

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
QUESTIONING: A PATH TO CRITICAL THINKING

by Leila Christenbury and Patricia P. Kelly

FROM ERIC/RCS AND NCTE: AN AID TO BETTER QUESTIONING

Every teacher's aim is to ask the kinds of questions that spark lively discussion. But questioning is a learned act. A new booklet in the Theory and Research Into Practice Series helps teachers draw on findings from research on questioning to polish their classroom techniques. Questioning: A Path to Critical Thinking was prepared by Leila Christenbury and Patricia P. Kelly, both of whom have taught English at the high school and college levels. It is published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Council of Teachers of English.

The authors offer a concise survey of current knowledge about the teaching potential of various types of questioning. They review the literature on hierarchies of types of questioning, such as Benjamin Bloom's sequence ranging from "to know" through "to apply" and "to evaluate." And they discuss the uses and limitations of such hierarchies for organizing language arts instruction, as revealed through research. Among the findings: heavy concentration on higher-order questions doesn't necessarily enhance student learning. Through their behavior, teachers may inadvertently defeat their own purposes in questioning, for instance, by giving students no more than a second or two to respond.

Christenbury and Kelly show how teachers can use the concept of the questioning circle to evolve flexible inquiry techniques. They show how the circle concept can be applied to questioning in literature, composition, and language study and offer further suggestions for improving one's questioning strategies. Rounding out the booklet is a series of games to help students learn to generate their own questions.

(Available from the National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, Illinois. 33 pages, paperbound. Price: \$3.50; NCTE members, \$3.00. Stock No. 38047.)