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Investigating language teachers' 'take-ups' from an in-service short course.

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new to many teachers. The main purpose of including this aspect of questioning was to make teachers aware that questions need not only be exposing learners to content in the text, but to make learners aware of various other issues that may have led to the writing of the text. This is also to encourage teachers to train learners to read texts knowing that they are written differently for different readers.

Questions and instructions

During the course examples of prepared activities and tasks were used to assist teachers to identify common ways questions and instructions can be used to help learners to carry out a task. Carefully structured questions and instructions can support each other towards making it easier for the learners to reach a solution to the problem presented. During the short course teachers had to make up their own questions and instructions for a task. This made it possible for them realise that sometimes one without the other can create problems for learners in carrying out a task. At first many of them did not see the point of giving or writing instructions with questions, but later they agreed that instructions serve a purpose as without them learners may struggle to solve a problem. Teachers were also made aware of the fact that at some stages in the teaching and learning process instructions serve similar purposes to questions.

Questions are an important part of classroom discourses and need to be varied to make them interesting for learners. Roberts (in King, 1999:169) makes a distinction between two dimensions of questioning. The one dimension is that questions must increase cognitive demands on learners, and the other refers to the extent to which learners consider a range of possible answers in their attempt to respond successfully to the teacher's questions. The use of questions and instructions can be another way in which learners are engaged in responding to questions.

All questioning techniques in question one

There are a few teachers who included all questioning techniques listed in question one as of importance to them. Some expressed the view that the course revived their knowledge of questioning and stated that the use of a variety of questions helps to promote learning and to stimulate thinking. Not all responses explained why the teachers thought they benefited from all these questioning techniques.

4.1.2 Question Two

'Briefly describe any changes to your use of questions in the classroom that you have made since the course'.

The responses to this question suggest that some teachers seemed to believe there had been changes in comparison to the way they had previously used questions. Their responses are categorised into seven subsections.

Learner participation and stimulating thinking

The largest number of teachers are those who said that they use questions to encourage learners' participation and to stimulate thinking. It is not surprising that these teachers found the use of questions in this way useful. During the INSET course, input on questioning was not done in isolation from OBE principles. Learners' active participation and ways of promoting learners' thinking were emphasised throughout activities that demonstrated to teachers various techniques of questioning.

Types and levels of questions

Twenty teachers stated that since their participation in the INSET course, they have tried using a range of types and levels of questions. The general impression from the reasons they gave is that by using a range of types and levels of questions, they believe that all learners at different levels of cognition have a chance to answer questions.

The section of the course on types and levels of questions did encourage teachers to use a variety of questions. These kinds of questions are aimed at giving all learners a chance to at least answer a question. The examples were used to illustrate to teachers how even the learner who is regarded as 'slow' can be given an opportunity to respond to certain questions. Questions that require recall of knowledge are most likely to be answered by all learners, while higher order questions may only be answered by some learners.

One of the points that teachers were asked to consider is that, no learner should be dismissed, but that all learners should be given a chance, so that they will be encouraged to participate and their self-esteem be boosted in the process of teaching and learning. Ways of grouping and encouraging learners to participate formed part of the content of the course. Some teachers mentioned that questions would not only encourage learners to participate, but that when learners work in groups they will have to think and reach consensus about the answer to the question. In addition, some teachers stated that when learners work in groups every learner gets a chance to contribute, thus slow learners are not isolated from the rest of the process of teaching and learning. These views are similar to those expressed by Hyman (1979) who argues

that teacher's questions can stimulate whole class, small group and individual activity within the small group or whole class.

Purpose of questions

Although the purpose of questions was the second most frequently chosen response to question one, there is a vast difference between the number of these responses and the number of teachers who say that they consider the purpose of questions in their actual practice. Only four teachers stated that they consider the purpose of questions when using questions in the classroom. These stated that thinking of the purpose for which they ask questions seems to improve the way they ask questions. They did not elaborate on this statement or describe how the purposes of questions affect the way learners engage in the classroom. The question that can be raised is whether teachers mastered the input on purpose of questions to be able to apply what they learned and to bring about change in the classroom.

It is possible that teachers have different purposes when asking questions at different stages of their lessons. Dillon (1988) believes that teachers' questions have purposes of different kinds. He gives an example that a teacher may have an immediate purpose in this moment for his/her act of questioning, an intermediate purpose for today's questions, and a long-term purpose for using questions in class. Dillon considers the actions of questioning in relation to these purposes to be different actions with distinct purposes. However, unless the teacher consciously makes the purpose of the questions he/she asks explicit, the question may not be directed in a way that makes the purpose achievable, and the relevant task words may not have been considered for the structuring of questions to help make the purpose clear.

