

# Exploring Classroom Interaction through the Whys, Hows and Whats of Self Questioning

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# Outline

- ▶ Learning opportunities and questions –why?
- ▶ A practitioner's typology of questions –what?
- ▶ Questions in action in the classroom –how?
- ▶ Self questions for reflection

# Nothing new under the sun

- ▶ “When then” proposed Socrates “if you should ever be charged in actual fact with the upbringing and education of these imaginary children of yours...so you will make a law that they must devote themselves especially to the technique of asking and answering questions.” (Republic VII:534)

# Learning Opportunities

- ▶ **Learning is not teaching** (Allwright 2005)
- ▶ **Learners uptake is more than what is explicitly taught** (Slimani 1987)
- ▶ Learners and teachers co-construct lessons
- ▶ Do we provide questioning opportunities for learning for learners and ourselves?
- ▶ Discuss with your partner

# A practitioners typology of questions 1

- ▶ Indirect questions – not true questions syntactically but functionally e.g. I don't know where Jack is.
- ▶ Direct questions – closed or open
- ▶ Closed –specified alternative. Did you A or B?
- ▶ Yes/no– Initial auxiliary verb :Have you learnt the phrase?
- ▶ Tag type: wasn't it?
- ▶ Intonated declaratives: Somebody is with her?

# A practitioner's typology of questions 2

- ▶ Closed or open questions (Barnes 1969)
- ▶ Echoic – mechanical response, form focused
- ▶ Epistemic – focus on what student knows – inductive or deductive, more syntactically complex answer
- ▶ Expressive – wants to express – individual emotion or opinion
  
- ▶ *A system based on anticipated response*

# Interactive question– reflective task 1

- ▶ Write a teaching question which you remember using recently?
- ▶ What was the purpose of the question?
- ▶ What would you do with the response?
- ▶ How would you simplify the question?
- ▶ How would you extend the learning/knowledge gained ?

# A form– based open question typology

- ▶ *Wh* questions link to grammar awareness
  - ▶ *Who* to the actor
  - ▶ *When* to specifying time specifics
  - ▶ *How* to broad range reasoning
  - ▶ *Why* to divergent evaluative higher reasoning
- 
- ▶ Do we make this awareness explicit to our students?

# Eliciting and question types

- ▶ Elicit Repeat – What did I say just now?
- ▶ Elicit Confirm– Is everyone clear on the meaning of terminal boredom?
- ▶ Elicit Agree – Ali is going to the market, right?  
Elicit Inform – What do you know about “photo synthesis”?

# Typology generalizations

- ▶ The shorter the response the less burden in the answer – for us and learners
- ▶ The closer, temporal and spatial, to the presentation of the language being questioned the less risk in answering

# Typology 2 \_ performance factors

- ▶ The less output the less learning there is e.g. Yes /No questions (Hall, 1991)
- ▶ Asking for info is challenging
- ▶ A public performance response is seen as risky
- ▶ Some questions may be directives (Tsui,2003)

# Reflective task 2

- ▶ Aligning learner empowerment with questions
- ▶ How do I provide for learner questions in my classroom?
- ▶ How do I provide a sense of safety for question asking?
- ▶ How do I link awareness of questions to examination skills?

# Echoic questions of teachers, learners and communication

- ▶ Comprehension – All right?
- ▶ Clarification – What do you mean? May be form (grammar, phonics, spelling)  
or meaning based (content, context, function)
- ▶ Confirmation checks – Did you mean?
- ▶ *Used everyday in conversation repair*

# Epistemic questions of teachers , learners and communication

- ▶ Display – an overused device e.g. What's the opposite of cold?
- ▶ Rhetorical – linked to presentation speaking e.g. Why didn't I do such a thing. Because I...
- ▶ Referential – refers outside text input e.g. Why didn't you do your project?/ What did you do on Sunday?
  
- ▶ *The wider the reference field, the larger the cognitive load, the more diverse the response and so it is with our professional reflection*

# Questions for us on our questions

- ▶ How many questions did I ask?
- ▶ How many questions were form-based?
- ▶ How many were yes/no questions?
- ▶ How many are display questions? (Farrell,2004)

# Questions for us on our questions

- ▶ What tasks did I lead that provided for questions that were oral or written?
- ▶ What task arrangements did I use over a week which provide for learner to learner questions?
- ▶ How long is my wait time? (Cazden, 1988)
- ▶ *How do I react to a question which is an unexpected learning opportunity? (Allwright, 2005)*

# Reflective questions

- ▶ The scribbled note in the lesson question??
- ▶ What worked in the lesson?
- ▶ What did not motivate the learners? – language, ideas, skills, text or support media
- ▶ **Questions from learner reflection:**
- ▶ Today I learnt, I felt, I thought of, I wanted to ask the teacher about.....
- ▶ **What professional development questions do I have and how will I answer them?**

# Thank you for sharing

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