

The observation of teachers' questioning techniques and students' responses in America

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Introduction

The purpose of this internationally educational visit is to observe how American teachers raise questions and how their students do the response with instructors or other students based on these questions. In order to engage all learners in the classroom, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate in class discussions and do the important thinking when a question is posed; teachers use a variety of questioning strategies to conduct diverse activities. In addition, teachers could characteristically implement the various types of questions they ask to generate meaningful dialog that supports the development of high-order thinking skills. There are useful benefits for instructors and learners toward operating questioning techniques; for teachers, they can avoid dominating classroom talk by questioning strategy; for students, they can actively engaged in the course instead of passively receiving teacher's lecture. Therefore, as an EFL (English as a foreign language) teacher, the appropriate questioning strategies can build the optimistic atmosphere in the classroom, help EFL students conquer the deficiency of language, and serve as teacher's feedback. And indeed, the Socratic method of using questions and answers to challenge assumptions, expose contradictions, and lead to new knowledge and wisdom is an undeniably powerful teaching approach. Besides, research also indicates that questioning is second only to lecturing in popularity as a teaching method and that classroom teachers spend anywhere from thirty-five to fifty percent of their instructional time conducting questioning procedures (as Image 1 and 2).

Image 1

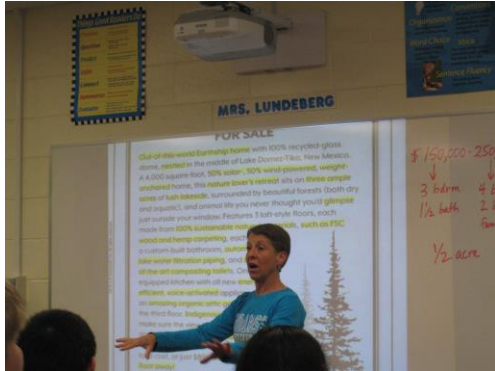


Image 2



Literature and Definition

Basically, the questions were composed of the context of questions, the content of questions, and learners' response to questions. Most questioning types include display questions, confirmation checks and clarification requests (Chang, 1992). The present review focuses on the relationship between teachers' classroom questioning behaviours and a variety of students' outcomes, including achievement, retention, and the level of students' participation. Several studies suggested that teachers should design adequate teaching activities in effective strategies to assist the English learners' oral development. Thompson (2004) said that reviewed the current research related to quality instruction for English learners, classroom teachers urgently need to know more about effective questioning strategies for teaching English learners. As Oxford (1990, p.1) claimed, "Learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning." Researchers have pointed out how language questioning strategies can indirectly advance learners' proficiency and positively affect students' learning achievement. Successful language learners are more aware of the cognitive and metacognitive processes while learning a language with teachers' high-order thinking questioning strategy.

Actually, most effective strategies are originated from meaningful learning. Meaningfulness can be achieved in contextual learning where natural learning environment is created (Ausubel, 1963). Therefore, teachers' primary role is to design different types of questioning activities that make learning materials meaningful and interesting to students. Accordingly, extensive studies research how students are making sense of their own background knowledge and displayed and how they accommodate and assimilate new information and concepts through the richly developed questions-answer tasks.

In pedagogical view, to explore and highlight the construction of students' cognitive and speaking knowledge development so as to understand what students have learned. Especially for Chinese instruction, the questioning strategy is appropriate to apply the reading activities and assessments to encourage learners establishing their information and performing their outcomes in the forms of spoken or written way (Wang, 2007). In linguistic view, Chafe (1982) there is a close connection between the rate of thinking and the speech. When human beings speak, they are in the habit of moving from one idea to the next at the rate of about one every two seconds that indicated perhaps the spoken rate is even our normal "thinking rate." In other words, language can reflect the pace of thought. Since the idea unit of human mind can construct the foundation of spoken language, some instructional aids such as "graphic organizer" "word bank" or "peer discussion" would reconstruct the cognitive knowledge and help learners perform the better oral proficiency. As teachers work on various questioning strategies, students could realize meaningful connections between known and unknown concepts, and they could easily organize their thought and systematically make the spoken output.

