

The Teacher as “Professional Question Maker”?

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or: try this on a webpage: <https://padlet.com/rachelpappleby/91y41p6lcr9g>

A possible ‘shape of a lesson’

“a professional question maker”

Lead-in / warm-up activity

Brainstorm a topic / Ask Ss their opinions

Elicit a wide range of contributions

Referential

Open / Wh-
Divergent Qs

Text comprehension Qs

‘Noticing’ language in a text

Matching words / phrases

Gap-fill activities

Language clarification

Concept check Qs

Closed / Y/N
Polar Qs

Display

Personalisation (of language)

Ss relate to / reflect on the topic

Ss use new language to ask/answer Qs

Freer speaking; Ss take control / ‘own’ language

Open / Wh-
Divergent Qs

Referential



References

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Questionnaire

How do you handle questions?

< Never – Sometimes – Usually – Always >
N S U A

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | I ask a mix of individual / open-class Qs. | | | | |
| 2 | I use Qs to wake Ss up / get their attention. | | | | |
| 3 | (in this order:) I nominate* a S, and then I ask the Q. (*name) | | | | |
| 4 | If a S doesn't understand, I immediately repeat or rephrase the Q. | | | | |
| 5 | I immediately acknowledge if an answer is correct or not. | | | | |
| 6 | I ask Ss to nominate other Ss to answer. | | | | |
| 7 | I let Ss write down their ideas before they say anything. | | | | |
| 8 | I ask Ss to discuss ideas in pairs before they answer. | | | | |

A sample lesson

What kinds of questions are used?

Could you add any further open Qs to increase motivation / help students to 'own' and personalise the language?

1. Look at the pictures which show visions of the future 50 years from now. Describe them.

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

3. Match opinions

4. Match verbs + nouns

5. Complete sentences

Fifty Years On

1 **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 2150, Antarctica could be the only continent that is habitable for human life – the rest of the world will be too hot.

2 **Richard Gott, physicist**
During the next fifty years, our earth might suffer a catastrophic climate change, 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, still as far away as the stars.

3 **Ellen Heber-Katz, biologist**
In fifty years' time, computers will be much more intelligent than humans, and they will change people's lives. Computers will help people work, learn, play 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 with us, and will start to make important decisions about the world.

4 **Eric Horvitz, principal researcher at Microsoft Research**
In fifty years' time, computers will be much more intelligent than humans, and they will change people's lives. Computers will help people work, learn, play 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 with us, and will start to make important decisions about the world.

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. In fifty years from now, people will simply discuss their needs with their computers, and the computer will make suggestions and provide usable information, not just a list of links.

6 **Eric Horvitz, principal researcher at Microsoft Research**
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7 **Work in pairs. Make three predictions about the world in fifty years' time. Use the ideas in the box to help you.**

6. In your opinion, which expert's prediction is the most optimistic / pessimistic? Why?

7. Make 3 predictions about the world in 50 years' time.

Bloom's Taxonomy & critical thinking

Encouraging deeper, more meaningful responses

