

LESSON OVERVIEW

Name: Sra. Patty Gómez | **Grade:** 9 | **Subject:** Spanish 4H for Heritage Speakers | **Location:** Fort Lauderdale, FL

Context & Purpose: I used the QFT toward the end of Unit 3: The Complexity of the Modern World (La complejidad del mundo moderno). One objective of the unit is for students to practice the art of describing people, places, common objects and inventions using a rich collection of adjectives and creating meaningful comparisons through similes, metaphors and analogies. The QFT was designed with the intention of leading students to generate their own questions about: 1) the critical information to be included in descriptions of inventions to better understand their value and 2) the importance of describing vividly the world around us.

Lesson Procedure:

I will translate the QFT procedure into Spanish and guide the students through it using google slides. Students (some remote, some in the classroom) will follow along synchronously using [this work document](#).

1. On days 1 and 2, students will **produce** and **improve** questions. They will **prioritize** 3 questions that would best help you describe an invention to someone who's never seen it before.
2. On day 3, students will **consolidate** the class's questions, erase duplicates, and pick the 5 most important overall. They will each **pick an invention** to describe and write an ode to, using answers to the priority questions. They will **discuss what additional information they will need** for the activity and how they will find that information.
3. Also on day 3, students will **prioritize again**, picking the 3 questions that would best help them discuss the importance of writing vivid, complete descriptions of the world around us. These will be used for an opinion essay.
4. Lastly, they will reflect on what they learned and how they learned it.

Next Steps (i.e. how student questions will be used after the QFT):

- Students will use the consolidated class list of 5 priority questions (step #2 above) as ingredients to write their own ode about a modern invention of their choice. They previously studied three odes by Pablo Neruda.
- From the second set of priority questions (step #3 above), they will choose one to use as prompt to write an opinion essay. The essay and the poem will constitute their final project for semester 1.

LESSON OUTCOME

Question Focus: [\[Link to larger version\]](#)

TEMA DE ENFOQUE

"Usar palabras para describir algo que percibimos claramente con otros sentidos puede ser frustrante, pero es una manera importante de comprender el mundo que nos rodea."
- Anónimo

3 of the above images are from the Library of Congress:

- Spanish ship: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004669361/>
- Dialing telephone image: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2019680541/>
- British telephone booth: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018703207/>

Quote at the top reads: "Usar palabras para describir algo que percibimos claramente con otros sentidos puede ser frustrante, pero es una manera importante de comprender el mundo que nos rodea." – Anónimo / "Using words to describe something that we clearly perceive with other senses can be frustrating, but it is an important way of understanding the world around us." --Anonymous

Student Questions:

(15 students produced 144 questions in 5 minutes. All questions are included in the [work document](#))

- ¿Cómo se usa el teléfono antiguo? / How do you use the old telephone?
- ¿Qué tipo de energía usa la cosa? / What type of energy does this use?
- ¿Por qué todas las cajas son típicamente rojas? / Why are the phone booths typically red?
- ¿Es propiedad pública o privada? / Is it public property or private?
- ¿Cómo es la textura de las telas? / What is the texture of the fabrics like?
- ¿De qué está hecho? / What is it made of?
- ¿Para qué se usa? / What do you use it for?
- ¿Cuál es el valor de esta cosa? / What is the value of this thing?
- ¿Cuánto tiempo necesita para construir estas cosas? / How much time does it take to build these things?
- ¿En qué año se inventaron los objetos? / In what year were these objects invented? (C) → ¿Porque inventaron este objeto durante este tiempo? / Why did they invent the objects during this time? (O)
- ¿Por qué es difícil describir algo usando palabras? / Why is it difficult to describe something using words?
- ¿Por qué es frustrante? / Why is it frustrating?
- ¿Por qué es importante? / Why is it important? (O) → ¿Es importante? / Is it important? (C)

Consolidated Class Priority List (see step #2 in lesson procedure):

1. ¿Cuál es el uso o los usos? / What is the use or uses?
2. ¿A qué se parece?/ What does it look like? ¿Cuáles son las características físicas (¿color, sabor, textura, dimensiones, sonido, olor)? / What are the physical characteristics (color, texture, dimensions, sound, smell)?
3. ¿Cómo y cuándo fue construida la invención? / How and when was the invention built?
4. Qué materiales usaron, y cuáles procesos usaron para crear?) / What materials did they use and what process did they use to create it?
5. ¿Qué importancia tiene esto en nuestra vida diaria? / What importance does this have in our everyday life?

