Construct Your Skills

Context:

A good variety of questioning techniques play a powerful role in construction lessons, especially in vocational settings where learners are developing both practical skills and professional judgement.

Questions in the classroom can be used for: building professional communication skills, supports assessment for Learning (AfL), clearer insight into understanding, encourages Reflection and Independence and you can teach through questions.

Problem solving - construction work is full of real-world decision-making "What factors would influence your choice of fixing here?"

Deeper Understanding of safety - "Why is it important to check the spirit level multiple times during this process?"

The Technique/Method:

Hinge questions:	Pick one key concept students must understand before moving on. Identify common misconceptions about that concept. Write a question with one correct answer. Have all students answer at once (whiteboards, cards, fingers). Decide in advance what you'll do based on the results (move on or reteach).
Pause, pose, pounce bounce:	Stop at a key point in the lesson, ask a question; everyone thinks. Collect answers from all students at once. Respond, explain, challenge, reteach, or move on.
Think pair share:	Ask a question and give silent thinking time. Students discuss their ideas with a partner. Pairs share answers with the class.
Show Me Tell Me Convince Me:	Students demonstrate understanding (e.g. solve a problem, draw a diagram) Students explain what & why. Students justify their answer (prove it, respond to challenges, compare methods).
Teaching through questions:	Decide what understanding you want students to reach. Break it into small steps. Ask, don't tell. Use questions to reveal ideas instead of explaining first. Give thinking time Probe and follow up. Build on responses then check

See the Technique/Method in Action:

Short Version: https://youtu.be/svcFwPFPLV0

Long Version with classroom examples: https://youtu.be/ARIWQnLuS-w

Top Tips:

- Start with safety first: ask questions that check risk awareness before technique.
- Use: “why” more than “what” to move beyond recall.
- Sequence questions like the job: Follow the order of a real task.
- Use: “what if” scenarios which are great for problem-solving and assessment.
- Ask for demonstrations: don’t just talk get them to show you.
- Target common mistakes: build questions around errors you see on site.
- Get students to justify: push them to think like tradespeople.

Dig Deeper:

- Getting started with Effective Questioning
- Teacher Toolkit: Questioning

Monitoring Progress and Impact:

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Evidence / Notes
Planning	Questions are sequenced from simple → complex, linked to learning outcomes	Some sequence, mostly linked to outcomes	Questions are random or not linked to outcomes	e.g. lesson plan notes
Clarity of Questions	Questions are clear, precise, and accessible to all students	Mostly clear; minor ambiguity	Questions unclear or confusing	Observations / student feedback
Think Time	Sufficient pause before answering, allowing reflection	Some pause, not consistent	Little or no wait time	Timing notes / student responses
Student Engagement	All students actively respond, variety of methods used	Most students respond; limited variety	Only a few students respond	Mini whiteboards, polls, hands-up
Use of Follow-Up / Probing	Questions deepen understanding, challenge thinking	Some follow-up; probes occasionally	No follow-up; surface level questions	Sample student answers
Checking Understanding	Misconceptions identified and addressed immediately	Some misconceptions addressed	Misconceptions overlooked	Hinge questions, class discussion
Impact on Learning	Responses show reasoning, understanding, and application	Some evidence of understanding	Responses show guessing or recall only	Compare start/end hinge questions
Reflection / Adaptation	Teacher adapts questioning in real time based on evidence	Minor adaptation	No adaptation	Post-lesson reflection