



The
Right Question Institute
A Catalyst for Microdemocracy



**Maine South High School
1111 South Dee Road
Park Ridge, IL 60068**

We are excited that you are here with us in Park Ridge, IL for our 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

Seminar Agenda

- 8-8:30 **Breakfast, Registration**
- 8:30-8:40 **Welcome**
Shawn Messmer, Assistant Superintendent, Maine Township High School District 207
- 8:40-10:15 **Collaborative Learning Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) & Unpacking the QFT**
Dan Rothstein & Sarah Westbrook
Experience the Question Formulation Technique, learn about the three thinking abilities strengthened by the QFT process, and see kindergarten through higher education classroom examples.
- 10:15-10:45 **Intro to Lesson Planning Using the QFT**
Matt Parrilli & Sarah Westbrook
Attendees will use a planning workbook to create their own QFT.
- 10:45-11:45 **The Art and Science of the QFT**
Dan Rothstein & Sarah Westbrook
In the five years since Harvard Education Press published *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions*, we have learned a great deal about best practices that improve use of the QFT. We will explore together best practices for facilitation, design of each element of the QFT process, and artful adaptations of the protocol.
- 11:45-12:30 **Lunch**
- 12:30-1:15 **Workshop Session 1**
- 1:25-2:10 **Workshop Session 2**
- 2:20-2:30 **Advancing the Work From Conference to Action: A New Vision of Professional Learning**
Sarah Westbrook
Learn about your role in advancing the QFT, opportunities to get more involved with The Right Question Institute and our work across the country, and how to join an international community of practice and professional learning.
- 2:30 - 3:15 **Self-Organized Working Groups**
Work with colleagues to generate ideas and create plans for applying and sharing the QFT.
- 3:15-3:30 **QFT SLAM presentations**
Matt Parrilli
- 3:30-3:40 **Q&A with RQI**
- 3:40-4:00 **Closing Reflections & Evaluation**

Workshop Descriptions

Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn. *Presenter: Matt Parrilli, Maine South High School*

Speaking and listening skills are essential to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), authentic learning experiences, and disciplinary literacy. This session will examine the Question Formulation Technique's (QFT) direct connections to the CCSS Speaking and Listening standards. Participants will develop their own Question Focus (QFocus) around an audio story and explore approaches to assessing and providing feedback on speaking and listening skills.

Teaching Students How to Ask STEM Questions. *Presenter: Allison Gest, Maine East High School*

The QFT can be used as a key component in a student-centered classroom and allows for students to carry out the scientific process when confronted with a problem. We will explore ways for students to ask their own questions and discuss how the QFT can enhance the use of the Next Generation Science Standards and Science & Engineering Practices.

What Is YOUR QFT Destination? *Presenter: Dan Fouts, Maine West High School*

The most important yet tricky part of the QFT process is deciding what you want students to do with the questions they create. Through a combination of show-and-tell, small group brainstorming and group discussion, we will unearth creative ideas for how to design that perfect end product to capitalize on students' questions.

Using ChromeBooks for More Than Typing. *Presenters: Mary Contois & Anita Theodore, Crystal Lake South High School*

Do you have a cart full of ChromeBooks that you want to use with purpose? Are you excited about including the QFT to engage students in discussions? We will explore ways teachers can mindfully use technology and address the SAMR model with the QFT. We will also feature ideas from Stephen Brookfield, author of Teaching for Critical Thinking.

Building Strong Partnerships with Families *Presenter: Dan Rothstein, The Right Question Institute*

Partnering effectively with families is vital for student success and equity in our education system. The Right Question Institute has developed an evidence-based strategy that can be used by all families to learn the key skills to **support** their children's education, **monitor** their progress, and **advocate** for them when necessary. In an active learning experience based on the book Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions, (2016 ACSD, Luz Santana, Dan Rothstein, & 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.

Presenters

Matt Parrilli is the Department Chair of English at Maine South High School in Park Ridge, IL and is currently working on his doctorate in educational leadership at Concordia University Chicago. Matt has taught high school English for 22 years and has been a department chair for 10 years. Since incorporating the QFT into his classroom four years ago, he has seen how it positively impacts student engagement, motivation, and inquiry. It has also changed his teaching which has become more student-led, collaborative, and authentic. Matt has led staff development on the QFT at the department, school, and district level in own district as well as neighboring districts in the Chicagoland area.



Allison Gest is currently the Assistant Principal for Teaching and Learning at Maine East High School in Park Ridge, IL. She is in her 12th year of teaching in the Maine 207 School District. Working with mainly juniors and seniors, Allison uses the QFT process to excite students in science and engage in their own learning experiences (i.e 20% plan projects). She uses the QFT process to enhance aspects of the Next Generation Science Standards and implement the Science & Engineering Practices. Allison is also a Google Education Trainer, instructional coach and has presented on the QFT at NSTA. Follow her on Twitter @MrsGest.



