

Activity ➔ 59

Learning how to question

STUDENT HANDOUT 1

Over the next week take note of questions that are asked. These could be questions that are asked by your tutor; questions that are asked by partners, family members or children; questions that are asked by TV reporters or journalists; questions that are asked on social media sites and questions that are asked by researchers, for example. When you hear or see a question jot it down so that you can build a list of different types of question that are asked.

As you build your list consider the following questions:

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| 1. What is the purpose of the question? | 6. Do you think the question will be successful or unsuccessful in doing what the questioner hopes it will do? Why? |
| 2. Why was it asked? | |
| 3. How was it asked? | |
| 4. What is the question trying to do? | 7. Do you think the question could have been asked in a different way to make it more successful? If so, in what way? |
| 5. Do you consider it to be a 'good' or 'bad' question? Why? | |

Group the questions from your list into categories, if possible. These could include, for example, questions that introduce a problem, test existing assumptions or stimulate reflection, or questions that constrain thought, lead to a specific answer or are simple, irrelevant or patronising. This will help you to think more about whether questions can be considered 'good' or 'bad' and whether they are successful in what they are purporting to do.

Once you have done this, start to think about how questions can be used in your academic study. The following questions will help you to do this:

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| 1. How can questions be used to stimulate thought and increase creativity? | 5. How can questions help you to explore a topic? |
| 2. What types of question constrain thought? | 6. How can questions be used to analyse and critique the work of others? |
| 3. How can questions help to introduce and solve problems? | 7. How are questions used in research? |
| 4. How can questions increase comprehension and knowledge? | 8. What is the difference between open and closed questions and when and how are they used in research? |

Develop a personal action plan that will help you to improve your ability to ask questions in your academic studies. Include within your plan action such as raising awareness, increasing understanding, practising, reflecting and developing skills.

Learning outcome: By the end of this activity you will have a raised awareness and understanding of the types of question that can be asked and will have developed a personal action plan that will help you to use questions effectively in your academic work.

STUDENT HANDOUT 2

Over the next week take note of questions that are asked. These could be questions that are asked by your tutor; questions that are asked by partners, family members or children; questions that are asked by TV reporters or journalists; questions that are asked on social media sites and questions that are asked by researchers, for example. When you hear or see a question jot it down so that you can build a list of different types of question that have been asked.

When we meet next week we will discuss these questions. In particular, we will think about the type of question that has been asked, the purpose of the question, whether it can be considered a 'good' or 'bad' question and think about how questions can be used effectively in our academic work. Once we have done this you will go on to develop a personal action plan that will help to improve your ability to ask the right questions in your studies and beyond.

Learning outcome: By the end of this activity you will have a raised awareness and understanding of the types of question that can be asked and will have developed a personal action plan that will help you to use questions effectively in your academic work.

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