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| 1. Getting set | Learners seated in a circle or horseshoe shape to enable dialogue between them. Rules for P4C developed with learners. Game or activity which either develops enquiry skills or relates to the content of the stimulus. |
| 2. Presentation of stimulus | A starting point which provokes questions and can be returned to as a shared context during the discussion. Could be picture book/story/fiction or nonfiction/film/animation/music/pictures/objects or combination. Needs to be thought provoking and make learners want to ask questions. |
| 3. Thinking time | Time to reflect on stimulus. Could be timed individual thinking. Ask learners ‘What are you wondering?’ ‘What interests you?’ Learners could talk in pairs and feed back a summary or one word to capture their ideas. Learners could write notes. |
| 4. Question-making | Groups of 3 – 5\* pupils share their thoughts on the stimulus and any issues or problems it raises. They turn these into an open / discussible question to put forward to the class. Teachers describe such questions as ‘big’, ‘chewy’, ‘about life’, ‘deep and meaningful’. (\* So as to end up with 6 – 10 questions). |
| 5. Questions-airing | Questions, prominently displayed, are celebrated and discussed. Ambiguities or vaguenesses are cleared up, and links often suggested and explored. A more experienced community could sort questions into ‘research’ or ‘reflection’. |
| 6. Question-choosing | Needs to be fair, not chosen by teacher. Omni-votes (can vote for all) or multi-vote (e.g. 2 or 3 votes) or preferential voting or random selection? Secret (e.g. outward-facing circle with thumbs up behind back to vote) or open ballot (e.g. with counters or stand on a question) |
| 7. First thoughts | About the question chosen. Could go round to find out everyone’s initial ideas (could restrict to 2 or 3 words). Anyone can pass. Could share first thoughts in pairs or ask learners who made up the question chosen to start the discussion off. |
| 8. Building | The question/dialogue is opened to the class, with encouragement to build towards better understanding of the issue(s) and concepts arising. Facilitator takes opportunities to clarify and to challenge learners’ thinking, and encourages constructive agreement or disagreement. Consider how learners will take turns speaking e.g. put hand out when person who is talking has finished, the teacher or last speaker chooses next person. Consider using different hand signals for new point or building or question. |
| 9. Last thoughts | Chance for final words uncontested (often learners who haven’t spoken in the large group before use this opportunity to contribute). Back to pair discussion or go round with ‘talking object’. One turn each. |
| 10. Review | Chance for learners to reflect on process of enquiry leading to planning for skills development and further enquiry (across the curriculum as well as into concepts). Are there any themes/issues/concepts that the group would like to follow up? |

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