APPENDICES

BRITISH COUNCIL TEACHER EDUCATION PROJECT   -256

DOCUMENT 29

SKILLS OF TEACHING AS USED IN TEACHER TRAINING COURSES AT STIRLING QUESTIONING FOR FEEDBACK

1.   Untested Assumptions about Pupils

In planning a lesson, one has to make assumptions about -

    i)   those initial interests, attitudes, knowledge and skills of pupils which one intends to make use of in the lesson.

    ii)   the effects which each phase of one's lesson will have upon pupils.

In implementing one's plans for a lesson it is wise, before proceeding with each phase, to check that the major assumptions upon which it is based are valid.

In order to do this effectively it is essential to make as many as possible of these assumptions explicit to oneself beforehand.

When observing lessons, enter a tally whenever one of these predetermined assumptions is acted upon without any questions being asked to test its validity.

2. <u>Type of Question</u>

a) There are several types of information about pupils which can be relevant to one's decisions in teaching, and it is important that one's questions should not all be aimed at obtaining the same type of information. Four categories of questions are suggested.

<u>Questions to test knowledge (recall) of information</u> :

1) <u>Questions to test comprehension</u> is to ensure that pupils have understood concepts or relationships. Unless carefully chosen, questions intended to test comprehension may only be assessing recall of previously learned information. Among the most useful ways of testing comprehension are questions seeking new examples of a learned generalization or seeking new applications of a learned rule.

2) <u>Questions to assess interests or attitudes</u>. Since pupils tend to express the attitudes of which they think the

teacher will approve, it is often most useful to ask indirect questions for this purpose, for example, about how many pupils spend their leisure time, or about facts which they are only likely to know if they take an interest in the subject. (Non-verbal feedback can, however, be more reliable in this area, if the teacher is sensitive to it)

3) Questions to encourage pupils to contribute their own experience and ideas

In addition to asking questions to ensure that pupils are following the teacher's arguments, it can be particularly valuable to ask "open" questions which invite pupils to answer at some length and thus to reveal the way think about the subject under discussion. Apart from showing misconceptions or differences in perspective from the teacher, this can also indicate ways of approaching the subject which are most likely to interest pupils.

b) **Pupil Responses :**

It is easy to obtain unrepresentative feedback from a vocal minority of pupils. A deliberate effort is therefore necessary to obtain feedback from all pupils, for example, -by addressing some questions to individuals as well as some to the group as a whole.

Especially where there is more than one 'correct' answer to a question, it can be valuable to elicit answers to it from more than one pupil.

3) **Inadequate questions**

Two of the most common sources of inadequate questions are :

Lack of Definition. Where it is not clear to the pupils what sort of answer the teacher wants. When a teacher reacts to an answer by saying something like 'That is not the sort of thing I was looking for', one should ask whether he had communicated to pupils what he did want.

Leading Questions. Particularly common among [...] questions relating to attitudes; but, more [...] generally, if pupils can tell the 'correct' answer from the way in which a question is asked, no useful feedback is likely to be obtained.

At first sight, it may seem that adequate definition of a question is likely to make it a leading question, but this is not the case. What one should aim at is to communicate clearly to pupils the criteria one wants them to use in answering, but to avoid giving uninfentional cluse to the answer.

4. Lack of attention to pupil response

Good questions are of little value unless the teacher listens to the pupils' answers; but it is easy to be so busy deciding what one is going to do next that one does not give one's full attention to the answer.

When observing lessons, enter a tally whenever the teacher does not appear to be listening to a pupil response, or whenever, his subsequent behaviour suggests that he has not listened to it.

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QUESTIONING FOR FEEDBACK

1.
United assumptions about pupils	

2.
TYPES OF QUESTION	PUPPIL RESPONSES					
	A	B	C	D	E	None
Information						
Comprehension						
Interest/Attitudes						
Pupil Contribution						

3.   INADEQUATE QUESTIONS

Lack of Definition	
Leading Questions	

4.
Lack of Attention to Pupil Response	