Consolidated Class Priority List 2 (see step #3 in lesson procedure):

1. ¿Hay algunas palabras que nos ayuden a describir más que otras? / Are there some words that help us to describe better than others?
2. ¿Por qué es importante describir objetos, personas o lugares con palabras y cómo estas descripciones afectan nuestra percepción del mundo que nos rodea? / Why is it important to describe objects, people, or places with words and how do these descriptions affect our perception of the world around us?
3. ¿Qué tan bien necesitamos conocer las cosas a nuestro alrededor para poderlas describir? / How well do we need to know the things around us to be able to describe them?

Student Reflections:

Some of the students' reflections are translated below.

- I learned how to formulate better questions in Spanish.
- This made me think about how we describe things and about what questions are better to help us describe them.
- I learned that we have to pay close attention to the words we use.
- I learned to ask better questions to get to information that I want.
- I learned that there are many ways a person can create good and strong questions
- I learned that closed questions are not necessarily worse than the open ones.
- This made me think about how just a few words can change completely the meaning of a question

Next Steps:

[Here is the description and the rubric of their final project.](#) The duration of the activity and ensuing project was 3 weeks.

Sample of student work:

Student work sample 1 ([Ode to my COVID-19 mask](#)) | Student work sample 2 ([Ode to my photographic camera](#))

Student work sample 3 ([Ode to my toothbrush](#)) | Student work sample 4 ([Ode to the internet](#))

Student work sample 5 ([Essay](#)) | Student work sample 6 ([Essay](#))

TEACHER REFLECTIONS

Reflect on any challenges you ran into.

Designing the QFocus was definitely a challenge. I had to carefully consider the implications of what I shared with students to stimulate the start of the question-making process. I wanted it to be meaningful, connected to what they had seen in previous units and to what we were discussing in class, self-explanatory, and actually useful in the process of producing valuable questions for the purpose I intended. I finally settled for a combination of images and a quote. 3 of the images were from the Library of Congress collection and the rest from other sources. It was interesting to see the diversity of questions and the many directions in which they went from the QFocus. Since the activity is timed, students did not have a chance to really pay attention to what others were writing. Because of this and because I tried hard not to give any indication of whether some questions were on the right track and some weren't, they all were a bit worried and confused when they saw the diversity of takes. Most students wrote questions about the images. Few addressed the quote that was part of the QFocus. They were not sure if they had done it "right." This worry ebbed as we moved along and they saw that all questions added value regardless of whether they served to validate or invalidate their ranking of questions.

Overall, what did you learn from this experience?

I have said this before, but this is the single most powerful protocol to use in the classroom and in professional development activities that I have learned and used in the last few years. It's adaptable, simple and yields pure gold thinking and experiences for students and teachers alike. The students' responses and resulting work far exceeded my expectations and far exceeded theirs. I was a bit afraid that they would find the process pointless. I have been reflecting about the origin of that fear and I think our students are so used to just being given information by us that finding themselves as the makers of the information would make them feel uncomfortable. I felt they'd be going through the process wondering quietly in their heads why I didn't just give them the questions I wanted them to use so they could get to their "actual work" right away. If they think that way it is because we have made them think that way. Luckily since the protocol allows for not revealing from the start where we are going with this, and the whole point is to build thinking together to get somewhere, they had no choice but to follow and be mildly intrigued. That helped them be truly engaged in what they were doing once they passed the initial hurdle of wanting for me to give them examples of what kinds of questions I wanted them to make and me not giving them any.