

# INTRODUCING THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™ (QFT™)



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Hello from Vancouver to everyone!

My name is Darren Elves and I am Grade 2 teacher and program coordinator for the IB Programme at a small public school here in Vancouver. One day early last school year, I was handed a copy of *Make Just One Change* by one of the Professors in the Grad Program I am currently doing and I have not looked back since. What amazes me is that it doesn't matter whether we are considering students at the primary level all the way up to those in various Grad Programs...and beyond, the art and science of questioning is still perhaps the key element to unlocking the learning possibilities for everyone!

# ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

This power point presentation will walk you through all the steps needed and tips for teaching the Question Formulation Technique™ to your students.



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# WHAT IS THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™?

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) is a simple step-by-step process designed to help students produce, improve and strategize on how to use their questions.

The QFT allows students to practice three thinking abilities in one process: divergent, convergent and metacognitive thinking.

# USING STUDENT QUESTIONS

Students can use their questions for the following:

- Homework Assignments
- Final Reports
- Independent Projects
- Research Papers
- Group Projects
- Assessments

# COMPONENTS OF THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™

TEACHER: 1. The Question Focus (Q-Focus)

- STUDENTS:
2. Review the 4 Rules
  3. Produce Questions following 4 Rules
  4. Categorize Questions
  5. Prioritize Questions
  6. Share Questions
  7. Next Steps
  8. Reflect

# RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

- Ask as many questions as you can
- Do not stop to discuss, judge or answer the questions
- Write down every question exactly as it is stated
- Change any statement into a question

What might be difficult about following these rules?

**TIP:** Distribute or post the **Rules for Producing Questions**

# PRODUCING THE QUESTIONS

Q-Focus:

1. Pick one person as the note taker
2. Write the Q-focus at the top of the note paper
3. Produce as many questions as possible in the allotted time
4. Follow the Rules for Producing Questions.
5. Number your questions.

**TIP:** The note-taker should also contribute questions.



# IMPROVING THE QUESTIONS

Define close-ended and open-ended questions:

- **Closed-ended questions** – can be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word (or limited words).
- **Open-ended questions** – require an explanation and cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.

# IMPROVING THE QUESTIONS

1. Identify closed and open-ended questions on the list
  - Mark the closed ended questions with a **C**.
  - Mark the open-ended questions with an **O**.

# IMPROVING THE QUESTIONS

2. Name advantages of **closed-ended** questions.
3. Name disadvantages of **closed-ended** questions.
4. Name advantages of asking **open-ended** questions.
5. Name disadvantages of asking **open-ended** questions.

# IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

6. Review your list of questions and change one closed-ended question into an open-ended.
7. Then, change one open-ended question into a closed-ended one.

**TIP:** If students have questions from only one type, for example they only have open-ended questions – ask them to change two of their questions to closed-ended.

# PRIORITIZE YOUR QUESTIONS

Choose the three most important questions from your list.

- Keep the Q-Focus in mind.
- Mark each priority question with an “X”

**TIP:** **Criteria** for prioritizing is usually set by the teacher. Criteria will depend on what you have planned as next steps with the questions. For example: Choose three questions...

- *that most interest you.*
- *that are most important.*
- *that will best help you design your research project.*
- *you want/need to answer first.*

# SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS

Please share:

- the questions you changed from closed to open-ended and from open-ended to closed. Read each question as originally written and how it was changed,
- your three priority questions,
- your rationale for selecting those three.

**TIP: Students can assign a group member to report or collaborate in reporting.**

## NEXT STEPS

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How are you going to use your three priority questions?

# REFLECTION

Think about the work you have done, what you've have learned, and its value to your work or to projects you will be undertaking.

1. What did you learn?
2. What value does it have?
3. How can you use what you learned?

**TIP:** Use one or more reflection questions.  
Ask one question at a time.



# DESIGNING THE Q-FOCUS

A simple statement, a visual or aural aid; anything to help students generate questions.

Created from *curriculum content*

**TIP:** You will need to design a Q-Focus every time you use the QFT.

# DESIGNING THE Q-FOCUS

The Q-Focus should be designed to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Generate Interest
- Stimulate New Thinking
- Introduce a Topic
- Deepen Comprehension
- Assess Prior Knowledge

# DESIGNING THE Q-FOCUS

The Q-Focus:

Should:

- Be clear, brief and sharply focused.
- Provoke or stimulate new lines of thinking.

Should **NOT**:

- Be a question.
- Reveal teacher preferences or bias.

**Tip:** Use this criteria for evaluating your Q-Focus.

# DESIGNING THE Q-FOCUS

To design your Q-Focus:

1. Define the Q-Focus purpose
2. Think about what students will do with the questions they produce
3. Generate several Q-Focus ideas
4. Check against criteria
5. Choose idea that best meets your purpose and the criteria

# DESIGNING THE Q-FOCUS

Once you have the Q-Focus you will be ready to guide your students to formulate their own questions.

Tip: Introduce the QFT process to your students by using a simple Q-Focus.

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

- Additional materials to help you teach the QFT are available at [www.rightquestion.org](http://www.rightquestion.org).
- For a comprehensive description of how to use the Question Formulation Technique™ in the classroom please see *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions*, 2011 Harvard Education Press. <http://www.hepg.org/hep/book/144/MakeJustOneChange>