Critical questions

Five teachers claim to be using critical questions. Their responses claim that they use questions to encourage learners to analyse information and to think critically. Critical questions are also seen to stimulate learners' higher level thinking. From the teachers' responses it is possible that critical questions are confused with evaluation, inferential or appreciation questioning techniques. These are all open-ended question types that will require the learner to think, based on given information. Critical questions on the other hand, would require the learner to think beyond the text. It is not possible to determine whether teachers use questions for critical thinking, unless examples of questions are provided.

It is not surprising that critical questioning was not chosen by many teachers as a useful section of the course because few teachers stated that they use critical questions. During the INSET course teachers struggled to formulate such questions and it was obvious that this type of questioning was not popular in the classroom.

Techniques of questioning

Four teachers' responses are categorised to mean that they use a range of questioning techniques. This can either mean that these teachers refer to a variety of questioning, or that they refer to types of questions. For the latter, one of the teachers says that he/she does not only use 'wh-' questions but makes learners recognise questions with different questions words. From another teacher's response, it appears that learners arranged pictures directed by the teacher's questions to make up a story. For question two

teachers' responses are not always clear and do not always relate to answers they gave to question one of the questionnaire.

Learners' questions

Three teachers mentioned that through their questioning learners are also encouraged to ask questions. Perhaps this response was inspired by the discussion during the course that not only teachers' questions play a role in the process of teaching and learning, but that learners' questions need to be recognised as important.

Moll (2001:112) argues that learners' questions offer an opening to start teaching when the teacher gets access to the individual's interest in seeking knowledge on a particular subject. In addition, 'learners' questions provide an opportunity for teachers to investigate how individual learners think and what their needs are' (Gultig, 2001:54). Gultig suggests that when learners ask a question, they exhibit their present and future complex of knowledge, their dispositions of character, and the dynamics of their relations to the world (ibid:54).

The learners' questions help the teacher establish what learners already know and understand, and what they are ready to learn. It would benefit teachers to know what learners know rather than feel intimidated by learners' questions, because of the teacher feeling insecure with the subject matter. Given the emphasis in the course on encouraging learners' questions, the very few references to this in the questionnaire responses may indicate lack of take-up of this aspect of classroom practice.

Confidence building

Three teachers feel that the way they use questions after they have participated in the INSET course makes them and their learners confident. The teachers acknowledge improvement in comparison to their previous use of questioning in the classroom. They say that they formulate better questions and that they ask questions that encourage learner participation. One of these teachers claims that he/she has better direction in the way questions are used to promoting learning.

According to Adhami, for a teacher to effectively become a good questioner he/she needs flexible knowledge of the activity and topics involved. In addition, a teacher needs to understand common misconceptions and different connections that can be made between different types of questions (2001:33).

Other responses

Six teachers did not respond clearly to this question. The responses were either general or irrelevant to the question. This raises concern as to whether these teachers understood the question or whether they had made any effort to try out ideas on questioning suggested and practised during the course. It seems that a few teachers struggled to express themselves clearly in English. It is possible that these would find it difficult to phrase questions clearly in English – the language of learning and teaching in grade five classrooms in their schools.

4.1.3 Question Three

'If you have noticed any benefit of these changes in your teaching, briefly describe these'.

This question was asked to find out whether teachers used the questioning techniques suggested, demonstrated and discussed during the July INSET course. Teachers had to return for half a day on a Saturday in September to complete the hours for which the OBE course had been stipulated in order to get recognition for attending the whole course. During the time lapse between the first sessions and the last session of the course, teachers were expected to have had a chance to use or put into practice some of the questioning techniques. The teachers' responses indicate that most teachers believe that they did benefit from the course on questioning. It is important to remember that during the discussions and engaging teachers in questioning activities, other teaching techniques were integrated. For example, group work was emphasised in order to encourage teachers to move away from a teacher-centred classroom, but learners in their groups can discuss and work out responses to questions. In addition, group work was used to make teachers aware that content is not the only focus of a lesson, but that language skills can simultaneously be developed.

