

Socratic Questioning

Conceptual Clarification Questions

Purpose: to get students to think more clearly and exactly about the topic of discussion; 'tell me more' questions that help them to go deeper

Examples:

- Why are you saying that?
- What do you mean by?
- What is your main point?
- How does this relate (tie in with) to what we have been talking about?
- Could you put that another way?
- Could you give me an example?
- Would this be an example,.....?
- Let me see if I understand you; do you mean or?
- Jane can you summarise (sum up/put into your own words) what John has just said?
...John, is that what you meant?

Questions to Probe Assumptions

Purpose: to help the students to think about their presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs

Examples:

- What are you assuming (taking for granted)?
- What is Sean assuming?
- You seem to be assuming Am I correct?
- What could we assume instead?
- Your argument (idea) seems to depend on the idea that Why have you based your reasoning (thoughts) on instead of ?
- Is that always the case? What would happen if.....?

Questions to Probe Rationale, Reason and Evidence

Purpose: to help students develop a more clearly thought out argument

Examples:

- How do you know this?
- Show me.....?
- Can you give me an example for that?
- What do you think causes.....?
- Are these reasons good enough?



Prepared by Lesley Emerson, Lecturer and Deputy Director, Centre for Children's Rights, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland.

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- How could someone refute (contest/ prove false) this?
- What evidence is there to support what you are saying?
- How can I be sure of what you are saying?
- What other information do you need?

Questioning Viewpoints and Perspectives

Purpose: to introduce students to alternative perspectives

Examples:

- What other ways could we look at this?
- Another way of looking at this might be Does that seem reasonable (sound/OK/fair enough)?
- Why is your argument better than.....?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of...?
- How are and similar (the same)? Different?
- How could you look at this another way?
- What might..... say about this?

Questions to Probe Implications and Consequences

Purpose: to assist students in developing an understanding of the consequences of their argument- in order to refine it

Examples:

- Then what would happen?
- What are the consequences of that assumption? (What might happen if you take..... for granted?)
- What are the implications of?
- How does.....affect.....?

Questions about the question!

Examples:

- What does the question assume?
- Would.....ask the question differently?
- Can we break the question down?
- Is the question clear?
- Is it easy or hard to answer?
- Do we all agree that this is the question?
- Is this the most important question or is there something underneath the question that is the real issue?