



**Right Question  
Institute**



**Burlingame Intermediate School  
1715 Quesada Way  
Burlingame, CA 94010**

We are excited that you are here with us in Burlingame, CA for the West Coast Seminar on Best Practices in the Question Formulation Technique! We are looking forward to working and learning with you, and we are excited for the new discoveries this seminar will yield.

Sincerely,

Dan Rothstein, Sarah Westbrook, and the RQI Team

## Seminar Agenda

8:30 - 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 - 9:10 am	<b>Welcome and Community Building</b> Dr. Maggie MacIsaac, Superintendent Burlingame School District
9:10 - 10:05 am	<b>Collaborative Learning with the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)</b> Dan Rothstein, Co-Director, Right Question Institute Sarah Westbrook, Director of Professional Learning, Right Question Institute
10:05 - 10:40 am	Classroom Examples
10:40 - 10:50 am	Break
10:50 - 12:00 pm	The Art and Science of the QFT: A Deep Dive into Planning and Designing
12:00 - 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:45 - 1:45 pm	Workshop Session #1
1:45 - 1:55 pm	Break
1:55 - 3:00 pm	Workshop Session #2
3:05 - 3:30 pm	Optional: Informal Conversation and Reflection with RQI

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# Workshop Descriptions

## **Building Strong Partnerships with Families // Room: 11-1, Session: 2**

*Presenter: Dan Rothstein, The Right Question Institute*

How can we make it easier for schools and families to work together on behalf of all students? The Right Question Strategy distills complex, important ideas on effective civic participation into an easy-to-learn process that teaches parents two fundamental skills they can use to support the education of their children, monitor their progress, and advocate for them when necessary: asking better questions and participating effectively in key decisions. In an active learning experience based on the book *Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions* (2016, Luz Santana, Dan Rothstein, and Agnes Bain) you will have the opportunity to work closely with co-author Dan Rothstein, to learn the strategy, explore its rationale, and plan on how to integrate it into your work with families.

## **Cultivating Creativity with the QFT // Room: 11-1, Session: 1**

*Presenter: Samantha Hundley, Roosevelt Elementary School*

As schools focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills to prepare our students for the modern world, they address the need for creativity in the classroom. Creativity is one of the pillars for this framework. The QFT allows students to develop creative thinking about art, before students take a physical paintbrush to paper. This technique guides students to learn about the cultural and historical background of art pieces, prior to creating their own, so that the projects done in class have a context. This develops imagination and creative thinking that can be applied to all classroom subjects. Together we will look at examples of the QFT in an elementary classroom and discuss ways to incorporate these techniques in your setting. You will be saying goodbye to stand-alone art projects and instead understand how to use the QFT to help generate art curriculum in your own classroom.

## **Inquiry asks a question; research answers it. // Room: 11-2, Session: 1**

*Presenter: Connie Williams, Petaluma Regional Library Branch and Sonoma County Library*

Let's have some fun looking at ways to engage our students so that questioning – and answering – become thinking routines that permeate every aspect of their learning. Participants will work in groups to identify common topics that could easily turn into research projects using primary sources; and then we will discuss when and how we can use student questions to drive our teaching while helping them hone their research skills.

## **Lessons from the Field: The QFT with Special Student Populations: // Room: 11-3, Session: 1**

*Presenter: Sarah Westbrook, Right Question Institute*

Join us in learning about how educators from around the country have tailored and scaffolded the QFT for English Language Learners (ELLs), students who receive special education services, and elementary and early childhood learners. Discuss classroom examples from around the country, work in small groups to explore additional resources, and plan what may work best for your students.

## **Suffering from Acronym Anxiety? Using the QFT to Tackle NGSS & STEM for All Students // Room: 11-2, Session: 2**

*Presenter: Julie Reis, Abraham Lincoln High School*

Are you nonplussed by the NGSS paradigm shift? Perplexed about how to implement PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies)? Entangled in your EL scaffolds? Stressed about how to engage your STEM-phobic students? The QFT can help! Join us to unpack the many ways the QFT can engage *all* of your students, re-focus your learning environment, spark meaningful academic conversations among students, and reinvigorate joyful learning for all.

## **The Big IDEA- Practical Steps to a Whole School Design Process // Room: 11-3, Session: 2**

*Presenter: Matthew Pavao, Roosevelt Elementary School*

The need for the skills of Creativity, Collaboration, Communication and Critical Thinking are becoming more necessary by the day. Schools need to develop a plan of not only introducing these skills but also of making them an integral part of a school's day-to-day instruction. Roosevelt Elementary School has built a whole school model that encourages problem solving and has created a design process that cultivates successful problem-seekers for the 21st Century. In this session, you will not only learn about our path to this success, but also will be given practical tools to help drive your school towards an effective whole school Big IDEA (Inquiry, Design, Engineer and Act) model.

