EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING
SUPPORTING LEARNING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Children are naturally curious. Who doesn't know a three-year-old that doesn't want to know why? Effective questioning supports our ability as teachers to grow student curiosity and understanding. As a tool, it aids teachers to make the learning visible (see the Make Physical Education Learning Visible article) and enables us to generate students critical thinking

Why is effective questioning important? (nzmaths.co.nz)

- Questions are an important part of many everyday interactions. They are asked to gather information, to self-reflect, to uncover and challenge assumptions, to clarify and confirm listening, to get help. The questions you ask in class should model the type of questions you want your students to ask themselves and each other.
- Encouraging students to contribute to discussions shows them that their ideas are valued. But it's important that the feedback students receive goes beyond praise or encouragement. Instead, the focus needs to be on eliciting and responding to student thinking.
- Effective teaching uses questions to extend thinking and scaffold instruction rather than to simply ask for an answer. Well-crafted questions help students to think more actively about concepts and processes, to make connections, and to build understanding. The person who does the thinking does the learning.

As the teacher

Being an effective questioner takes thought and planning. And as with anything, the more you practice, the better and easier it will get. Here are four ways to improve your questioning (theeducationhub.org.nz)

- *Make sure questions are demanding.*
- *Allow enough time for students to think about answers.*
- *Involve as many students as possible in thinking about answers to a question.*
- *Follow up incorrect responses with probing or scaffolding for the correct answer.*

What might this look like in physical education?

Instead of :
Are you holding that bat/racquet/stick correctly?
Try...
How many ways can you hold the bat/racquet/stick? Which way/s allow you to hit the target?

Instead of:
Did you like that game?
Try...
How did you feel when playing that game and what made you feel that way?
(N.B: there is just as much thinking involved in identifying negatives as positives. Both answers are just as valid)

Instead of:
What are our safety practices?
Try...
How did our safety practices affect the way you played the game today?

Things to consider

- Are you using effective questioning to engage, promote and deepen your students learning in physical education?
- As we do in other curriculum areas, we need to think carefully about the types of questions we are using with our students. We want questions that:
- Are linked to the learning
- Require students to think beyond limited one-word answers
- Opens the thinking to allow them to take the learning in their own directions
- Encourages learner-learner interaction

Supporting Articles

- https://theeducationhub.org.nz/a-guide-to-successful-questioning/

- https://nzmaths.co.nz/6-building-understanding-through-effective-questioning-and-modelling

Final thoughts

- Plan your questions
- Allow time for students to think about the answer
- Scaffold any incorrect answers
- Ensure use of effective questioning across the curriculum and it will become habit for you and your students

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