Question Formulation Technique

A Simple, Effective, Low-Cost Activity to Use in Your Classroom

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Adopted by: Right Question Institute

The activity

This activity provides students with an interactive method to generate interest around a topic by creating questions in response to a topic. Students are encouraged to clarify the purpose of their questions while building college readiness schools. This is a great activity for promoting full class participation: it encourages often-quiet students to speak out during class and exercise their voice.

This activity is great for lesson plans, thinking routines, social studies, math, English, and science.

Students will learn

- How to develop and clarify their thinking
- How to deepen their understanding (or lack of understanding) of a topic
- How to make connections between what they know and what they want to know
- How to develop essential questions
- How to explain the purpose of their questions

Here’s what you do

Resources needed:
- Markers
- Large paper
- Timer

Approximate time:
10 mins to 1 hour

Visit https://youthbuild.org/my/education to access more classroom activity ideas
Instructions

1. Review Question Formulation Technique (QFT) rules with students. Discuss advantages/disadvantages of these rules.

Rules:
   a. Ask as many questions as you can.
   b. Change any statement to a question.
      - Do not stop to discuss or answer questions.
   c. Write down each question exactly as it was stated.

2. Assign student roles.
   a. Scribe – writes down questions
   b. Rule keeper – makes sure no one breaks the rules

3. Hand out large sheet of paper and markers to each group, as well as the question focus. Do not allow students to start to discuss the question focus. The focus can be 1 word, a phrase, a quote, an image – whatever will provoke good questions.

4. Give students 5-10 minutes to generate as many questions as they can. Circulate to make sure that students are adhering to the rules.

5. Have students count up the questions. (I'll usually make a big deal about who has the most).

6. Introduce/review the idea of a closed vs. open question. Discuss the advantages/disadvantages for each.

7. Have students label questions as C/O – closed/open and explain that sometimes a question is better open or closed. Students can change any open to closed and vice versa.

8. Finally, have students put a star by their 3 priority questions.

9. Have each group explain why they chose their 3 priority questions.
**Success Tips**

- Take the time to review the rules.
- Use this technique at the beginning of a unit and then follow up to see if students get their questions answered.
- OR, have students research one of the questions.