

Question Formulation and an Emerging Theory of Learning

The QFT [Question Formulation Technique] really teaches a way of thinking so students can be thinking critically every time they read, trying to connect the concepts and deciding whether to take facts and information at face value or to dig a little deeper.

Brandeis University student, 2016

A Simple Protocol

Instructor:

1. *Plans* for use of QFT and student questions
2. *Develops* a Question Focus

Students:

1. *Produce* their own questions
2. *Categorize* questions
3. *Prioritize* questions
4. *Justify* prioritization and plan for using questions
5. *Reflect* on what they learned by working with their own questions

Student Voices

Just when you think you know all you need to know, you ask another question and discover how much more there is to learn.

When we come up with our own questions, we think more deeply.

I learned that if we keep asking questions, we keep getting better answers.

I learned how important it is to listen to others' questions to add to what I learn and know.

The Deceptive Simplicity of the QFT

Cognition—Students:

- Use three different thinking abilities:
 - Divergent
 - Convergent
 - Metacognition
- Develop greater comprehension/ sophistication about content by using these three abilities
- Compare and assess value of different questions
- Think about rationale for priority questions

Behavior—Students:

- Ask a lot of questions
- Listen to others' questions
- Collaborate
- Work rigorously with all the questions

Emotion—Students:

- Feel more comfortable with "not knowing" (Ignorance)
- Express greater curiosity
- Are more intrinsically motivated
- Become less dependent on instructors

Equity—QFT:

- Provides safe and equitable structure for participation
- Creates space for all voices
- Enhances mutual learning
- Offers a differentiated learning experience