

QUESTIONING STRATEGIES USED BY SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENTS IN MICROTEACHING CLASS

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Submitted: 2025-07-27

Accepted: 2026-03-12

Abstract: Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are crucial for developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Using questioning strategies in the classroom has been found to improve HOTS by encouraging students to think more deeply and more involved. However, limited research has explored how EFL student teachers implement questioning strategies during microteaching and how these strategies can promote HOTS. This study explores questioning strategies used by EFL student teachers in microteaching course at the English Education Department (EED) of a private university in Indonesia. This qualitative phenomenological study used audio visual material from microteaching video and structured interviews to collect the data. The results of the study reveals that the EFL students teachers used three types of questions, namely procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. Convergent questions were the most frequently used, while divergent questions were the least used, indicating that most of the questions posed were associated with lower-order thinking skills (LOTS), whereas questions promoting higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) were relatively limited. This findings suggest that student teachers still need stronger pedagogical support in designing and implementing higher-order questioning strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher educators should provide more focused training on formulating HOTS-oriented questions. Additionally, integrating Bloom's Taxonomy explicitly into lesson planning and reflective teaching practices can help student teachers align their questioning strategies with intended learning outcomes across cognitive domains.
Keywords: questioning strategy, microteaching, Bloom's Taxonomy, EFL student teacher

INTRODUCTION

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are crucial in teaching and learning process because they enable students to think critically and solve problems effectively. HOTS refers to the cognitive ability to think critically by applying processing in activities to remember, restate, or refer to information. HOTS are commonly related to the higher levels of cognitive abilities in Bloom's Taxonomy, i.e. analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Damayanti et al., 2020; Tuela & Palar, 2022). These skills allow students to recall information, interpret, assess, and generate new ideas based on their understanding. Research have shown that integrating HOTS into classroom instruction can improve students' academic achievement and foster deeper learning (Hartik et al., 2021; Rasyid, 2023). Therefore, promoting HOTS has become an important objective in education.

One instructional approach that can reinforce the development of HOTS is the use of questioning strategies. Questioning is noted as a pedagogical technique that encourages students to think more deeply, engage actively in learning, and demonstrate their understanding. It is often used at the beginning, middle, and end of a lesson during the teaching and learning process. Questioning strategy refers to the technique of constructing or using a plan or strategy to achieve a goal used to motivate students, revise, control, test or assess, explore, explain, and

encourage students to focus on a particular topic, elicit information, and check understanding and control behavior (Young, 1992; Richards et al., 1994, as cited in Sari, 2018). In this context, teachers act not only as primary source of knowledge but also as mediators and facilitators who guide students to construct knowledge and encourage critical thinking skills (Laine et al., 2020). Consequently, it is of utmost important for teachers to understand how to formulate and implement different types of questions effectively in the classroom.

The results of some previous studies have indicated that questioning strategy is an important part of teaching EFL students. Anisah et al. (2019), Astrid et al. (2019), Devant & Amalia (2017), and Primadini (2020) reported that question strategies enhance student engagement and critical thinking, particularly in reading and speaking comprehension in EFL classrooms. Meanwhile, Erianti et al. (2018) and Fitriati et al. (2017) showed that using questions significantly affects classroom interactions. Thus, questioning strategies enhance students' verbal responses and lead to the comprehension of the lesson.

Some studies researched questioning strategies of experienced teachers in secondary schools. Irawati et al. (2021) and Niza (2024) revealed that effective questioning boosts students' confidence and fluency in junior high school settings. Moreover, Frastiwi et al. (2022) and Sujariati et al. (2016) found that structured questioning enhances classroom communication and understanding in teaching descriptive texts. Similarly, Salsabila & Patmasari (2024) and Yang (2017) emphasized the importance of varied question types in maintaining student engagement, especially in speaking classes. Reflianto (2022) showed that adjusting question levels enhances reading comprehension in flipped learning. While these studies provide valuable insights into questioning strategies in secondary school, they do not extend their focus to how student teachers develop and apply these strategies during their teaching practice.