Some teachers did not give reasons for their response to question three. In some cases two or more reasons are provided as to how the teacher finds questioning techniques useful in their classroom. Some responses are not easy to categorise. For this reason the number of responses described and discussed is different from the total number of questions. The answers to question three that focus on 'learner responsiveness' as benefit can be categorised as follows:

a. Getting more responses from questions asked in the classroom (11)

b. Improved group work (8)

c. Greater learner interest (6)

d. More creativity, critical thinking and problem solving from learners (6)

The second category of benefits focuses on the types of questions teachers use and how these have engaged learners. Five teachers say that their use of questions has increased the learners' level of understanding and that learners participate. Another four teachers say that questions enabled learners to ask their own questions, that they can identify slow learners and give them help and that questions give a positive direction. Three teachers say that questions help them identify learners with problems, that learners have since gained confidence and that learners' communication has also improved. Two teachers do not give reasons except to say 'yes to the best'. This response does not tell the researcher whether learners or the teacher find it best and in what ways. Other responses by individual teachers are that learners are challenged, that learners' ability to read instructions enhances their participation, that questions improve listening, that questions indicate learners' progress. The most unusual is that learners' attendance has since improved, as they do not want to miss the interesting lessons.

Apart from how questions seem to have had an influence on how learners engage in classroom lessons, other responses indicate that their use of questions has had an impact on the teachers' style of teaching. Two teachers say that the course on questioning has helped them change their teaching methods. This would include how to involve learners in asking questions, encouraging thinking etc. Another two feel that questioning, using learning support materials, enhances and encourages learner participation. Individual teachers report that questions are useful when used in different activities, that questions guide the teacher, that questions enable the teacher and

learners to work together, and that questions help the teacher determine whether outcomes have been achieved.

There are also teachers' responses presenting a negative attitude to the use of questions in the classroom. One teacher reported that what was discussed and illustrated for teachers as positive practice in using questions for promoting learning results in 'extra preparation for the teacher'. Another responded that questioning could lead to lack of discipline. This teacher is likely to be a teacher who is against the use of group work. One teacher stated that if questions are in English learners are not able to participate. These negative responses are not so much based on the use of questions but on approaches to teaching in an outcomes-based classroom.

Considering the historical background of teacher education in South Africa it is possible that the adoption of C2005 and the achievement of the goals of the RNCS will not easily be accepted by some teachers. The resistance to change may be partly due to insecurity. Teachers require exposure to knowledge as well as new approaches to learning and teaching of the knowledge (Adler, 2002:4). According to Fullan (1991:23) continuous development for teachers is the cornerstone for learning, improvement and reform. Through continuous training minimally competent teachers may achieve higher levels of professional competence and expand their understanding of self, role, context and career (Millman and Darling-Hammond 1990:17).

4.1.4: Question Four

'If you still have questions about questioning, please list these'.

Only ten teachers responded to this question. One teacher's concern is that he/she still finds it difficult to make learners understand the questions. Two teachers want to know how often teachers should ask questions and whether all learners benefit from questioning or only those who participate in answering. Two teachers feel that their input on questions and instructions was not clear enough for them to use it effectively in class. One of the teachers asks a question. 'Why opinion or subjective questions are considered less accurate than is the case with objective questions?' From the teacher's question above, it is possible that in his/her long teaching experience only lower order or factual questions are what the teacher is comfortable with. Another teacher still finds appreciation and inferential questions difficult. Three teachers listed critical questions to be still problematic.

Each of these questions or comments suggests that for these ten teachers the course did not fully meet their needs or achieve what the facilitator had aimed at. The majority focused on the more challenging aspects of questioning. The time allocated for the course was insufficient to address the more complex aspects of questioning in detail.

4.1.5 General comments on questionnaire responses

It is not always clear from the teachers' responses whether they fully understood what the questions asked of them. Some respondents did not respond clearly to some questions. The questions asked aimed at getting responses from teachers that would inform the researcher about the 'take-up' from the course. If the teachers did not respond clearly, the researcher is left to make assumptions without any evidence.

Another concern is about when is the best time to give out questionnaires in a course. For the researcher it is valuable to get information that will lead to knowledgeable and substantiated conclusions. It is in most cases problematic to give questionnaires after the course. Usually there is not enough time to discuss questions so the researcher can be sure that all questions are understood. The lack of understanding by the respondent can result in irrelevant information being supplied. If both the researcher and respondents have time to go through questions the researcher can learn of questions that are unclear or ambiguous and rectify these instantly. In this research questionnaire, questions three and four could be improved. The responses do not provide enough information for the researcher to know what improvement teachers have made in their use of questions. Fortunately, further information could be obtained from the interviews and from the classroom observations.

4.2 *Interview Data*

The teachers who agreed to participate in this study, also agreed that the interviews could be audiotaped. One of the aims of the pre-observation interview was to establish a working relationship between the teacher and the researcher. It was also necessary that the researcher find out how teachers believed they had been using questioning before they attended the INSET course and afterwards. Moreover, it was important to know in advance how teachers felt about using various questioning techniques suggested during the course, to learn which of the questioning techniques they believe they are able to put into practice and which they believe they still need to improve on.