## Presenters

**Samantha Hundley** is an elementary school educator, currently teaching second grade in Burlingame, CA. Her interest in inquiry as an educational technique was sparked when studying the Socratic questioning method at Oxford University, while abroad from the University of San Diego. For the past year, Samantha has been applying the Question Formulation Technique in the classroom, across subjects, with particular emphasis on the arts. Passionate about bringing creativity and engagement to learning, Samantha especially appreciates the higher order thinking brought about by the QFT.



**Matthew Pavao** is currently the principal at Roosevelt Elementary School in Burlingame, California. In his 7-year tenure at the school, Roosevelt has been acknowledged as a Partnership for 21st Century Learning Exemplar School, a California Gold Ribbon School and a Title One Academic Achievement School. Mr. Pavao has also been acknowledged as a Digital Innovation in Learning Administrative Trailblazer. At Roosevelt, he has leveraged the work of QFT to build up their own Big IDEA (Inquiry, Design, Engineer and Act) method of not only problem solving, but also building in the indispensable, and underutilized skill of problem seeking.



**Julie Reis** is a National Board-certified science teacher and Science Department Chair at Abraham Lincoln High School in San Francisco. As a member of the Lincoln science faculty for over 20 years, she has taught Biology, Human Physiology, Biotechnology, and Advanced Placement Psychology. She is currently teaching Lincoln's first year Principles of Biotechnology course, a curriculum she co-developed over the past 10 years and continues to modify in partnership with her teaching colleague. She also teaches two sections of Advanced Placement Psychology. As Department Chair she has been active in San Francisco Unified School District's early adoption and implementation of the NGSS standards and has conducted workshops for colleagues on Teaching and the Teenage Brain and on Growth Mindset. She began to incorporate the QFT into her courses this Spring and is eager to share the results and further explore creative applications of this simple, yet powerful, technique.



**Dan Rothstein** is Co-Director of the Right Question Institute and co-author of *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions*. Dan's work focuses on honoring the work of educators who are driving a movement to help all students learn to ask better questions. His keynotes and seminars have engaged many audiences, including the Library of Congress, Harvard Medical School, Brandeis University, Google, and Microsoft. His work has been featured on NPR, Education Week, and Educational Leadership. Dan's earned his B.A. at Harvard College and his doctorate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where he also was a Teaching Fellow and an Editor of the Harvard Educational Review. Dan was a Fulbright Scholar and one of very few non-academics to be chosen as a National Academy of Education Spencer Fellow.



**Connie Williams** is currently the Petaluma History Room Librarian for the Sonoma County Library. An NBCT school Librarian, she worked for 28 years as a school librarian in Petaluma City Schools. She is a Past President of the California School Library Association, and is a member of the California State Library Services Board. She is the author of the book: *Understanding Government Information: a teaching strategies toolkit for grades 7-12*; many articles on topics such as assessment, using primary sources, inquiry, library advocacy and of course: questioning. After reading Warren Berger's book: *A More Beautiful Question*, she contacted RQI to learn more and has been using the QFT ever since with students from grades 3 through college.



**Sarah Westbrook** is a former high school English teacher who is now RQI's Director of Professional Learning. During her seven years of teaching in Boston area public high schools, Sarah developed a deep appreciation for the innovative work educators do every day for students that often goes unseen and unrecognized. She now partners with schools and districts around the country to design professional learning on the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) and collaborates with individual classroom teachers to highlight their work and identify new opportunities for professional growth. She has presented on the QFT for a range of audiences including NCSS, NSTA, and ASCD National Conferences, Chicago Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, New York State BOCES districts, and the Hawaii and Iowa State Departments of Education. (email: Sarah dot Westbrook at rightquestion dot org)



# Acknowledgements

We are delighted to be here in Burlingame, CA. We would like to thank Burlingame Intermediate School for graciously sharing their space with us and Bruce Duncan, Matt Pavao, and Grace Villaflor for their work behind the scenes which made this event possible. Thank you also to the presenters who shared their expertise and creativity.

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## **RQI 2018 Summer Fellows**

Monique Crowley  
Erin Kim  
Sara Shapiro

We would also like to acknowledge the valuable role played by Harvard Education Press (HEP) and ASCD in making the QFT available to a wide audience through the publication of *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions* (HEP, 2011) and *Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions* (ASCD, 2016).



The Right Question Institute launched The Million Classrooms Campaign in 2015, and the campaign is part of a larger project made possible with the support of a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The aim of the campaign is to learn and work with educators in the field to promote the adoption of the QFT in over a million classrooms by 2020. Now, educators in over 140 countries around the world are facilitating student curiosity and creating space for students to develop their thinking skills using this simple, powerful strategy. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and energy of over 300,000 educators worldwide who use and share the strategy. They not only helped us to reach our goal, but they helped us surpass it more quickly than we could have imagined. We continue to learn every day from their innovation, creativity, and dedication. Learn more about the Million Classrooms Campaign: <http://rightquestion.org/mcc>