

School Improvement Plan –Differentiation, Effective Questioning

Our school has strengths in the following areas:

- There is an awareness of the importance of effective questioning amongst staff and they see themselves as having a significant role to play in differentiation.
- A dedicated staff that is willing to engage in programmes in order to enhance student learning and professional development in this area.
- Good support from the SEN Department
- A positive rapport between staff and students as highlighted in our WSE 2102 which promotes encouragement to students to ask questions
- The majority of teachers ask questions to students to encourage creative and critical thinking.

The following areas are prioritised for improvement:

- To create a classroom climate in which questioning is further encouraged.
- To plan a number of questions in advance of both higher and lower order to ensure the questions are focused
- Raise the quality of questions by considering the purpose of the questions
- Allow 'wait time', allow sufficient time for students to think and formulate an answer before taking responses
- Use the 'no hands' rule. When hands are waving it stops thinking. If the 'no hands' rule is used everyone is enabled to think about the answer.

IMPROVEMENT TARGET 1:

Theme: 'Wait time'

Target: Allow sufficient time for students to think and formulate an answer before taking responses

Required actions:

- Wait 3 seconds

Research shows that by waiting 3 seconds between asking a question and taking answers leads to more responses from less able students. Use fewer 'don't knows' and more thoughtful and creative responses. Use more follow-on questions from students, students challenge and/or improve the answers of other students. Increased waiting time leads to more confident responses, longer answers from students and more students with answers.

Persons responsible: All teachers

Timeframe for action: September 2016-June 2017

Success criteria/measurable outcomes:

- To increase from 48% to 60% the number of teachers who always allow time for thinking after a question is asked in class.
- An increase in the number of students answering questions and longer answers from students.

Review date: May 2017

IMPROVEMENT TARGET 2:

Theme: Plan questions in advance of class

Target: If questions are planned in advance of class, it will help make the questions more focused.

Required actions: Planned questions are related to the lesson learning intentions. They should be mainly open questions, accompanied by wait time, ones where the teacher allows collaboration before answering, carefully graded in difficulty, where the teacher encourages learners to explain and justify answers, where both correct and incorrect answers are followed up and where students also ask questions.

Persons responsible: All teachers.

Timeframe for action: September 2016 – June 2017.

Success criteria/measurable outcomes:

- An increase from 26% to 40% of teachers who always think about the questions they ask in class and to plan one or two really good questions per lesson.
- Effective questioning will help identify the present level of students understanding, extend and deepen learning and inform future planning .Asking more open questions will probe students understanding and prompt thinking, it will permit a range of responses and solicit opinion. The desired outcome is to increase the use of the students voice in the classroom.

Review date: May 2017

IMPROVEMENT TARGET 3:

Theme: Use the 'no hands rule'

Target: Use the 'no hands rule'. When hands are waving it stops thinking. If the 'no hands' rule is used everyone is enabled to think about the answer. Students stated that they do not like to put up their hands to answer a question as they stand out as being the 'swot'. They stated it damages their credibility and reputation and makes them stand out.

Required actions: Involve the whole class," think, pair share", provide think time

Persons responsible: All Teachers.

Timeframe for action: September 2016-June 2017.

Success criteria/measurable outcomes:

- The student focus group indicated that currently 90% of teachers ask questions with their hands up, the target is to reduce this to 50%.
- Creating a classroom in which questioning is encouraged. This means encouraging student questioning and creating a space where it's okay to offer divergent responses. Then all answers, right or wrong, can be used to develop understanding.

Review date: May 2017.