

QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE

How to Run a Classroom Discussion
Guided by Student Questions

(Adapted from Rothstein & Luz, 2011, [http://
www.hepg.org/hel/article/507#home](http://www.hepg.org/hel/article/507#home))

WHAT IS THE “QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE (QFT)?

Technique developed by Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana that helps students learn how to:

- **produce their own questions**
- **improve them**
- **strategize on how to use them**

WHEN WOULD YOU USE QFT?

- to **introduce** students to a new unit
- to **assess** students' knowledge
- to **see what they need to understand** better
- to **conclude** a unit to see how students can, with new knowledge, set a fresh learning agenda for themselves

SOME WAYS TO USE QFT

“Students have used the QFT to develop science experiments, create their own research projects, begin research on a teacher-assigned topic, prepare to write an essay, analyze a word problem, think more deeply about a challenging reading assignment, prepare an interview, or simply get themselves ‘unstuck.’”

HOW DO YOU USE QFT?

1. Teachers design a question focus.
2. Students use a protocol to produce questions without the teacher.
3. Students improve their questions.
4. Students prioritize their questions.
5. Students and teachers decide on next steps to guide discussion.
6. Students reflect on what they have learned.

STEP ONE

Teachers design a Question Focus, or QFocus, “a prompt that can be presented in the form of a statement or a visual or aural aid to focus and attract student attention and quickly stimulate the formation of questions.”

How do I interest students in their own learning?



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e-book on
Connected Learning

STEP TWO

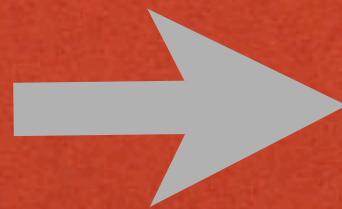
Students use a set of rules that provide a clear protocol for producing questions without assistance from the teacher:

1. Ask as many questions as you can related to the today's overarching question: ***How do I interest students in their own learning?***
2. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any of the questions.
3. Write down every question exactly as it was stated.
4. Change any statements into questions.

STEP THREE

“Students then improve their questions by **analyzing the differences** between open- and closed-ended questions and by practicing **changing** one type to the other.”

Can teachers
make students
care about
school?



What are some ways
teachers can help
students care about
school?

STEP FOUR

“The teacher, with the lesson plan in mind, offers criteria or guidelines for the selection of priority questions.” Your priority questions should be:

1. Inspired by today's reading
2. A question that you genuinely care about
3. A question you are eager to hear others talk about
4. A question you can't answer alone

STEP FIVE

“Students and teachers work together to decide how to use the questions.”

1. Rank order your questions.
2. As a group, choose your most pressing question.
3. Ask one person to post your group's most important question to Padlet board #2 (see link on weebly site “Links” page under “Website of the Week”).

STEP SIX

Reflect...

What have you learned by “producing, improving, and prioritizing” your questions?