

Asking Questions

Types of Questions

1. Closed questions
 1. Closed questions often receive a short, factual answer.
 2. Closed questions are good to test understanding, concluding discussions, or framing a setting.
 1. **Do you understand? Are you happy with your effort on the last exam?**
2. Open questions
 1. Open questions go for longer answers. They usually begin with what, why, or how.
 2. Open questions are good for developing conversation, finding out more detail, or getting opinions.
 1. **What did the professor say about this assignment in class yesterday? How would you start answering this question?**
3. Funnel questions
 1. Funnel questions are a series of questions that start generally and get more specific.
 2. Funnel questions are good for getting more detail about a particular subject or easing in to a conversation with someone.
 1. **Have you been to tutoring? What did you talk about there? How did that help you solve the problem? Did they leave anything out?**
4. Probing questions
 1. Probing questions are clarification questions. They often contain the word 'why' or the phrase 'exactly'. The goal is to understand not just what the problem is, but what the root cause is.
 2. Probing questions are useful to get clarification or to draw information out of people.
 1. **What, exactly, seems to be the problem?** I'm struggling with homework. **Why are you struggling with your homework?** It's too hard. **What, exactly, about it is too hard?** This concept is difficult. **Why do you think this concept is difficult for you?** I'm just not good at learning stuff that I don't see the point of. **Okay, let's talk about what you might use this for.**

Using Questions

1. Questions are valuable in many situations in regards to tutoring.
 1. Learning what the student needs.
 2. Building a relationship with the student.
 3. Avoiding any misunderstandings with what the student needs.
 4. Defusing any tension or frustration the student has towards tutoring, the course they are taking, and/or themselves.
2. Probing questions can be valuable in defusing tense situations, as they allow you to investigate what the student is struggling with.
3. All question types have their place in tutoring, but try to ask some more than others.
 1. For instance, **Closed** questions should be used to get basic information. They should never be used to ask for clarification or to check understanding. It is easy for a student to say "yes, I understand" when they do not understand.