



ENCOURAGE QUESTIONING AS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN CLASSES

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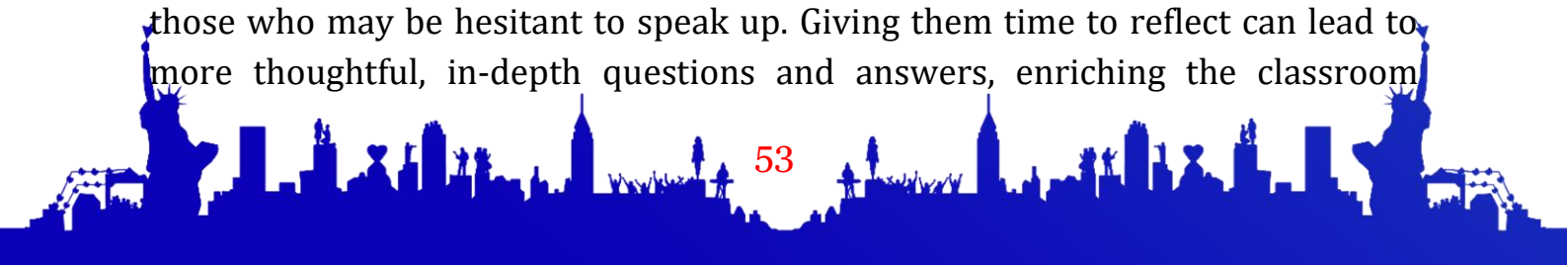
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Abstract. In this article, it will be explored how promoting a culture of questioning within the classroom can significantly contribute to the development of critical thinking skills. We will delve into the various techniques educators can employ to create an environment that values inquiry, the types of questions that stimulate engagement, and the essential role questioning plays in transforming passive learning into an active and thoughtful exploration of knowledge. Ultimately, this article aims to provide educators with practical insights into harnessing the power of questioning as a tool for cultivating critical thinkers equipped for the challenges of tomorrow.

Keywords: critical thinking, questioning techniques, active learning, inquiry-based learning, student engagement, classroom strategies, socratic questioning, higher-order thinking, reflective learning, learning environment

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, fostering critical thinking and engagement among students has never been more crucial. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by encouraging questioning in the classroom [3, 147-153]. Questions are the gateways to deeper understanding, inquiry, and a love for learning. By employing a variety of strategies and techniques, educators can create an environment where students feel empowered to ask questions, explore ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue. The foundation for encouraging questioning lies in establishing a safe and open classroom culture. When students feel comfortable asking questions without the fear of judgment, their natural curiosity can flourish. Educators can model respectful dialogue by demonstrating appreciation for all questions, thus reinforcing that curiosity is valued.

Furthermore, promoting a supportive atmosphere where classmates positively respond to each other's inquiries fosters collaboration and encourages students to share their thoughts openly [1, 53]. One technique that can significantly enhance questioning is the use of wait time. After posing a question, educators should allow sufficient time for students to think critically and formulate their responses. This practice benefits all students, especially those who may be hesitant to speak up. Giving them time to reflect can lead to more thoughtful, in-depth questions and answers, enriching the classroom





discussion. To guide students in asking more detailed and thoughtful questions, educators can implement structured questioning strategies. Two effective methods are Socratic questioning and Bloom's Taxonomy. Socratic questioning encourages students to engage in a dialogue through a series of increasingly complex questions, stimulating critical thinking and illuminating ideas.

Meanwhile, Bloom's Taxonomy categorizes questions according to different cognitive levels, enabling educators to challenge students and promote higher-order thinking. Peer interactions can be a powerful means of facilitating questioning. Activities like Think-Pair-Share allow students to think individually about a question before discussing their thoughts with a partner. This collaborative exchange often leads to richer questioning and deeper understanding as students build on each other's ideas. Additionally, providing question stems, such as "What would happen if...?" or "How does this relate to...?" equips students with tools to formulate their inquiries. Encouraging questioning within the classroom is not merely an instructional strategy but a vital component of fostering a rich learning environment. By employing these techniques, educators can create a culture that celebrates curiosity and critical thinking, empowering students to become active participants in their education. In doing so, they prepare students not only to excel academically but also to become lifelong learners who are equipped to navigate an increasingly complex world. Embracing the art of questioning can transform classrooms into dynamic hubs of inquiry, exploration, and discovery.

Conclusion. In conclusion, fostering a culture of questioning in the classroom is essential for enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and deeper understanding of the material. By creating a safe environment, utilizing effective questioning techniques, and encouraging students to collaborate and explore together, educators can significantly enhance the learning experience. Implementing strategies such as inquiry-based learning, Socratic seminars, and the use of technology further empowers students to take ownership of their learning process. Recognizing and celebrating inquisitive behavior not only boosts student confidence but also emphasizes the importance of curiosity in education. Ultimately, by prioritizing questioning as a core component of teaching, educators can cultivate a classroom atmosphere where students feel inspired to explore, challenge, and reflect, leading to more meaningful learning outcomes.

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