

**LESSON OVERVIEW**

**Name:** Charlotte Dumont | **Grade:** 11-12 | **Subject:** ESL 4 | **Location:** Cambridge, MA (Remote and in-person)

**Context & Purpose:** The QFT was embedded into a six-week unit on food sustainability. I used the QFT to launch the unit and again towards the middle as a formative assessment to gauge students' understanding of the anchor text we were reading. The first QFocus was a direct quote from the anchor text, Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. The second used two images from the Library of Congress.

**Lesson Procedure:**

**First QFT**

1. On days 1-3 students participated in a mini-project sharing [Padlets](#) they created which documented the food that they eat in their culture and how their diets may have changed since moving to the United States.
2. On day 4 we conducted the QFT using a quote from *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. After the QFT, we discussed the priority questions, debriefed the process, and used the questions to launch into the text.
3. After reading the anchor text for two weeks, we revisited the QFT questions and discussed what we had learned and what we still needed to find out.

**Second QFT**

1. The second QFT occurred after students had read most of the anchor text and were beginning their research. Students were shown two images from the Library of Congress (LOC) that juxtaposed examples of sustainable farming vs. factory farming.
2. Students discussed the priority questions. Much of the discussion was focused on the benefits and costs of factory farming vs. sustainable farming.

**LESSON OUTCOME**

**Question Focus 1:**

"If it came from a plant, *eat it*; if it was made in a plant, *don't*." –Michael Pollan

**Question Focus 2:**



[Cooperative farms are stocked with the highest grade of livestock. Osage Farms, Missouri](#)



<https://foodprint.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/agriculture-pollution.jpg>

**Priority Student Questions:**

*Question Focus 1:*

- How many people agree with the author?
- What is the difference between organic food and non organic?
- I wonder why we don't (the people) eliminate made in plant food?
- Why made the author think that anything come from factory should not be eaten?
- Does the food made by nature takes more time to properly grow than the food that are scientifically reproduced?
- Is it the workers that are bad or the factory itself?
- Did more people change their diets after this quote?
- If people know that the food is made in factory do they still go market and buy that?
- Are all the plants healthy?
- How is food made in a plant is different come from a plant?

*Question Focus 2:*

- Is that enough space for all the cows in photo 2?
- If the industrial farming is paid more money is unfair for the small farmers like in the photo 1 to be paid less money?
- Photo 2: Did the bosses of the industrial farm think that it is okay to close all those cows in a small place and feeding them corn instead of grass?
- There is no other way to grow the cows in the industrial farms so it can be better for the cows?
- Do cows stay in the same place all the time?
- How the cows feel when they are hundreds in a closed place like in photo 2?
- I wonder how much money they can get in both farming system?

**TEACHER REFLECTIONS**

**Reflect on your QFocus.**

For the first QFT, I chose a quote from the author of our anchor text. My hope was that students would ask questions about what was said in the quote, but also about the author. It worked! Students asked really insightful questions about the authority of Michael Pollan, how he conducted his research, why he wrote the book, where he shops for food, etc.

For the second QFT, students asked questions about two LOC images related to food sustainability and farming. We had been reading a lot about factory farming in the book and I wanted to give students the space to process what we had been reading and express what they still wanted and/or needed to know about the topic. Many of the students in the class immigrated from countries where factory farming is not practiced on a large scale, so this was a new topic for many of them. Students had a harder time getting started with this QFT than the first one. I'm not sure if it was the topic or if it was the skill of analyzing images. We ended up giving the students extra time to ask questions. Once they got going, they asked some really great questions. But it required some self-control and patience from the teachers not to intervene.

**Which student questions stood out to you? Why?**

There wasn't one particular question that stood out to me. Instead, what impressed me was the broad scope of questions that were asked. The questions covered healthy eating, farming practices, bias and research, the ethics of eating meat, food-related illnesses, economics, etc.

**How well did student questions achieve planned next steps?**

The 1st QFT was used as a launch into the anchor text, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. We were able to tap into students' prior knowledge of food sustainability and spark their interest to learn more. After reading the text for a few weeks, we revisited the initial priority questions and discussed what we had learned and we still had questions about. We built upon our original questions and dived back into the text.

The 2nd QFT was intended to help students think deeply about the issues surrounding food sustainability and farming. Students used the priority questions they developed to conduct research in the LOC resource Foodprint.org and other credible sources. They wrote short papers and presented their findings to the class.

The questions that students developed provided the perfect transition into the text and bridge between the text and student-led research. In both instances, students were able to connect the questions that they developed to what they were reading and researching.