USING HIGHER ORDER QUESTIONS TO SUPPORT INQUIRY

UNITED WAY

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Professional Development

A Read to Succeed Workshop

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BLUEPRINT for EARLY CHILDHOOD SUCCESS

Resources:

"How to Increase Higher Order Thinking" https://www.readingrockets.org/article/how-increase-higher-order-thinking

"The Use of Productive Questions in the early childhood classroom" https://scholarworks.uni.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=hpt

NAEYC page on Inquiry https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/inquiry

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- Find and register for the Read to Succeed Free Early Childhood Webinar Series at https://www.eventbrite.com/o/united-way-of-greater-nashville-30218001622
- Find RTS Webinar recordings at https://www.unitedwaygreaternashville.org/rts-training/

Inquiry
fuels curiosity and an appetite for learning.

Inquiry is:

- An act of asking for information
- An official investigation
- The constant process of questioning by which you gain experience, and (sometimes) answers to your questions.

A love of learning, along with the skills to communicate, problem-solve, and self-regulate, will lead to life-long success no matter the profession.

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.
– Margaret Mead

Inquiry in the classroom is based in teacher language.

Young children are natural inquirers. The job of the teacher is to add to their explorations and play, not take away from it.

Questioning aids inquiry when it allows students to discover information on their own.

Avoid "front-loading" information to students.

"What can you build" vs "Can you build a tower?"

"How can you fix the problem?" vs Explaining how to fix the problem.

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The Type of Question Matters

Higher Order Questioning:

Answers require students to think about what they are doing, and problem solve or explain their process.

Examples:

- "Can you tell me about why you used these colors?"
- "How many blocks do you think you can use before the tower falls over?"
- "How did you decide to wear that costume?"

Lower Order Questioning:

Answers tend to not require much thought, often:

- "yes" or "no"
- Specific, regurgitated information
  - "Blue"
  - "Two"

Examples:

- "What color is that?"
- "Are you building a tower?"
- "Are you dressed up as a firefighter?"

A Note about Lower Order Questions: Lower Order Questions aren't "bad" and can sometimes be very useful for students who are shy or are reluctant to engage in conversation. Your goal doesn't have to be to not use Lower Order Questions, but to be committed to using more Higher Order Questions.

It's not about what teachers cover;
It's about what students discover.

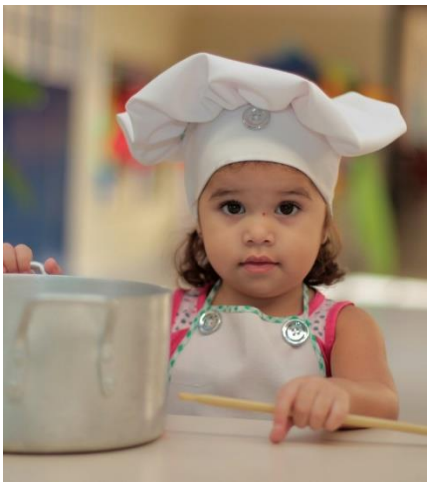
Higher Order Questions for Effective Teaching

Higher order questions, sometimes called productive questions or prompts, help to direct student attention, support further exploration, encourage children to think more deeply, and require more than a single word answer. Some examples are below.

1. Attention-Focusing Questions
    a. Have you seen _____?
    b. What do you notice?
    c. What are they doing?
    d. How does it feel/look/sound?
    e. Could you tell me about _____?
2. Measuring and Counting Questions
    a. How many _____?
    b. How often _____?
    c. How long _____?
    d. How much _____?
3. Comparison Questions
    a. How do _____fit together?
    b. How are _____different?
4. Action Questions
    a. What happens if _____?
    b. What would happen if you ____?
    c. What would you do if _____?
    d. Why can't I _____?
5. Problem-Posing Questions
    a. Can you find a way to ____?
    b. Do you think you could _____?
    c. Can you help me understand _____?
    d. How can you explain _____?
    e. How did you decide _____?
    f. How will you know if _____?
    g. I wonder _____?
    h. I wonder why _____?
    i. It seems like you think _____, can you tell me why?
    j. What else might have caused _____?
    k. What is the problem you are trying to solve?
    l. Why do you suppose _____?
6. And perhaps the most important questions:
    a. What do you think?
    b. How do you know?

Source: Early Childhood Science and Engineering Resources by Peggy Ashbrook

What questions can we ask to promote inquiry?



An Invitation to Support Inquiry in Your Classroom

1. What is one practice from this training that you will implement in your work?

2. What materials and support do you need to be successful?

3. How will you know when you are successful?