In this section of the chapter responses to the questions asked of the five teachers interviewed prior to the classroom visits, are reported on and discussed. Parts of the

In this section of the chapter responses to the questions asked of the five teachers interviewed prior to the classroom visits, are reported on and discussed. Parts of the transcript of teachers' responses are presented for each question asked. Four interviews were taped and the other interview was not taped due to a power failure. However, notes were written as the teacher gave responses. The teachers are labelled A to E. At one school two teachers had attended the course, and both agreed to participate. In the interview they were interviewed simultaneously. The responses of the teachers to each question are presented and discussed.

1. Do you decide which questions to ask for each lesson you are going to teach?

A: It's usually based on what the lesson is about. Because if they already know some of the concepts you don't have to go right back and start from scratch, but also you decide to ask mainly what they know already to see where they are, and if you know where they are then you can ask them deeper questions.

B: Sometimes I prepare, I prepare a few questions. But most of them – some of them come spontaneously. As you know if you can see the child not understanding something, or that you have not explained something well enough, then I ask them again while I rephrase until I get some kind of response. But if they keep on looking blank or looking bored, then I try to come up with new ideas or new questions.

C: Ja. I do ask them spontaneous questions to see if they are interested in the work, then I move to what I have prepared for them. If they are interested in the work, they will come up with different answers and I can see if they are exploring a little further. I then ask them questions stimulating them to think as far as they can.

B: I think you can ask them basic ones, because when you are preparing you know what is going to arise in the classroom situation. So you take it as it comes.

D: What I do is, when I prepare my lesson, I have a few questions, but mainly when with the children in the classroom – from their responses you ask coaching questions and find that your questions vary and changes. Because when you teach children it changes, you can't describe all questions that you are going to ask. You ask different questions, and from their responses you ask more questions as well.

E: Questions are spontaneous – mostly from learners' answers I ask more questions.

2. Do you ever write down questions that you will ask learners before you teach?

A: I don't tend to write them down. Because I feel unless it's a comprehension where you write it, but usually I don't. Actually, I find different classes do not respond the same to the same thing, and I would pick up some questions before I start the lesson like: 'How do you explain the rhyming scheme?' 'What is a limerick?' then the class may not really know, then you have to ask them different questions. So if you write them down I think you are to --- the focus is too narrow.

B: Yes. Because you want to know what the children will gain from a lesson.

C: No.

D: One of the things we do, at some stages we do write down some questions. But to be honest we, I introduce a lesson, I ask them spontaneous questions according to the topic or the comprehension that --- the title, because I find that the questions comes while we engage in the classroom environment.

E: No, but when they answer questions for reading comprehension I write some questions on the board.

Teachers seem to acknowledge that preparing questions for a lesson is important although they do not often do it. The common reason given is that due to working with different learners with different cognitive levels, the first question usually determines

questions to follow based on learners' responses. They also say that sometimes even when the teacher had questions in mind, the questions would change depending on how the learner responded. They also say that questioning is spontaneous.

From the teachers' responses, it is possible to say teachers do think about or prepare questions depending on the lesson to be taught. The learners' responses, their understanding or lack of understanding determines the next question the teacher will ask. Learners' prior knowledge is also recognised when asking questions. It seems that there is flexibility on the teachers' side in the way questions are decided upon for teaching purposes. It can also be said that purpose is given to the questions asked, since teachers do not just continue to ask questions, but their questions are determined by the situation in the classroom. Although questions are not literally written down as preparation for what the teachers will do in the classroom, the teachers still do know what questions they want to ask. As such it can also be assumed that the teachers know why they would want to ask such questions.

3. *During the course we looked at types and levels of questions as in Barrett's taxonomy. Which of these questioning techniques do you use, when and why do you use them?*

A: Yes. You have to [ ] I mean in English for example, you have to give a certain amount of literal questions because some of them can't cope with the higher ones. And, but obviously [ ] want to try and give them some inferential ones, and some appreciation like in a poem, did you like the poem, did you like the story, what did you think of it etc. And the children that are a bit further ahead, if I put it like that, they usually do not have a problem. It's the ones that are struggling with English that are not sure what to do there.

B: Yes I do. I do get Barrett's taxonomy in front of me when I do comprehension. I keep it in front of me. And I try that when I do my comprehension. We all try to make up questions accordingly, so we have three or whatever from literal, then we go up to appreciation. And we all do it in English. ... but you do not always know. You sometimes kind of forget and it's hard to rephrase questions of what clusters of which type. I still have to have a piece of paper in front of me, then I know I'm on the right track.

C: I don't use that in grade 5 yet. ... I use anything that comes from an OBE comprehension books.

