

Skilful questioning

Skilful coach questioning can help players:

- to take responsibility for their learning
- to learn how to learn
- to be more curious
- to persist
- to self-monitor
- to develop critical thinking

So being a skilful questioner is quite important, right?

Absolutely!

But it turns out
coaches don't ask that many questions...

Here's some fascinating research for you from the very brilliant combo of @CoachCl, Paul Ford, and Mark Williams from 2012 – they found that coach questioning typically ranges between 2% and 7% of coaching behaviours.

Just 2-7%? Ok...not a lot!

So, questioning is important, but perhaps we don't do enough of it.

And actually, what questioning we do as coaches can tend to lack sophistication...

They found that the questions coaches ask can tend to be 'closed' rather than 'open'...not so great for building the intelligent player!

Questions are important, we need to ask them more in our coaching, and we need to ask more sophisticated questions...

So, what kind of questions can coaches ask? (I mean, what's the difference between sophisticated and less sophisticated

questions?)

Professor Kagan proposes 6 categories of questions:

1. Skinny: questions that require a yes/no answer with little thought
2. Fat: questions that require more evaluation and thought
3. Review: questions that ask for a recall of information
4. True: questions that ask for more thought and detail
5. High consensus: questions for which most of the team would provide a similar response
6. Low consensus: questions which might evoke different responses from different players

To be a skilful questioner it takes practice. But it also takes knowledge of how to ask a question.

For example:

- “How are you deciding...”
- “How could you improve...”
- “What’s the most important thing...”
- “If you...”

Ok...next...

When should coaches ask questions? Here’s some ideas (you probably have some thoughts yourself):

- stop the game at a teachable
- stop the game and have a ‘timeout’ to discuss the question in small groups
- don’t stop the game, call an individual off the field, and ask the question
- don’t stop the game, pose the question, and let play continue (you can come back to it later)
- questions between reps

In conclusion: skilful questioning can help promote an array of player benefits, not least ‘thinking’ and ‘social

interaction' (between coaches & players, & between players themselves)