The BIG QUESTIONS – the WHY & the HOW
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TEACHER'S QUESTIONS   Rachel Appleby
Ideas to try out next time you're in class!

Action: *Choose an area you're interested in; then choose 2-3 ideas to try.*

PLANNING

❑ Know the aims of your lessons; then plan Qs accordingly.

❑ Write down 5 key Qs you want to ask: put them on post-its on your plan!

❑ Plan important questions [Qs] in advance, word-for-word.

TYPES

❑ Ask a balance of referential & display questions.

❑ Plan Y/N Qs in advance to check concepts and understanding clearly.

❑ Use open (*Wh-*) Qs to encourage opinions, elaboration + discussion.

❑ Ask Qs about important rather than trivial content.

❑ Personalise Qs, or use personalised follow-up Qs where possible.

❑ Remember: 'Do you understand?' 'Is that clear' are unlikely to get helpful responses.

❑ Avoid Qs which may cause embarrassment, or offend ('Are you awake?').

❑ Add 1-2 Qs at the start/end of the module to promote higher level thinking.

PERSONALISATION

❑ Really listen to your students' answers, and respond accordingly.

❑ Give appropriate responses to Qs, especially if correction is required.

❑ Help sts 'own' / personalise language through higher-level thinking Qs.

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DEPTH, and quality of answers

- ❑ Rework lower-order thinking Qs to raise the level of thinking required.
- ❑ Plan / extend key Qs with follow-up – for greater depth, or personalization.
- ❑ Plan the order of your Qs – making sure they increase the challenge.

HOW / WHO

- ❑ Make sure that Ss clearly understand Qs.
- ❑ Spread Qs randomly around the class.
- ❑ Balance Qs to the whole class, with individual S nomination.
- ❑ Move around the room ... to 'catch' more Ss more easily, randomly.
- ❑ Give Ss time to write down / discuss their answer(s); then it's 'safe' to nominate.
- ❑ Let Ss 'phone a friend' i.e. ask another S for help.
- ❑ Ask the Q first, before nominating a S.
- ❑ Ask the S. who has just answered a Q. to nominate the next S. to answer.
- ❑ Don't immediately acknowledge an answer. Ask other Ss: *Do you agree? /* (sometimes) *Are you sure? / Why? / Can you give me a reason / evidence?*

WAIT TIME

- ❑ Give **time** for Ss to answer: count 1,000, 2,000, (to 5,000) before responding.
- ❑ Know which Ss will need most thinking time.
- ❑ Know which Qs will require more thinking time.

OVERALL / FOLLOW-UP

- ❑ Video/Audio-record (part of) your class.
  - o After, write down word-for-word each Q. Note down wait time.
- ❑ Ask a trusted colleague to come in a write down each Q, and response.
- ❑ Use an observation task sheet to focus on a specific issue regarding Qs.
- ❑ Follow-up: Choose 3 Qs you could improve, and choose 2-3 ideas from above.