Leadership coaching · A conversation tool for students

What next?

Thinking things through.

Use these questions when a student wants to get better at something, or is stuck. They leave the thinking with the student, so the student sets the goal and chooses the next step. Listen more than you speak. Students are more likely to follow a plan they have made for themselves.

Choose one or two questions from a row, not all three. Ask, then wait. The "What else?" question at the end of each row is often the one that matters, because a first answer is rarely the whole answer.

Clarify goals	- What do you want to be able to do better in this topic? - What's the main thing you're aiming for right now? - What else would you like to improve?
Diagnose obstacles	- What's getting in the way of your learning right now? - When do you tend to find things most difficult? - What else makes this tricky for you?
Visualise success	- What would it look like if you'd nailed this? - How will you know when you've got it? - What else might show you've made progress?
Encourage next steps	- What small thing could you do next to move forward? - What's one action that could help right now? - What else could you try?
Prompt alternative thinking	- Can you think of another way to approach this? - What's another strategy that might work? - What else could help you solve this problem?
Reinforce values	- Why does this matter to you? - What's your reason for wanting to improve here? - What else motivates you to do well in this?
Support reflection	- What have you learned about how you learn best? - What surprised you about this task? - What else have you noticed about your thinking?
Build resilience	- What have you done before that helped in a similar situation? - When have you bounced back from something like this? - What else has worked for you?

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What now?

Talking things through.

Use these questions for a calm conversation with a student after a behaviour incident, or in a moment of difficulty. They help the student look back at what happened, see it from someone else's side, and decide how to put it right.

These questions sit alongside your school's behaviour policy, not in place of it. If the matter could lead to a sanction or a safeguarding concern, follow your school's procedures first.

Understand what happened	- Can you walk me through what happened? - What do you remember thinking or noticing at the time? - What else stands out when you look back?
Get specific details	- What exactly did they say or do? - When did things start to change? - What else happened that might be important to mention?
Explore impact and emotion	- How did that make you feel? - Who else was affected? - What else might have been going on, for you or for them?
Shift from reaction to reflection	- What would you do differently next time? - What could you learn from this? - What else might help you respond differently in future?
Encourage empathy	- What do you think it felt like for them? - How might they have seen the situation? - What else could explain how they reacted?
Promote accountability	- What part of this can you take responsibility for? - How might your actions have contributed to what happened? - What else could you do to make things right?
Reinforce identity and values	- What kind of person do you want to be here? - How do you want others to see you? - What else matters to you about how this is resolved?
Support next steps	- What do you need to do next? - Who can help you follow through? - What else will help you make a positive change?
Learn from experience	- What have you learned about yourself? - How could this change the way you handle things next time? - What else will you take away from this experience?

Page 1 draws on coaching questions in the GROW tradition. Page 2 is based on the restorative questions of the International Institute for Restorative Practices. The "What else?" question comes from Michael Bungay Stanier's book The Coaching Habit.

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