

LESSON 8. QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES AND THINKING-ORIENTED INTERACTION IN HYBRID CLASSROOMS

The lesson familiarizes students with questioning techniques as a core interactional strategy in pedagogical discourse, especially in hybrid learning environments (offline + online).

By the end of the lesson you will be able to:

- identify different types of teacher questions (display, referential, probing);
- analyze how questioning techniques influence learners' thinking, participation and interaction;
- distinguish between controlling and thinking-oriented questions;
- design and apply effective questioning strategies in hybrid foreign language classrooms.

CONTENT OF THE LESSON

🔍 SPARK

1. Think about the following statements (individually, then discuss in pairs or breakout rooms):
 - “The quality of students’ thinking depends on the quality of teachers’ questions.”
 - “Too many closed questions limit interaction and creativity.”
 - “In hybrid classrooms, questions should address both offline and online learners equally.”
2. Reflect on the questions:
 - What types of questions did your teachers mostly use at school or university?
 - Which questions make you think more deeply: closed or open ones? Why?
 - How can questions be asked differently in online lessons (chat, polls, forums)?

🔍 INPUT

1. Watch & observe (mini video task)

Teacher shows 1–2 short video fragments from:

- **Edutopia** – “Asking Better Questions” (edutopia.org)
- Optional: **Teaching Channel** – “Using Questions to Promote Thinking” (teachingchannel.com)

In hybrid mode: students watch the video clips online before the lesson via LMS / Telegram / Google Classroom.

While watching, note down:

- examples of effective teacher questions;
- how students respond to different types of questions;
- which questions stimulate longer answers and discussion.

After watching, discuss in pairs / breakout rooms:

- Which questions would you like to use in your future teaching? Why?

2. Reading: Types of teacher questions

Read the adapted extract (based on Penny Ur, 2009; Walsh, 2011).

Teacher questions play a central role in classroom interaction. Traditionally, many classroom questions are **display questions**, where the teacher already knows the answer and expects students to reproduce information. While display questions are useful for checking understanding, they often result in short answers and limited interaction.

In contrast, **referential questions** are genuine questions to which the teacher does not know the answer in advance. Such questions encourage learners to express opinions, explain ideas and use language more freely. **Probing questions** are follow-up questions that push learners to clarify, justify or expand their responses. These questions promote higher-order thinking and deeper engagement.

In hybrid classrooms, questioning techniques must be adapted to include online tools such as chat questions, polls, breakout room prompts and forum discussions. Well-designed questions help integrate online and offline students into one interactive learning space.

3. Fill in the gaps

Use the following words:

display – referential – probing – thinking – interaction – participation

1. _____ questions usually have one correct answer known to the teacher.
2. _____ questions encourage students to express opinions and ideas.
3. _____ questions help learners explain and develop their answers.
4. Effective questioning promotes deeper _____.
5. Good questions increase student _____ in class.
6. Questioning is a key tool for managing classroom _____.

Check your answers with a partner.

4. Identify the question type

Read the questions and decide whether they are **display (D)**, **referential (R)** or **probing (P)**.

1. “What is the past tense of *teach*?”
2. “Why do you think the teacher reacted this way?”
3. “Can you explain your answer in more detail?”
4. “What does this word mean?”
5. “How would you solve this problem differently?”

Discuss your answers in pairs.

📌 FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Case analysis: Questioning and classroom interaction

Work in small groups (3–4), face-to-face or in breakout rooms. Read the situations and discuss:

- a) In a hybrid lesson, the teacher asks only yes/no questions. Offline students answer quickly; online students remain silent in the chat.
- b) The teacher asks an open question but immediately answers it herself without giving students time to think.
- c) The teacher asks a student for an opinion and follows up with “Why do you think so?” and “Can you give an example?”

For each case, decide:

- What type of questioning is used?
- How does it affect student interaction?
- What could the teacher do differently?

Prepare a short “Improved Questioning Plan” (2–3 steps).

2. Question transformation task

Rewrite the following display questions into thinking-oriented questions:

Example:

“What is the rule?” → “Why do you think this rule works in this situation?”

1. “Is this sentence correct?”
2. “What is the main idea of the text?”
3. “Did the student answer correctly?”

Compare your questions with another pair.

3. Hybrid micro-practice

In groups of 4:

- one teacher;
- two offline students;
- one online student.

Task:

The “teacher” conducts a 5-minute discussion using:

- at least 2 referential questions;
- at least 1 probing follow-up question;
- one question addressed to the online student (via chat or voice).

Observers note:

- balance of participation;
- quality of questions;
- student responses.

4. Reflective journal (for trainee teachers)

After the lesson, write a short reflective entry (10–15 sentences):

- What did I learn today about questioning techniques?
- Which type of questions do I use most often?
- Which questioning strategies do I want to develop?
- How can I use questioning to involve online students more actively?

Upload the entry to LMS or share with the instructor.

ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write **10 effective teacher questions** for a hybrid foreign language lesson:
 - at least 4 referential questions;
 - at least 3 probing questions.

Criteria for assessment:

- rationality – 0.5
- accessibility (clear and appropriate for students' level) – 0.5
- relevance and clarity – 0.5

Total: 1.5 points maximum.

2. Fill in the SAC. Revise the material if your learning is not well.

☐ SAC (Self-Assessment Checklist)

№	The key points of the lesson	Know	Know not well	Don't know
1	Types of teacher questions (display, referential, probing)			
2	Role of questioning in pedagogical interaction			
3	Thinking-oriented questioning techniques			
4	Questioning strategies for hybrid classrooms			

Glossary (Lesson 8)

questioning technique – a method used by teachers to ask questions in order to guide learning and interaction

display question – a question where the teacher already knows the answer

referential question – a genuine question that encourages personal responses

probing question – a follow-up question that deepens or clarifies thinking

higher-order thinking – complex thinking involving analysis, evaluation and reflection

wait-time – a pause after a question that allows learners to think

student talk time (STT) – the amount of time students speak during a lesson

teacher talk time (TTT) – the amount of time the teacher speaks during a lesson

interaction – communicative exchange between participants

participation – active involvement of learners in classroom activities

hybrid classroom – a learning environment combining offline and online instruction

chat-based questioning – asking questions through online chat tools

cognitive engagement – mental effort invested in learning

follow-up move – a teacher response that extends student contribution

critical thinking – the ability to analyse, evaluate and justify ideas

For reading / viewing

1. Ur, P. *A Course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 2009. pp. 230–245.
2. Walsh, S. *Exploring Classroom Discourse*. Routledge, 2011.
3. Edutopia. *Asking Better Questions*. (edutopia.org)
4. Teaching Channel. *Using Questions to Promote Thinking*. (teachingchannel.com)