

Q&A SESSION AS A TEACHING TOOL FOR STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN THE FLIPPED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Klymovych Yuliia

Lecturer

Ivan Franko Zhytomyr State University

At the current stage of educational technologies development there are various approaches to updating and evaluating students' knowledge, but in practice, however, the *question* itself is the main means of assessing students' understanding and stimulating their critical thinking. Logically and consistently formulated questions encourage new insights and lively discussion, help to create a background for effective and exhaustive research. Instead, illogical or too complex questions can cause misunderstandings and decrease in students' motivation for further discussion.

During the traditional lesson the teacher is the "generator" of questions, and students answer them, discuss and, if necessary, formulate clarifying questions. A Q&A session is a mirror opposite approach: the audience (students) ask their own questions that arose during independent studying. Researchers claim that the question asked in the right way already indicates that the student is familiar with the topic and is ready to discuss problematic issues if there are any.

In our research we worked out four stages of flipped learning: "**F**"- **facilitation**, "**L**" - **learning online**, "**I**" - **interaction**, "**P**" - **post-class activities**. [1] Hence, questions at the students' initiative increase the effectiveness of the higher order skills formation, which is the main aim of the **I-STAGE** of flipped learning, and the Q&A session is one of the options for updating self-acquired knowledge. It's well known that flipped learning involves self-mastery of professional knowledge, skills and habits and their further improvement by means of interactive in-class learning. Thus, while studying educational materials at the **L-STAGE** (learning online stage), students formulate their own problematic questions within the topic, which are discussed with peers and the teacher at the interactive stage of flipped learning.

The students' ability to frame problematic questions plays an important role in the effectiveness of this teaching method, and therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between them. A **classification of problematic questions** based on the critical thinking skills structure according to Bloom's Taxonomy is provided below [3]:

- questions that involve recalling and recognizing previously acquired knowledge (*What do you remember about secondary education in the USA?*)
- questions that involve understanding and comprehension of information (*How would you differentiate between Ukrainian and American student?*)
- questions that involve the application of the acquired knowledge in practice (*What actions would you take to pass your GCSE?*)
- questions that involve the interpretation and analysis of information (*What are the pros and cons of public schools in the UK?*)

- questions that involve the developing of criteria and evaluation of information (*What is the most influential university in the USA?*)
- questions that involve the creation of new ideas based on the acquired knowledge (*What would you get from being an exchange student in the USA?*)

It's worth mentioning that the last three types of problematic questions are the most effective for higher order skills formation and their use is preferable during the Q&A sessions. Several options for organizing a question-and-answer session using online tools are considered:

Polling. While completing individual tasks at the L-STAGE, students prepare several questions and place them on the Padlet board (or other online-tool such as Mentimeter, Polleverywhere, etc.). Fellow students have the opportunity to evaluate each other's questions with the help of “likes” (thumbs up), so they choose the most difficult questions with their votes. Before the lesson, the teacher analyzes the students' questions and selects the “top 5” most difficult questions to discuss. Students can comment on the remaining questions online.

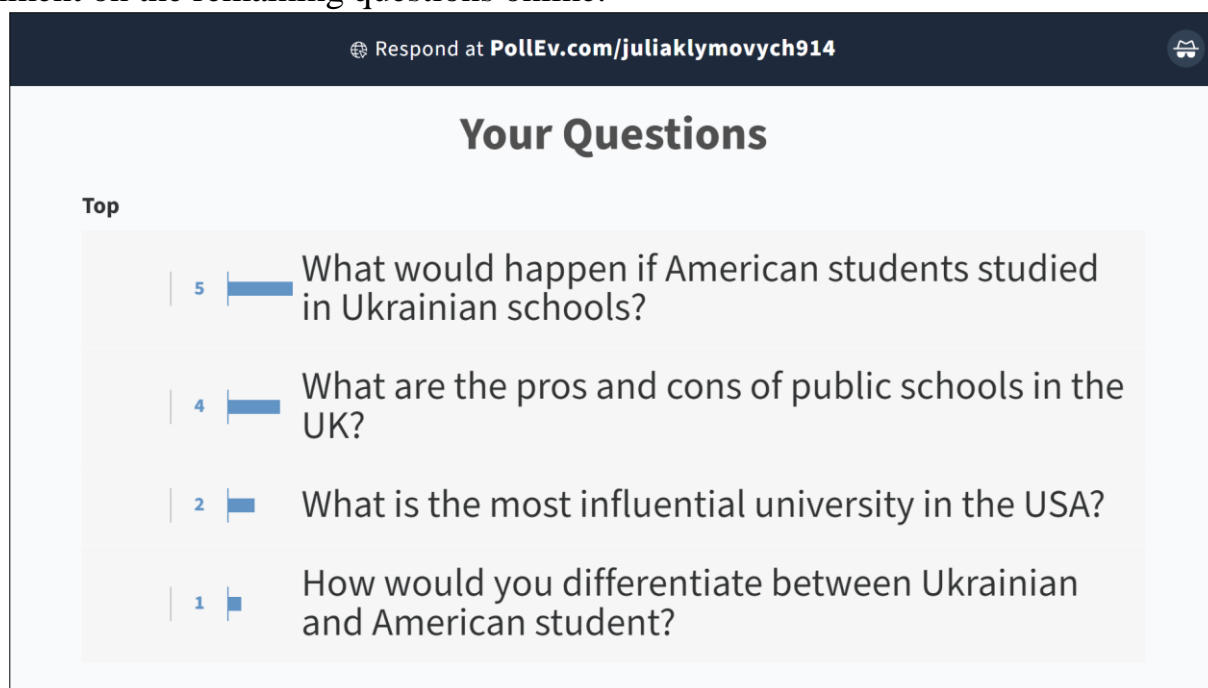


Figure 1. Polling for the most difficult questions.

Level Up! This technique is an expanded version of “Polling”. While working independently, students are asked to prepare one difficult question, one question of medium difficulty and one easy (but important) question, which can be posted on the online board. In the classroom, students initially work with easy questions in pairs, then with questions of medium difficulty – in groups, and finally the most difficult questions are discussed with the whole class.

Personal Q&A. Once a week students are allowed to ask questions they think are “too personal”. They might seem too easy or off-topic, but in fact they influence general understanding of educational concepts. For example, within the topic “Secondary Education in Ukraine” students are often interested in entry requirements for the Master’s degree, but they are afraid to ask the teacher.

Taking everything into account, engaging students in discussion by means of Q&A session increases their engagement with the material and with the instructor himself/herself, assesses the depth of understanding and provides a lead-in to new information.

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