Dan Fouts currently serves as an instructional coach and teaches AP government, philosophy and US history at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, IL. Drawing from his five years of experience with the QFT, he now instructs an online graduate course titled Socrates in the Social Studies through which middle and high school teachers create, digitize and share personalized QFT lesson artifacts. In his role as member of the committee on pre-collegiate instruction in philosophy through the American Philosophical Association from 2012-2016, Dan presented locally and nationally on topics connected to questioning and critical thinking. Twitter @dmfouts



Mary Contois has been the Technology Integration Specialist at D155's Crystal Lake South (CLS) High School in Crystal Lake, IL for 5 years. She enjoys working with teachers, assisting them with incorporating technology to enhance their lessons. (She loves showing teachers how to use the SAMR model to reach goals and engage students.) She has partnered with Anita Theodore, CLS's Reading Specialist and Literacy Coach, to present a blend of the QFT and technology to teachers and administrators at CLS. Mary and Anita have also presented their QFT and technology work at several local conferences, including Illinois Reading Council (IRC) and Illinois Computing Educators (ICE). Please follow @LitologyD155 on twitter.



Anita Theodore is currently a Literacy Coach and Reading Specialist at D155's Crystal Lake South High School in Crystal Lake, IL. Anita has partnered with Mary Contois, CLS's Technology Integration Specialist, to bring critical thinking and technology support to their peers, and the QFT has been a featured PD series that has caught teachers' and administrators' attention. Mary and Anita have also presented their QFT and technology work at several local conferences, including Illinois Reading Council (IRC) and Illinois Computing Educators (ICE). A former English teacher for 16 years, Anita looks forward to returning to the classroom this fall to co-teach History. If you'd like to see Anita Theodore's and Mary Contois's adventures, please check out their joint efforts known as Litology (Did you catch the "literacy" and "technology" blend?) on Twitter @LitologyD155.



Dan Rothstein is 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 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.



Sarah Westbrook is a former high school English teacher who is now RQI's Director of Professional Learning for education programming and the Million Classrooms Campaign, which aims to expand the use of the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) to one million classrooms by 2020. During her seven years of teaching and tutoring in Boston area public schools, Sarah developed a passion for advancing equity and success for all students and a deep appreciation for the innovative, dedicated work fellow educators do every day that often goes unseen. She holds a M.A.T. in English Education from Tufts University and a B.A. in English from Bryn Mawr College. Follow her on twitter @rightquestion for the most up to date articles, resources, and classroom examples.



Acknowledgements

We are delighted to be here in Park Ridge, Illinois at Maine South High School. We would like to thank Maine South for graciously sharing their space with us and to Matt Parrilli, Shawn Messmer, and Dan Bachar for their support and guidance which made this event possible. And thank you to the presenters who shared their expertise with their fellow educators. We also want to thank Superintendent Ken Wallace and former Assistant Superintendent Barbara Dill-Varga for supporting the use of the QFT in the district and beyond.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support from the following funders who have helped make this seminar possible:

The Sir John Templeton Foundation The Whitman Institute The Hummingbird Fund

We are also very grateful for strong support of the Right Question Institute over the years that has been provided by:

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund	The Germanacos Foundation
The McLeod BlueSkye Foundation	Mary and Ted Wendell
Diane Englander and Mark Underberg	Ellen Paradise Fisher and Franklin M. Fisher
Stephen Quatrano and Doreen Karoll, M.D.	The Germeshausen Foundation
The Nellie Mae Education Foundation	Jane's Trust

All of the work of the Right Question Institute across many fields and communities is made possible by the strong financial and programmatic support of RQI's Board of Directors:

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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, which aimed to expand the use of the QFT to develop students' thinking abilities and spark curiosity in a million classrooms by 2020. The One Million Classrooms Campaign is part of a larger project made possible with the support of a generous grant from the Sir John Templeton Foundation for "Activating and Demonstrating Greater Curiosity by Learning to Ask Questions."

We are deeply grateful for the enthusiasm and energy of over 250,000 educators worldwide who are using and sharing the strategy. They have made this goal possible more quickly than we could have ever predicted. We continue to learn every day from their innovation, creativity, and dedication to teaching students how to ask their own questions. Learn more about the Million Classrooms Campaign: <http://rightquestion.org/mcc/>



We would like to thank Nathan Rothstein and [Project Repat](#), producer of custom t-shirt quilts, for their generous support of our work this year.