D: What I did find is that that was useful, the course we have done. It gave us the knowledge of how to ask questions, relevant questions that we must think before we ask questions, and also give children chance to reflect so that they can answer. Coming back to what you say, yes maybe I do use most of those techniques. In fact all of them have a place in our teaching. I find them useful.

E: I think I do use some of them even not exactly as we used them in the workshop. And maybe because I don't teach English I am not aware which I use.

The response to this question varied. One teacher acknowledged the importance of the course on questioning and that all questioning techniques discussed have a place in teaching. However, he was not yet feeling confident to use some of the higher-order questions, particularly the appreciation and inferential questions. The other teachers claimed to be using a variety of questioning techniques, even though they do not consciously categorize questions used in a lesson. One teacher confessed to have been referring to Barrett's taxonomy notes when teaching. She said that the notes serve as a reminder and that she is able to decide task words she can choose to construct questions. There was also a teacher who felt that not all questions are applicable to

what she is teaching. The teachers' responses suggest that while they have been familiar with most of the questioning techniques, they have found it difficult to use some of them in their classrooms. The responses do not, however, confirm that teachers are using all types and levels of questions in their teaching. This can only be confirmed when observing their classroom teaching.

Based on responses to question 4.2.3, it seems that most questions still used in the classroom are literal questions for comprehension. In support of that, one of the teachers mentioned that she uses questions to elicit learners' comprehension, and that questions from textbooks are still mostly used for teaching and learning in the classroom. The teacher who taught poetry used appreciation questions. At no stage in the teachers' responses were evaluation and reorganisation questions mentioned. This does not mean these are not used, but it is likely that they are rarely used and as a result, they were not mentioned.

4. Since you have different ways you ask questions, would you say these have improved learners' comprehension and participation?

A: I use interesting books from the media centre. The fun activities give ideas that involve learners. They do a lot of speaking. Lot of things are discussed.

B: Now with OBE questions they make them do a number of activities. They make them think more. Whereas the ones before we very often involved learners... I don't do a lot of writing. I do discussions.

C: Unlike before where you can take the ruler and your pencil and read the question and go back to the comprehension and underline or write the answer. It was basically based on recognition. ... They've got to know how to put in their own words, think and know how to reorganise statements that you give them out of the comprehension. I

engage learners to do more discussions. They do project work, the newspaper they have started.

D: I think learners enjoy to be involved in the lesson. I have always made learners work in groups and in pairs.

E: Yes,I think so. I ask questions that make learners discuss.

Responses to this question indicate that teachers are aware that in an outcomes-based lesson learners should be encouraged to actively participate. However, it is not clear from their responses how learners are encouraged to participate. The teachers tend to refer to making learners think as a way of participating. From other responses there is indication that discussions and project work involve learners in either pair or group work, although this is not explicitly stated.

From the information gathered from the interviews, it can be concluded that teachers are aware of the significance of questions for improving learning and participation in the classroom. However, it seems that some types and levels of questions are used more than the others, in particular lower-order questions. Most teachers still regard eliciting learners' comprehension as more important than other ways learners can be questioned about what they have learn[ed]. In some cases teachers still rely on textbooks, especially the newly released OBE ones which are regarded as better than those previously used. However, their responses suggest that teachers still need to think further about what they want learners to learn, and to base their questions on those anticipated outcomes. According to Selley (2000:42) for a teacher to get satisfactory outcomes from learner participation in any learning process, it is good to view learning not just as getting to know the right answer, but knowing why it is right. 'Knowing how to reason something out, and being aware of one's thought process while doing so,

is part of metacognition. The concern is that only a few learners may know the answers, and the question is what is happening to the rest' (ibid:42).

Towards the end of the observation sessions teachers were reminded of the researcher's intention to conduct a second interview with them. It became clear that none of them were enthusiastic about a post-observation interview and so the researcher decided not to pursue these follow-up interviews.

4.3 Presentation and analysis of classroom observations

During the interviews the agreement reached was that each teacher would be observed at least three times for this study. Teachers were to decide what to teach, following the normal lesson that would have been scheduled for that time. The researcher did not influence or persuade teachers in regard to any content to be taught during the observations. Mostly, after each observation, the teacher would indicate what would be the subject matter for the next visit.

Of the five teachers observed, only one agreed to be videotaped. For the rest, an observation schedule with columns had been devised for which the number of times particular types and levels of questions were asked was to be recorded using the tally method. In this schedule the columns were also divided according to the different stages of a lesson which include introduction, body or input and conclusion. Other columns recorded questions asked by learners and also questioning techniques that encouraged participation during the process of learning.