For these reasons, it's a pleasure to observe the discourse teachers and students produced in ELL (English Language Learners) classroom through various questioning

strategies. Additionally, the following paragraphs will elaborate the teachers' questioning techniques and students' responses in America from the perspectives of SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), quantum learning, and the balanced literacy. By observing these dimensions, it was hoped to achieve the learning efficiency and to create the positive attitude in the classroom talk.

Questioning strategies on SIOP Model

The SIOP is a research-based model that offers an empirically-validated approach to teaching that helps prepare all students—especially English learners. As a framework for organizing instruction, the SIOP Model supports teachers in planning and delivering high-quality instruction for all students. The core purpose of SIOP for students is to build the background knowledge, and to develop their own schema. It comprised the following eight components including lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice and application, lesson delivery, and review and assessment. Based on these above eight elements, instructors can adopt a variety of questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills or brain preference survey to process language practice lectures and to make teaching content comprehensible by the mean of scaffolding. In the beginning of lecture preparation, teachers need to set the appropriate content and language objectives. And then, according to the targets teachers made, the related questioning worksheets or organizers can be designed for kids which can help them easily involved in classroom discussion (as Image 3 and 4) This situation can totally help all students involve and engage in questioning activities.

Image 3



Image 4



Indeed, it is imperative for students to have frequent opportunities for interactions and discussions. As for how a teacher use higher level questioning with students, Webb’s depth of knowledge (shown as Table 1) must be taken as the foundation to develop the variety of questioning techniques in lesson plans. According to the following chart of Webb’s depth of knowledge, teachers can design questioning activities with four kinds of levels comprising recall, skill or concept, strategic thinking and extended thinking. There are some frequent strategies American teachers often use such as “concept map, mind map, writing the main idea in the diagram before addressing, some worksheets with the information of learners’ background knowledge and asking how, what and why questions.”

Table 1

Level One (Recall)		Level Two (Skill/Concept)		Level Three (Strategic Thinking)		Level Four (Extended Thinking)
Arrange	List	Infer	Summarize	Revise	Construct	Design
Repeat	Label	Categorize	Show	Apprise	Assess	Connect
Recall	Illustrate	Identify	Relate	Critique	Solve	Synthesize
Recite	Name	Organize	Compare	Formulate	Use Logic	Apply
Calculate	Use	Construct	Estimate	Hypothesize	Explain	Critique
Define	Match	Modify	Cause/Effect	Conclude		Analyze
State	Quote	Predict	Separate	Cite Evidence		Create
Tell	Report	Interpret	Classify	Differentiate		Prove
Recognize	Measure	Distinguish	Graph	Investigate		
Tabulate	Memorize	Use Cues	Observe	Compare		
Identify						

(From <http://www.bizinabox.com/blog/from-standards-relevancy-and-application-the-depth-of-knowledge/>)

Besides, in SIOP Model, instructors also can apply the questioning-response-evaluation model to examine learners' progress toward topic knowledge after implementing the related questioning strategies not asking only one student with high level but whole class. This model might help teachers to better understand the impact of the questioning strategy use on learning processes of students. Moreover, students' response offer teachers a chance to understand the "gap" between what students wanted to say and what students really perceived while they were learning the new knowledge. It's expected to provide teachers another standpoint from which to design teaching methods and materials more suitable to their students than original ones, so that their teaching can be effective with students' oral performance.

Questioning strategies on quantum learning

The main purpose of quantum learning is to create positive climate and culture for learning and to decrease the students' anxiety during the time of comprehensible input. Basically, the positive classroom atmosphere and landscapes are the extension of a teacher is a classroom. At first, teachers need to set the class pledge, and emphasized on children's "choice" "power" and "freedom" to construct the foundation of classroom language and questioning. If classroom runs positively, the learning efficiency will be better than the negative one. Some practical words teachers can apply comprised "Why are you here? To learn" "Why does it take? Effort" and "What will give? 100%."(Shown as Image 5).

This is what someone called "home-court advantage" can eternal students' optimistic mind and naturally perform the good characters and attitude. First, ensure all class understand the purposes of routines and procedures; next, clarify the procedure through modelling, allow students having opportunities to practice the routine through rehearsal, and to try not to overwhelm students (as Image 6). The

process of establishing routines and procedures may take several days. Therefore, as a teacher, we should be consistent and patience for students' performance. With the support of these benefits above mentioned, instructors can implement more high-ordered thinking activities.