In the context of higher education, some research have examined the role of questioning strategies in university classrooms. These studies showed that varied questioning techniques can enhance classroom interaction, assess students' comprehension, and stimulate critical thinking during learning activities (Rido, 2017, 2020; Wangru, 2016; Sulaiman, 2021). However, few attention has been given to questioning strategies used by student teachers during their teaching preparation programs, particularly in microteaching courses.

Microteaching is an important stage in teacher education programs. It provides student teachers with opportunities to practice and refine their teaching skills in a simulated classroom. Despite its importance, research examining how student teachers use questioning strategies during microteaching remains limited. Most studies focused on questioning startegies used by teachers in secondary schools. Furthermore, few studies have explored how these questioning

strategies align with cognitive levels in Bloom's Taxonomy in order to promote higher-order thinking skills.

Given these gaps, this study aims to explore the questioning strategies used by EFL student teachers in microteaching and the relationship between those questioning strategies and cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Thus, the present study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how questioning strategies can support the development of higher-order thinking skills of EFL student teachers.

METHOD

The research applies a qualitative method with phenomenon research design. The use of phenomenology was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore the experiences of EFL student teachers in using questioning strategies during their microteaching practice. Through this approach, how student teachers used and reflected on questioning strategies in their teaching will be known.

This study investigates the actual phenomena of questioning strategies used by the EFL student teachers of English Education Department of a private university in Indonesia during microteaching course. The instruments to collect the data were audio visual materials from videos of microteaching and interviews with EFL student teachers. The video recordings were obtained from the course documentation of the microteaching class and were used to examine the questioning strategies employed during teaching practice. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain further insights into the participants' perspectives on how and why they used particular questioning strategies.

The participants of this study were selected purposefully, that is only nly EFL student teachers who received an A grade in the microteaching course because they were considered to demonstrate strong teaching performance. The data were then analysed qualitatively which included some steps as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006), i.e transcribing video recordings and interviews, categorizing different types of questioning strategies, identifying themes, and interpreting findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate three types of questioning strategies used by the EFL student teachers in microteaching course and how those questions related to Bloom Taxonomy.

1. The Type of Questioning Strategies Used by Sixth-Semester Students of EED Muria Kudus University

This current study reveals three types of questioning strategies that student teachers used in the microteaching class, which are in line with the types of questions proposed by Richard and Lockart (1994), i.e. procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. They are presented in the table below.

Table 1 The total number of types of questions

No	Type of Questions	ST 1	ST 2	ST 3	ST 4	ST 5	Total
1	Procedural	7	10	12	4	6	39
2	Convergent	17	18	16	7	16	74
3	Divergent	5	2	11	4	6	28
Total Number		29	30	39	15	28	141

Table 1 above informs that convergent questions were the most dominant questioning strategy used by EFL student teachers in microteaching compared to procedural and divergent questions.

A. Procedural Questions

The findings of this study show that procedural questions appeared 39 times and were primarily used by student teachers to open the class. Procedural questions are not designed to assess content knowledge, but are commonly used to manage classroom routines. For example, the question “Who's absent today?” is not only used to check attendance but also as a psychological approach to help students prepare to pay attention to the lesson. This is emphasized by ST 3, which states that asking about attendance can help build students' attention at the beginning of the lesson. Questions such as “How are you today?” or “How's life?” are used to create a warm atmosphere and bring the teacher and students closer together. Meanwhile, questions such as “Are you finished?” or “Who wants to read?” help teachers monitor student engagement and manage transitions between activities in the classroom. All of this shows that although simple, procedural questions play an important role in establishing a comfortable and orderly learning rhythm.

As Richards and Lockhart (1996) state that procedural questions are used not to explore lesson content but to manage the flow of the class. In other words, although not directly related to the cognitive level in Bloom's Taxonomy, procedural questions are still needed to create a conducive classroom atmosphere and support the overall learning process.

This aligns with the findings of Fitriati (2017) and Irawati (2021), which indicate that procedural questions can help boost students' confidence and make them more comfortable participating verbally. Therefore, although procedural questions do not fall into the category of Bloom's Taxonomy, their presence remains essential in creating a warm and structured learning environment. For this reason, such questioning strategies should also be an important part of teacher training, especially for those who are still in the early stages of teaching.