As indicated in chapter three the 'tally method' has its weaknesses as a data capturing instrument because there is the possibility that information can be missed, or categories

incorrectly recorded when trying to follow the pace of the lesson, and to understand the teacher's use of questions. The mind may also be distracted during the lesson.

Both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the observation of each of the five teachers is presented with a view to establishing any patterns in the data and any relationships between the questioning observed and the input given at the short course.

During the course questions were categorized initially to establish the two main types of questions: closed and open-ended. Closed questions are defined as questions which elicit fact, memory and knowledge based on previously taught knowledge or what the learner knows from home, whereas open-ended questions elicit more complex thought-processes and longer responses (Dillon, 1982:143). The course referred to levels of questions as sub-categories of the types of questions. As outlined in chapter two, knowledge and comprehension questions are categorised as lower order. These lower order questions elicit direct information based in the text or information heard. The evaluation, appreciation and inferential questions are categorised as higher order questions. These questions require the learner to use the text or information heard to think about the answer and beyond what is in the text.

The following section presents data from all the lessons observed and the one videotaped. The tabulations of the data show how many times questions were asked in each lesson, the number of each type and level of questions used in each lesson, when in the lesson there were questions that involved learners and the number of times learners were able to ask questions. The number before the equal sign represents the lesson and the other number the number of questions asked. After the presentation of the tabulated data for each teacher, a description of the lessons is given.

4.3.1: Teacher A

Teacher A holds a four year Bachelor of Primary Education degree (B Prim Ed) and has been teaching for 19 years. She currently teaches English and Arts and Culture to a multicultural class. English is taught as a home language and all other learning areas are taught in English as a medium of instruction. Most learners in Teacher A's classroom are English mother tongue speakers. The lessons observed were a poetry – limerick lesson, a reading lesson and a grammar lesson focussed on teaching contractions. Data from the observations are presented in Table One.

Table One: Teacher A

- Levels and purposes of questioning.

	Introduction	body/input	conclusion
Knowledge	1=3 2=6 3=3	1=10 2=5 3=11	
Comprehension	1=2 2=4 3=0	1=12 2=4 3=7	
Application/ reorganisation	1=1 2=2	1=5 2=1	
Evaluation		1=3	
Appreciation			
Inference		1=6 2=0 3=1	
Others			1. In groups learners answered comprehension questions 2. Written work–grammar exercise 3. Learners wrote poems - creative writing.

- Learners' questions

			3. Learners asked questions when checking with the teacher as to what they did was correct.

- Encouraging interaction

Teacher-learner	2. Learners responded to the teacher's questions individually 3. Some questions' responses directed to the teacher	1. Teacher asked questions, learners responded directly to the teacher	1. Learners worked in groups to answer questions. They shared answers – work was marked by the whole class.
Learner-learner	3. In groups learners were encouraged to discuss the structure of a limerick and report back	3. In groups learners studied a poem and identified features of a limerick – report back	1. Learners worked in small groups to answer questions – groups shared answers – work to be marked by whole class.

In Teacher A's three lessons it is evident that lower order questions which require recall of facts and memorisation of knowledge are still dominant. A total of forty questions in the three lessons elicited prior knowledge and knowledge based on what was taught. The second highest number of questions asked were comprehension questions. These questions were mostly used to find out what learners understood from the lessons taught. It is likely that Teacher A wanted to check that learners understood what had been taught before they continued with the task or activity, as most were asked in the body of the lesson. A total of only nineteen questions that could be classified as higher order questions were used in the three lessons. Examples of higher order questions used from one of the lessons are:

- Why do you think there was always chaos in Mr Jerkins' classroom?
- Would you have enjoyed being a pupil in Mr Jerkins' class? Why or why not?

Although most questions asked were 'wh-' type of questions commonly used in the classroom, there was evidence that Teacher A used a variety of questions. This supports what she said in the interview that she tries to use higher order types and levels of questions that encourage thinking whenever she can. This is the teacher who

claimed to be constantly referring to the notes from the short course to be sure that she uses relevant questioning and task words for different purposes when asking questions. Though not enough higher order questions were used, there is evidence of possible 'take-up' from the course in the way different levels of questions were used.

It was only in the third lesson that learners had an opportunity to ask questions, because of the type of task they were engaged in. Nonetheless, learners' participation was encouraged throughout the lessons either at teacher-learner or learner-learner level.

