



Socratic Questions

Guided Discovery and Socratic Questions to examine thinking and challenge performance interfering thoughts (PITs)

Guided discovery is a process where the coach and the coachee work collaboratively to view the world or particular problem differently.

It uses questioning based on the systematic questioning and deductive reasoning developed by the 5th Century philosopher, Socrates. It is used to help PIT identification and modification. (Palmer, Szymanska 2008)

A. Questions that probe CONCEPTUAL understandings.

1. What do you mean by ____?
2. How does ____ relate to ____?
3. Could you put that another way?
4. Is your basic point ____ or ____?
5. Let me see if I understand you; do you mean ____ or ____?
6. How does this relate to our discussion/problem/issue?
7. Could you give me an example?
8. Would this be an example: ____?
9. Could you explain further?
10. Can you find a more precise term for ____?

B. Questions that probe ASSUMPTIONS.

1. What are you assuming?
2. What could we assume instead?
3. You seem to be assuming _____. Do I understand you correctly?
4. You seem to be assuming _____. How would you justify taking this for granted?
5. Why would someone make this assumption?



C. Questions that probe REASONS AND EVIDENCE for a position.

1. How do you know?
2. Why do you think that is true?
3. Do you have any evidence for that?
4. What are your reasons for saying that?
5. What other information do we need?
6. Could you explain your reasons to us?
7. Are these reasons adequate?
8. Why did you say that?
9. What led you to that belief?
10. How does that apply to this case?
11. What would change your mind?
12. Is there a reason to doubt that evidence?
13. What would you say to someone who said ____?
14. By what reasoning did you come to that conclusion?
15. How could we find out whether that is true?

D. Questions about PERSPECTIVES.

1. You seem to be approaching this from ____ perspective. Why have you chosen this rather than another perspective?
2. How would other groups/types of people respond? Why? What would influence them?
3. How could you answer the objection that ____ would make?
4. What might someone who believed ____ think?
5. Can/did anyone see this another way?
6. How many other perspectives can you imagine?



E. Questions that probe CONSEQUENCES of a position.

- 1.** When you say ____, are you implying ____?
- 2.** But if that happened, what else would happen as a result? Why?
- 3.** What effect would that have?
- 4.** Would that necessarily happen or only probably happen?
- 5.** If we disagree, what consequences could result?
- 6.** If this and this is the case, then what else must also be true?
- 7.** Would any implication or result cause you to think differently?