appraise / evaluate** your experiments!

- **Analyse** any changes in your classes

- **Apply** new ideas to try out strategies

- **Understand** how different Qs & Q-techniques affect your students

- **Know** what you do in your own classes

References / Further reading

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COUNCIL of EUROPE, *Manual for Facilitators* (Training Materials)

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Hattie, J. (2012) *Visible learning for teachers*. Routledge

Rowe, M.B. (1974) 'Relation of wait-time and rewards to the development of language, logic, and fate control: Part II-Rewards' quoted in 'Questioning Strategies' https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/resources/teaching-strategies/questioning-strategies (retrieved July 2019)

Bloom Taxonomy: Action verbs and activities: www.slideshare.net/IidaHokkanen/bloom-taxonomy-action-verbs-and-activities

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✓ Powerpoint slides
✓ Ideas for logging and recording what you do in your lessons

CONFERENCES / WORKSHOPS / TRAINING

Posted on April 16, 2016

(Please note that the date you can see above is when I started this blog; I update it regularly!)

For more information and details on short workshops, please check out this page: SHORT WORKSHOPS
2021 February 20 – Saturday, 9am
IATEFL-Hungary Winter Warmer Conference (Plenary session, online)
The Big Questions: the Why and the How
Do you ever stop and think specifically about the type of questions you want ask in class? Do you consider the sort of answer(s) you expect to get, and from whom? Do you also think about how to get the best answer out of students – from all students, or just a specific student? What if we could involve different and more students, and elicit richer answers?

In this session, I'll be focusing on how we can become more aware of what we do, the role questions play in course materials and exam tasks, and – as a result – how we can fine-tune and sharpen our questioning skills. Ultimately, this leads to better student involvement, engagement and challenge.

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The Big Questions: the Why and the How
WINTER WARMER
20 FEBRUARY 2020

(Thanks to my sponsors!)
Powerpoint slides: *coming shortly!*
Handouts – ways to log and record what you do in class: *coming shortly!*
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The Why and the How

Thank you!

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IATEFL Hungary, Winter Warmer Conference, February 2021