Teacher A is one of the teachers who felt confident about her teaching techniques. Considering her level of education and teaching experience, it would not be difficult for this teacher to adopt improved teaching and learning practices. This supports the notion discussed in chapter two that if the teacher is knowledgeable about the curriculum content he/she is likely to be able to engage learners in high-level conceptual thinking. In addition, Teacher A is likely to make progress towards change with the kind of attitude she has and her proficiency in teaching (Ross,1994). As a result of Teacher A's knowledge of curriculum content and how she should involve learners in the process of teaching and learning, she has the capacity to choose appropriate approaches that will 'engage learners in high-level conceptual thinking towards improving learning' (Adler, Slonimisky and Reed, 2002:136).

4.3.2: Teacher B

Teacher B holds a Bachelor of Primary Education degree, and had been teaching for six years at the time questionnaires were completed. She is teaching Languages: English and IsiZulu, Life Orientation, Social Sciences and Art and Culture.

The recording of Teacher B's schedule looks different from the other four teachers observed. Most columns are blank because lessons were taught differently. To be consistent with the display of each teacher's data the same pattern of data capturing is repeated. Below the schedule an explanation of how lessons were conducted is given.

Table Two: Teacher B

- Types and levels of questions

Knowledge	1=0 2=3 3=0		
Comprehansion			
Application/ reorganasation			
Evaluation			
Appreciation			
Inference			

- *Learners' questions*

		1. *In groups learners* had prepared questions to interview a partner. The purpose was for learners to use questions to find information from one another. *Learners used* a variety of levels of questions.	

- *Encouraging interaction*

Teacher-learner	2. Teacher elicited prior *information and* learners gave responses when doing corrections		
Learner-learner		1. *In pairs learners interviewed* each other – role-play.	

For the first lesson learners were guided and prepared through examples of questions that they had to use for the interviews they were to role-play in the classroom. On the worksheet they used to prepare for the interview, learners were made aware that questions should not be asking for 'yes' and 'no' responses. The interview also had a learning purpose in that learners had to first do research on a 'strange beast'. Then the partner had to ask questions to find out what made the other person research that kind of beast. Learners were encouraged to be imaginative and pretend or imagine themselves as presenters on a television programme. This activity gave learners a lot to think about as they developed questions for the interview. With this kind of activity learners did not only learn how to construct questions, they also were able to use language effectively when asking and when answering. Other language skills were developed. For example, listening played a significant role in order that relevant responses could be given. It was not clear from the observation whether the teacher discussed the purpose of the activity before learners engaged in preparing questions. These learners had a chance to practice useful skills which are likely to benefit them in future.

For the second lesson the teacher gave learners a poem on practicing punctuation. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher asked only two questions and did not elicit prior knowledge of punctuation. It is possible that the poem had been studied in a previous lesson. However, it would still have served a good purpose for the teacher to check if learners remembered what they had been taught regarding punctuation marks. Learners read the poem and then did the punctuation exercise that was below the poem. Not enough preparation was done for learners to go ahead with correcting the punctuation of the paragraph that followed the poem. Marking was done with the whole class.

For the third lesson learners were engaged in developing what looked like a school newsletter. The emphasis was on creativity, on how groups would present ideas to attract the reader on different topics, most of which were about animals (linked to the lesson where a learner researched about a particular animal and was interviewed).

The observation of this teacher's lessons was different from the other lessons observed. In all lessons, the teacher had very little to do except to facilitate or observe what learners did. It is not clear whether the teacher purposefully arranged her lessons so that the focus was on the learners during the researcher's visits or whether this is her usual approach to teaching. The work displayed by learners was impressive.

Learner interaction in Teacher B's classroom received high priority. While not a great deal of teacher input was observed, there was evidence of learning by learners in groups or pairs. The teacher did mention at one stage of interacting with the researcher that she enjoys teaching where learners are doing something themselves to promote learning. She also said that 'OBE is a successful approach to teaching'. She showed the researcher textbooks that she regards as good in that integrated questioning techniques are used in them. It might then be assumed that Teacher B is aware of what should be done towards improving learning, and is able to facilitate learning-centred lessons or it may be that she does not feel confident and/or comfortable to publicly display her teaching skills in the presence of strangers invading her comfort zone. The teacher did mention that she learnt a lot from the course on how learners should be involved in the process of learning.

4.3.3: Teacher C

Teacher C holds a three year teacher's diploma, and he had been teaching for eight years at the time questionnaires were completed. He currently teaches English, Mathematics, Natural Science, and Human and Social Sciences to a multicultural class. English and Afrikaans are taught as home languages and all other learning areas are taught in English as medium of instruction. The school is situated in an area where Afrikaans is mostly spoken among residents. Learners in the school include learners speaking African languages. However, none of these languages are taught and the teacher does not speak any of the learners' languages. Although English is the medium of instruction, not many learners are fluent in English. The teachers in the school are mostly additional language speakers of English.

