## Example of two teaching approaches – food technology and cake storage in cafes

Teacher 1

Now, in cafeterias it is important to make sure that the cakes on display do not go stale over a period of time. This is particularly important if there is a large selection of cakes, or where the cake is kept in warm conditions. Unfortunately, warm conditions are all too common where food is being cooked and served. So we must pay a great deal of attention to the display of cakes in a cafeteria environment. When choosing a cake for cafeteria display, bear in mind that it should be an iced cake, as these go stale less quickly. Also, it should not be left near an 'oven, coffee urn or other source of heat. It should be covered, of course, and a cake display cover like this one could be used to good effect here. So, during your practical this afternoon, I want to see cakes in suitable display conditions.

## Teacher 2

Jacek: Why does fruit cake go stale?

Kim: Currants go off, sir.

Jacek: Actually, currants keep for years.

Norbert: Flour goes off, sir?

Jacek: Flour keeps for ages too! *(5 second pause)* How would you tell fresh cake from stale cake?

Tom: Fresh cake is nice and moist, and stale cake is all dry.

Jacek: Good! So if stale cake is dried-out cake, how could we store cakes to stop them going stale?

Kim: Put them in an air tight tin

Jacek: excellent. But what if you want them on display?

Norbert: Or one of those glass covers

Jacek: Yes indeed. Why would it stops the cakes going stale? PAUSE. Tom?

Tom: because it stops the cake drying out.

Jacek: Good. And what effect would icing a cake have on the staleness?

Kim: It would stop it going stale so fast, because it covers most of it up.

Jacek: Good, so going stale means drying out. Now, in our practical this afternoon, would you choose an iced or an un-iced cake for display?

Kim + Norbert + Tom (together) Iced!

Jacek: And where would you store it?

Norbert: Away from the oven.

Tom: Away from anything hot.

Jaek: Yes, away from the oven, the heated display counter, the coffee urn and so on. Because ... ?

Kim: Because heat dries cake out, makes it stale.

Jacek: That's right! Well done.

There is a crucial advantage to the questioning approach, and that is that the knowledge gained in such a lesson is 'transferable'. Imagine asking the two classes who experienced these lessons the following question: 'How should bread be stored overnight to prevent it going stale?' The class who were given the 'teacher talk' lesson would probably say, 'We haven't done bread: (One hopes they would not suggest icing it!) However, the class taught to understandthe process of going stale would probably have some correct suggestions; they would be able to transfer their understanding to this unfamiliar problem. It is important to teach for understanding, rather than just for knowing. Questioning teaches students to think for themselves.

Does anything else strike you about the differences between these two approaches? Most people would agree that the questioning approach would be more interesting for the students; they are actively involved rather than passively listening, and the questioning style tends to stimulate the students' curiosity - why *does* cake go stale? Moreover the students are made to *think* in the questioning-style lesson; the logic of the subject is exposed and they are encouraged to use it: 'How could we store cakes to stop them going stale?'