Image 5



Image 6



Besides, environment is the use of physical space to support a culture of learning. The ideal classroom layouts are inviting, comfortable and stimulating. Since everything sends a message about what is important, the environment is purposefully constructed with content-related and inspirational posters, student-generated work, music, plants, and lighting furniture arrangements. Actually, different tables and corners have various functions such the following tasks as “answer yes-no questions” “asking why or what's the clue you get?” “using thumbs-up and down to show the agreement” “wait-time” “once at a time” or “finding the partners to execute the teamwork discussion.” Furthermore, as a collaborative mode on quantum learning, the strategy “turn and talk” or “turn around and say” is the most meaningfully strategy for questions and answers.

Questioning strategies on balanced literacy

Balanced literacy incorporates all reading approaches realizing students need to use multiple strategies to become proficient readers. The purpose of balance literacy is to provide and cultivate the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening for all

students. Instructors always apply the diverse questioning type to process the clarification and comprehension checks. Furthermore, this is the most popular model to directly evaluate students' response and feedback at reading and writing class.

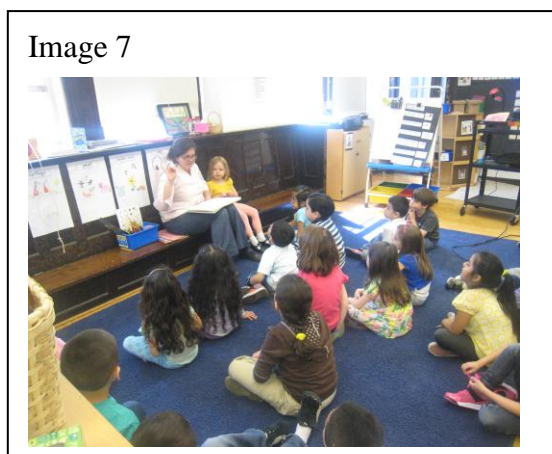
Researchers have designed experiments which examine the effects of questions framed at differing levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of School Learning. These levels, in ascending order of sophistication, are: (1) knowledge, (2) comprehension, (3) application, (4) analysis, (5) synthesis, and (6) evaluation. There are other hierarchies, too, which are used as the basis for structuring comparative studies on balanced literacy. The majority of researchers, however, have conducted more simple comparisons: they have looked at the relative effects on student outcomes produced by what they call higher and lower cognitive questions. Generally speaking, lower cognitive questions are referred to in the literature as fact, closed, direct, recall, and knowledge questions; however, higher cognitive questions are defined as those which ask the student to mentally manipulate bits of information previously learned to create an answer or to support an answer with logically reasoned evidence. Higher cognitive questions are also called open-ended, interpretive, evaluative, inquiry, inferential, and synthesis questions.

In this way, a well-organized questioning procedure (shown as Image 7 and 8) can assist students making a lot of progress on reading and writing proficiency. The model is offered by Pearson (1985) does provide some basic steps which can help students make connections between what they know and what they are seeking to learn. Pearson suggests that teachers complete all the steps in this process by way of demonstration, and then gradually shift responsibility for all but the first step to the students. The steps are as following: (1) ask the inference question; (2) answer it; (3) find clues in the text to support the inference; (4) tell how to get from the clues to the answer (i.e., give a line of reasoning).

Conclusion

Teachers' talk is the major tool for instruction, assessment and affects students' communicative skills significantly. Therefore, the teachers should focus on how they adjust the instructional talk to elicit or initiate the responses of learners, and after that classroom interaction could perform better than the unidirectional communication from teachers to students. In order to enhance the efficiency of teaching type on students' responses, it seemed necessary to apply questioning strategies into the instruction through various models above mentioned.

In sum, the effectiveness of questioning strategy can promote students' schema scaffolding, positively learning attitude and reading comprehension. Some appropriate questioning strategies or devices could be carried out as an instruction for EFL teachers in English class. That could be provided as small group tasks with opportunities to effectively elicit students' interaction. For examples, teachers try to induce students answering the questions with the use of sentence starters, frames and graphic organizer, and that kind of teaching activities can help students easily result in spoken output naturally ; the application of word banks or sight words can help students guide the thinking trace. Therefore, based on the observation and the analysis, the application of questioning strategy is deserved to regard as a key way to enhance students' learning comprehension in EFL classrooms (as Image 7 and 8).



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