The lessons observed included poetry, reading comprehension and developing a dialogue using a speech bubbles story. Observation data for the three lessons is as follows:

Table Three: Teacher C

- Levels and purposes of questioning.

	Introduction	body/input	conclusion
Knowledge	1=6 2=2 3=2	1=5 2=8 3=6	1=1 2=2 3=3
Comprehension	1=3 2=2 3=1	1=7 2=11 3=3	1=3 2=2 3=1
Application/ reorganisation	1=1 2=0 3=0	1=0 2=1 3=1	1=1 2=1 3=0
Evaluation		1=2 2=0 3=0	1=1 2=0 3=2
Appreciation		1=1 2=1 3=0	1=1 2=0 3=2

Inference		1=1 2=3 3=0	1=1 2=1 3=0

- Learners' questions

		1. Learners asked questions when checking with the teacher.	2. Learners were encouraged to check with each other instead of directing questions to the teacher. These were mostly checking if they were doing what was expected.

- Encouraging interaction

Teacher-learner	1. Questions on what they thought the poem was about and their understanding of what was read -teacher learner interaction 2. Questions directed at partner 3. Teacher learner interaction	1. Mostly responses directed at the teacher 2. Questions to check understanding and vocabulary engaged individuals 3. Responses directed to the teacher.	1. Comprehension questions asked to individuals 2. Learners answered questions in their books 3. Report of written dialogue read to the class
Learner-learner	2. Learners in pairs talked about the topic and pictures shared responses discussing	1. On two occasions learners got a chance to speak to each other in groups after reading the poem. They had to answer questions but no discussion before responses were given. 2. Learners did ask questions in their group and reported 3. Learners were encouraged to read and discuss what they would include in the blank speech bubbles.	

In the three lessons there was a high number of lower order questions which were divided between factual and comprehension questions. Although few higher order questions were asked throughout the lessons, there is evidence of some use of all levels of questions in these lessons. In the interview the teacher indicated that although he still finds it difficult to ask higher order questions he is trying to include more higher order questions in his lessons, in order to encourage learners to think. He said that the Barrett's taxonomy notes are helpful whenever he formulates questions, but he is not yet confident using some of the higher order questions. When learners were reading the poem, the teacher could have engaged learners by asking questions that encouraged them to think. This could have been through asking learners to give reasons for or

examples of what they meant. Selly (2000:42) mentions that it is important to view knowledge as not just knowing the right answer, but knowing why it is right. She further says that 'knowing how to reason and being aware of the thought process is part of metacognition'. The learners in Teacher C's class had few opportunities to reason.

Another concern about Teacher C's lessons is how he handled learners' responses. Not enough time was given for learners to think of the answers, and the teacher would then answer his own questions. Young (1992:114) considers such an act by the teacher to be denying learners an opportunity to learn; instead the teacher becomes the learner.

From observing Teacher C's lessons there is no doubt that he has good knowledge of the content taught, and that there is hope that he will be able to adopt ideas and information about questioning introduced during the short course. His confidence in his content knowledge and his willingness to attempt to use different questioning techniques in promoting learning skills and encourage learners' thinking suggest that he has potential to engage learners fruitfully. Perhaps it would be helpful for Teacher C to continue using the notes provided during the course as a reminder of what he has not yet mastered.

4.3.4: Teacher D

Teacher D's qualification is indicated as a two year secondary diploma, and this teacher has been teaching for thirty years. She teaches home language and Life Orientation. Teacher D teaches in a school where one of the African languages is the home language and English is taught as an additional language and also used as a

medium of instruction. The researcher did not find out if all learners were speakers of the same home language.

One of the lessons observed was on HIV/ AIDS. The other two lessons were home language reading and a written comprehension test. In all three lessons observed there was not much difference in the way questions were used in relation to involving and promoting thinking in the lesson. Most questions used were lower order.

Table Four: Teacher D

- Levels and purpose of questioning.

	Introduction	*body/input*	conclusion
Knowledge	1=2 2=0 3=3	1=3 2=8 3=0	1=1 2=2 3=0
Comprehension	1=1 2=0 3=1	1=1 2=10 3=8	1=1 2=2 3=0
Application/ Re organisation		1=0 2=2 3=0	
Evaluation	1=1		
Appreciation			
Inference		1=0 2=2 3=0	
Other	3. Do you have anything to ask?	3. *Which word don't you understand?*	1. Do you promise to abstain until you are 21 years old?

- Learners' questions

		1. The teacher often asked learners if they had questions, but no one asked. 3. Learners were encouraged to ask for meaning of words they did not understand, but learners did not respond.	