

**Enhancing Critical and Analytical Thinking Skills Through
Questioning in the Language Classroom**

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Abstract. *One of the most effective educational tools for developing language learners' critical and analytical thinking abilities is questioning. Effective questioning techniques can develop students' critical thinking, information analysis, and effective communication skills by stimulating curiosity, increasing introspection, and fostering deep engagement with the course material. This article examines the value of questioning in language classes and offers suggestions for purposeful questioning strategies that can strengthen students' capacity for critical and analytical thought.*

Key words: *Literal Questions, inferential questions, evaluative questions, analytical questions, diversify questioning techniques, scaffold questioning.*

Success in the academic, professional, and personal domains all depend on having strong critical and analytical thinking skills. Fostering these skills in language learners is essential to their ability to understand, assess, and make sense of a variety of texts. Asking insightful questions is a useful strategy for fostering analytical and critical thinking. Teachers can engage students' cognitive processes and encourage them to examine, interpret, and reflect on language and its surroundings by asking thought-provoking questions.

While analytical thinking focuses on dissecting complex information into manageable components for deeper understanding, critical thinking involves actively and skilfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and evaluating information to reach reasoned conclusions. Both abilities are essential

to language learning as they allow students to comprehend texts, infer meaning, and engage critically with linguistic and cultural nuances.

Being able to communicate in two languages is becoming more and more important in social, professional, and academic settings in today's globalised society. Beyond mere language proficiency, people must be able to critically assess material in many languages, negotiate many cultural viewpoints, and grasp minute linguistic nuances. Therefore, it is crucial to develop critical and analytical thinking abilities in language classrooms to give students the tools they need to succeed in a multicultural and multilingual setting.

Asking questions is an essential teaching strategy that encourages higher-order thinking abilities, active learning, and cognitive engagement. Effective questioning strategies in language classrooms can support students' knowledge of linguistic structures and cultural settings, promote metacognitive reflection, and scaffold their learning.

Literal questions: Factual information and cursory understanding of texts are the main topics of these questions. Higher-level questions should be asked after them to promote deeper analysis, even though they act as a beginning point for knowledge. For instance, what is the primary idea of the text?

Inferential Questions: Students must infer logical inferences from the text in order to answer inferential questions. Students are encouraged to evaluate latent meanings and draw connections between ideas, which fosters critical thinking. As an example, ask students to consider why they believe the character behaved that way.

Evaluative Questions: Examining the ideas, applicability, and validity of concepts offered in the text is what these questions ask students to do. Students are urged to interact critically with the content and present arguments that are supported by facts. Educators could set agree or disagree statements and ask for supporting arguments.

Analytical Questions: These questions delve deeper into the structure, language, and stylistic elements of the text. They facilitate a nuanced understanding

of linguistic features, cultural references, and literary techniques. Here students may discuss how does the author use symbolism to convey the theme of the story?

Diversify your questioning strategies to accommodate a range of cognitive capacities and learning styles. Mix questions that are literal, inferential, evaluative, and analytical to help students progress from simple understanding to critical analysis.

- Ask questions that do not just have a yes/no response option. Open-ended questions enable students to think critically, spark debate, and provide detailed explanations of their ideas.

- Start with easier questions to boost learners' confidence, then progressively raise the difficulty as they show mastery. Students that use scaffolded inquiry are able to acquire increasingly complex thinking abilities.

- Give them enough time to consider questions, come up with answers, and be reflective. While ensuring that all students have the chance to participate, think time promotes deeper cognitive engagement.

- Conduct dialogue-driven lectures based around open-ended questions for your students. This is known as Socratic method. Motivate pupils to evaluate texts critically, substantiate their beliefs with facts, and thoughtfully address the viewpoints of their peers.

- Encourage students to study and discuss works in small groups by setting up literature circles. To foster focused discussions and collaborative critical thinking, assign roles such as questioner, summarizer, and discussion leader.

- As students go through actual texts, have them analyse language usage, literary strategies, and cultural allusions. Urge them to pose critical queries regarding the organisation, tone, and underlying ideas of the text.

- Give students the chance to reflect on their own learning, pinpoint areas for development, and establish goals for advancement.

To sum up, through the use of a variety of questioning strategies, scaffolded instruction, and real-world classroom applications, educators can create an environment that sparks intellectual curiosity, encourages collaborative learning,

and equips students for success in a multilingual and multicultural world. By asking insightful questions, teachers can encourage students to engage deeply with texts, develop higher-order thinking skills, and become proficient communicators and critical thinkers.

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