B. Convergent Questions

Convergent questions are the most frequently used type by student teachers in the microteaching class, appearing 74 times during microteaching. This type of questions is usually used during the main teaching activities and requires short and specific answers. The student teacher typically used those questions at the LOTS level to engage students and focus on the yes/no question, or to check students' understanding by recalling information that had been previously presented.

The first example, "From the video, where did he offer his friends to go on holiday?" shows a fact-based question, requiring students to recall specific information ("In the lake"). The next two examples, "It is easy to analyse orientation, right?" and "Everything will be lost because of this disaster, right?" are yes/no and confirmation questions, used to check students' understanding and maintain engagement without needing long answers. The fourth question, "Okay, let's discuss together. Number one is?" is a recall question, helping students retrieve learned information. The final example, "What is the type of text of this story?" is a classification question, requiring students to categorize information part of convergent questioning.

According to Student Teacher 2, simple questions like recalling facts are quicker to prepare and useful for checking students' understanding of key points. This finding aligns with several previous studies, such as Anisah (2019), Fitriati (2017), and Astrid (2019), which found that EFL teachers tend to use convergent and procedural questions more often because they are considered easier to manage and provide greater control in classroom interactions. This is consistent with the acknowledgment of student teachers in this study who stated that simple questions are quicker to prepare and elicit more definite responses from students.

C. Divergent Questions

Compared to the other types, divergent questions were used less frequently, that is only 28 times during microteaching. These questions allowed students to think critically, express opinions, create ideas, or reflect on their experiences. This type of questioning aligns with higher-order thinking skills in Bloom's Taxonomy, such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

The first question, “What activity that you prefer to do on holiday?” invites students to express personal preferences, reflecting divergent questioning. Responses like “Sleep, mudik” show individuality and real-world connection. The second question, “Let’s analyse the orientation in this text, is?” promotes text analysis, with responses like “The first paragraph” indicating students’ ability to identify text structure. The third, “What’s your opinion about this video?” asks for student opinion, encouraging emotional and critical responses such as “I’m crying.” The fourth, “False, okay great, why?” is a reasoning question that prompts students to justify answers. The response “not in the text” reflects critical thinking.

The last, “What is the moral value that you can take?” encourages moral reflection and critical thinking, with answers like “Don’t be arrogant” showing value-based interpretation. Though less dominant in number, this type of question is vital in developing students’ creativity and critical thinking, fostering higher-order thinking skills. This is supported by Simatupang (2024), who emphasized that divergent questions stimulate creativity, reasoning, and personal expression, all crucial elements in 21st-century learning. Moreover, Richards & Lockhart (1996) note that divergent questions encourage students to think critically and provide more open and varied answers.

ST 4 admitted that “high-level questions require analysis, evaluation, or creativity. These questions ask you to make connections, form opinions, solve problems, or reflect.” From the interviews, student teachers often described divergent questions as “risky” or “hard to manage” because students sometimes remained silent or gave unclear answers. This perception reflects a training gap, where student teachers may lack experience or strategies to prompt elaboration or build on incomplete responses.

2. The Relationship Between the Questioning Strategies Used by Student Teachers and Bloom's Taxonomy

Although a total of 141 questions were identified during the microteaching sessions (Table 1), only 102 questions were categorized using Bloom’s Taxonomy. Procedural questions were excluded from this classification because they function mainly to manage classroom interaction rather than to stimulate cognitive processing. The data below shows the results of the analysis of Bloom's taxonomy at 6 levels.

Table 2 Frequency of Bloom's Taxonomy

No	Type of Bloom's Taxonomy	ST 1	ST 2	ST 3	ST 4	ST 5	Total
1	Remembering	3	12	9	6	9	39
2	Understanding	14	5	7	1	7	34
3	Applying	0	0	0	0	0	0

4	Analysing	0	1	5	0	0	6
5	Evaluating	2	1	5	4	4	16
6	Creating	3	1	1	0	2	7
Total		22	20	27	11	22	102

Based on Table 4.5, the data shows that the most frequently used questions are at the LOTS level namely remembering (39) and understanding (34). There are no questions at the applying level. Meanwhile, HOTS questions are used the least, especially creating (7), evaluating (16), and analyzing (6). From this, the compatibility between Bloom’s Taxonomy and questioning strategies can be seen as follows.

