**Question Technique in Group Training**

Question Technique is one of the key tools in the trainer’s kit bag and when delivering learning interventions with groups it is the most powerful of all techniques. The greater the degree of involvement by the learners the greater their commitment to the learning will be -using your question technique effectively increases learner engagement.

**Why** **ask questions**

* To establish existing knowledge of the learners
* To recap on previous sessions
* To gain interest in the subject
* To maintain interest and keep group members alert
* To get maximum involvement of learners, particularly the more shy and quieter members of the group
* To encourage learners to reason things out for themselves
* To check understanding at the end of the session

**Types of questions**

**Testing Questions** which test the learner’s knowledge

* During the introduction these are used to create interest or refer back to previous sessions
* During the development phase they can be used recap if necessary- check learners are keeping up with the learning
* During the consolidation phase these are used to test whether all the new information has been understood and can be accurately recalled

**Teaching questions**

These are questions on points that have not yet been taught, but must be reasoned out by the learners, providing answers based on their experience, observation and the information already established during the training session.

What learners have thought out for themselves they are less likely to forget. Teaching questions are used predominantly during in the development phase of the session.

**Framing questions**

Always start by knowing the answer you require. This will be the information you want to transfer to the learner. To be able to frame your teaching questions effectively you will need to have organised the transfer of information in a logical order through your knowledge analysis

Question should start with - **Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why**. Often you will need to use the funnel or spider web questioning approach to help learners with reasoning out the answers.

**Questions to avoid**

Questions should be concise and clearly worded. Avoid using:

* Closed questions with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer
* Vague questions
* Complex questions
* Questions that allow learners to guess

**Posing Questions**

The pose, pause, pounce approach helps manage learner engagement and keep the whole group alert.

**Pose** - the question to the group initially

**Pause** - this gives the whole group time to think about the answer and

**Pounce** – identify the person you would like to answer the question (observe the body language and consider the distribution of questions)

You can use this technique to encourage quieter members of the group to be involved and to control the more dominant members of the group who always want to answer.

Questions should be evenly distributed across the group of learners so that everyone has a chance to contribute equally, this is more difficult in larger groups where it’s harder to keep track of individual levels of engagement.

**Handling Answers**

The more challenging aspect of question technique is handling the answers, you will need to develop your own set of language for how you approach this

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| **Correct Answers** | Thank learners for their contribution and confirm that it is correct. Depending on how challenging the nature of the question then praise the learners for reasoning out the more difficult answers. Take care not to appear to be patronising - be sincere with praise. Choose the words you use carefully – only say ‘excellent’ when that is truly the case. |
| **Incorrect answers** | That’s not quite the answer I am looking for – rephrase the question to help the learner reason through the answer but if the learner still doesn’t arrive at a correct answer then ask members of the group if they can help with the answer |
| **Partially correct** | Identify and thank learners for the partially correct bit of the answer and rephrase the question to identify the rest of the answer. |
| **No answer** | Check that the question has been misunderstood and prompt the group, rephrase or recap. |

Always allow learner the opportunity to ask questions after each part of the session. If you don’t know the answer say that you don’t have the answer but will find out and come back to them – always be sure to follow through when you have made this commitment. Failing to do so will impact on your credibility as a trainer.

Ask sufficient questions to teach and test all the main parts of your session.