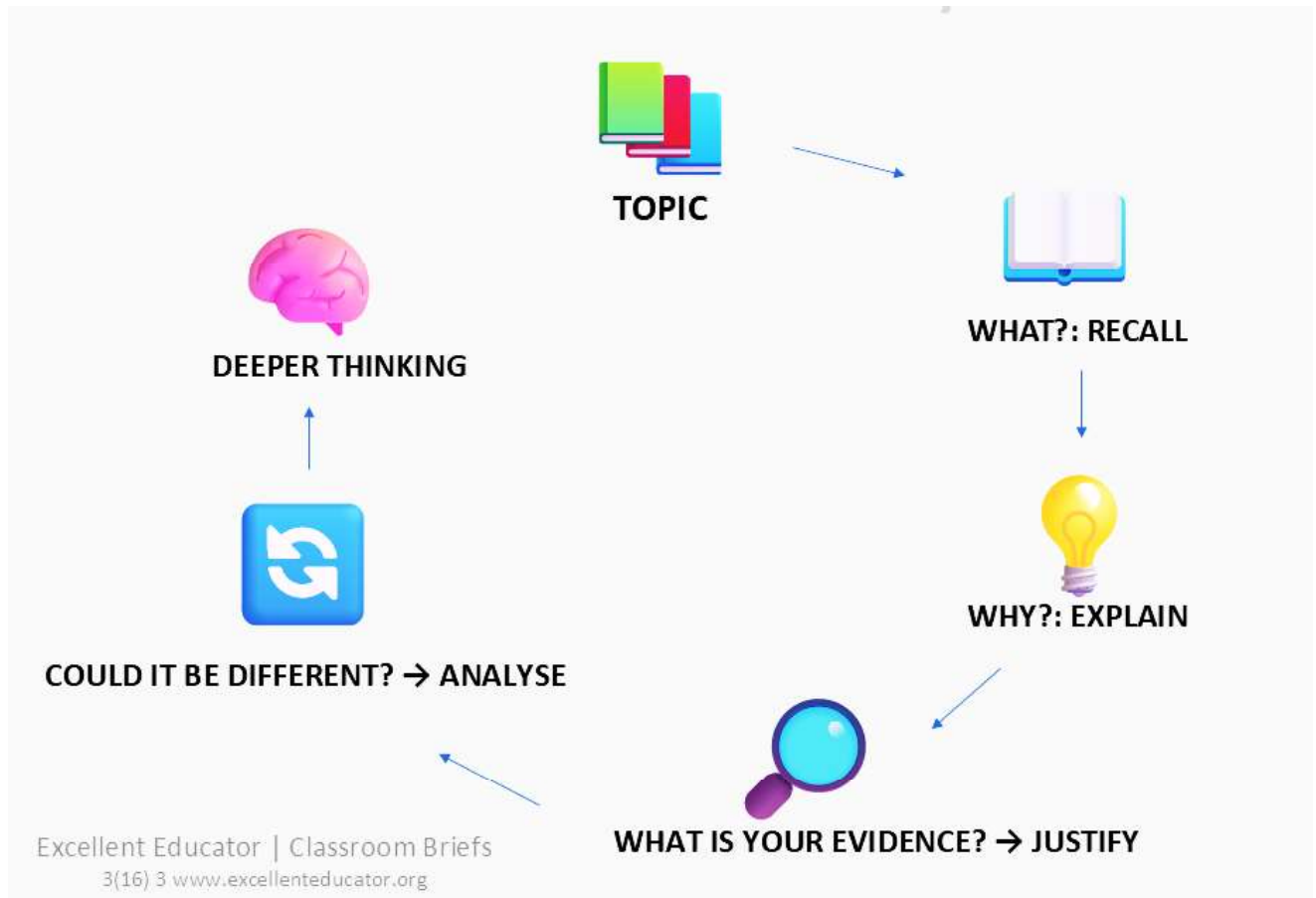


From “What?” to “Why?”

The quality of a question can change the quality of thinking.

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Visual Insight

Changing the question can change what students have to think about.

Research in Brief

Research on question-and-answer teaching highlights the potential of questions to move students beyond simple recall toward critical, analytical and higher-order thinking. Argumentative questioning, in particular, requires students to explain and support their responses rather than simply provide an answer.

The approach described in the research uses questions to encourage students to connect information, construct explanations and consider different possibilities. Such questioning can support critical thinking because students have to make their reasoning visible rather than simply state what they believe.

For teachers, the practical distinction is simple:

“What is the answer?” checks the response.

“Why do you think that?” begins to reveal the thinking behind it.

✓ Try Tomorrow

After a student gives an answer, add one follow-up:

- Why do you think that?
- What evidence supports your answer?
- How did you arrive at that?
- Could there be another explanation?

★ One Key Takeaway

A powerful question does not just demand an answer—it demands a reason.

Keywords

Questioning, higher-order thinking, critical thinking, reasoning, argumentation, classroom discussion

Original Research

Karuru, P., Muta'allim, Suparjo, Setiawan, A. F., & Junaida, S. (2023). *Improving Students' Higher Order Thinking Skills through a Question and Answer Method*.