A. Procedural Question and Bloom’s Taxonomy

The results of this study show that procedural questions have no direct link to Bloom’s taxonomy. These questions are technical and aim to manage classroom routines rather than develop students’ thinking skills. This aligns with Richards and Lockhart (1996), who state that procedural questions serve to ensure instructions are understood, such as “Can you hear me?” or “Do you understand?”. Thus, they are not related to lesson content or cognitive processes.

In Bloom’s taxonomy, developed by Bloom (1956) and revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), questions are categorized by cognitive levels from remembering to creating. Since procedural questions do not engage these levels, they are not included in the taxonomy. Their purpose is to maintain the technical flow of classroom activities, not to stimulate cognitive development.

B. Convergent Question and Bloom’s Taxonomy

Based on the results of this study, the convergent questions used by the student teachers in microteaching course are closely related to Bloom’s Taxonomy, particularly at the level of Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). These types of questions are often designed to check understanding, recall facts, and clarify meaning. Interviews with student teachers revealed that they were aware of the importance of questioning strategies and Bloom’s Taxonomy, but most preferred using lower-order questions due to their familiarity, simplicity, and efficiency.

This finding is in line with Richards and Lockhart (1996), who describe convergent questions as questions that elicit short, specific responses often focused on factual information. These align with the LOTS domain in Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), which includes remembering, understanding, and applying levels that do not demand complex cognitive processing. The use of such questions is particularly common among student teachers, as supported by Bibi et al. (2020), who found that factual and convergent questions dominate classroom practices due to their alignment with the syllabus,

time efficiency, and lower linguistic demands. Similarly, Devant et al. (2017) and Primadini (2020) affirmed that while convergent questions contribute to comprehension, they are generally limited to literal understanding and surface-level responses.

C. Divergent Question and Bloom's Taxonomy

The results of this study show that divergent questions are strongly associated with Bloom's Taxonomy, particularly within the level of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Divergent questions encourage students to think critically, express opinions, create ideas, and reflect on their experiences. During the interviews, many participants acknowledged the importance of HOTS in fostering critical and creative thinking, but also admitted that designing such questions was challenging. They reported lacking both the pedagogical training and the confidence to formulate and implement higher-level questions effectively.

Richards and Lockhart (1996) mentioned that divergent questions are open-ended and promote a wide range of student responses, involving skills such as interpretation, evaluation, and idea generation. These are closely aligned with the analyzing, evaluating, and creating level in Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Overall, the findings indicate that student teachers frequently use procedural and convergent questions, while the use of divergent questions remains limited. This suggests that although student teachers understand the importance of higher-order thinking, they may still lack the pedagogical confidence to implement such questioning strategies effectively. Therefore, microteaching courses should provide more explicit training on how to design and manage higher-level questions that promote critical and reflective thinking in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, several conclusions can be drawn. The EFL student teachers used three types of questioning strategies in their microteaching, i.e. procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. Among them, convergent questions were the most dominant, used primarily to check understanding and recall facts, whereas, the least common type is divergent questions, which stimulate higher-order thinking.

This study explores the relationships between different types of questioning strategies, such as procedural, convergent, and divergent questions, and Bloom's Taxonomy. Procedural questions are not directly linked to Bloom's cognitive domains, but they are important for classroom management and for promoting clarity and student participation, particularly in language learning contexts. In contrast, convergent questions are closely related to Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) in Bloom's Taxonomy because they typically assess students' ability to recall, understand, and apply factual knowledge. Student teachers like these questions because they are simple and effective. Meanwhile, divergent questions are strongly associated with

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), such as analysing, evaluating, and creating. Despite their pedagogical importance, many student teachers find it challenging to design and implement these questions due to limited training and confidence.

To enhance the development of students' Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), teacher education programs should provide more focused training on designing and implementing divergent questions. While student teachers are generally comfortable using procedural and convergent questions, they often lack the confidence and pedagogical skills to formulate effective divergent questions that promote critical thinking. Therefore, structured workshops, mentoring, and microteaching sessions that emphasize practical strategies for crafting and using higher-order questions are recommended. Additionally, integrating Bloom's Taxonomy explicitly into lesson planning and reflective teaching practices can help student teachers align their questioning strategies with intended learning outcomes across cognitive domains.

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