

Introduction to the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) for Primary Source Learning

Hosted by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Program

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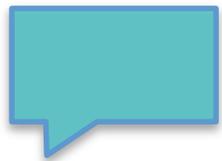


rightquestion.org

There are 2 icons you will see in this session:



This means that you should be thinking or working on the task assigned

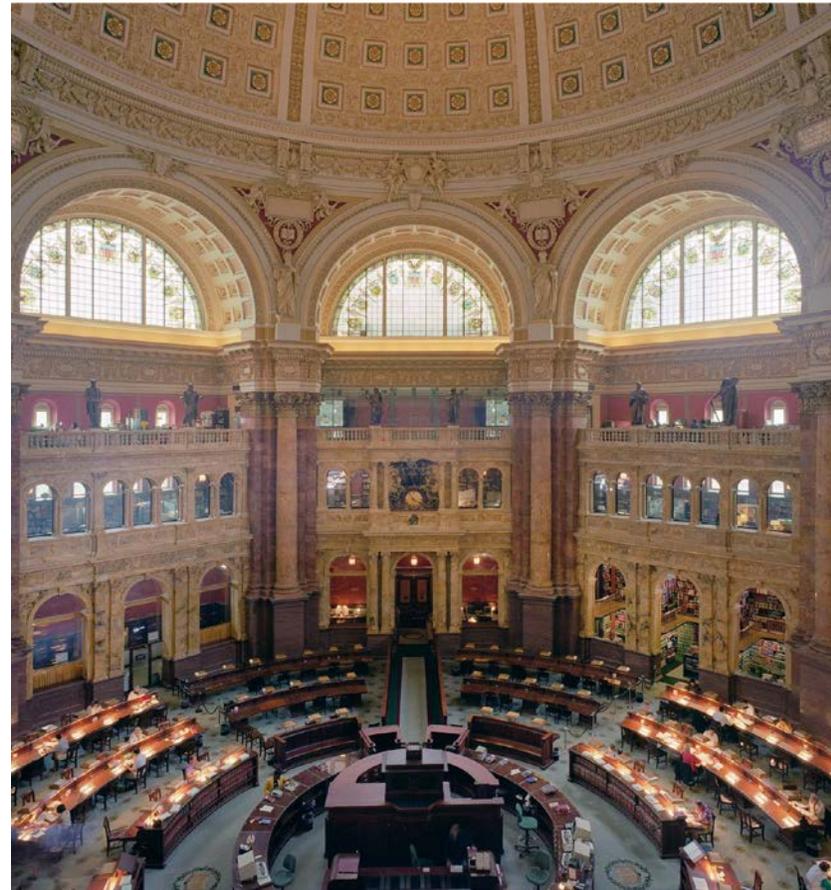


This means get ready to use your chat box to share some of your work

Who is in the room?



(Not this room, but rather our virtual version of the Library of Congress!)



Highsmith, C. M., photographer. *Reading Room at the Library of Congress's historic Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.* United States Washington D.C, None. [Between 1980 and 2006] [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011635726/>.

Today's Agenda

- 1) **Why Spend Time on Teaching the Skill of Question Formulation?**
- 2) **Collaborative Learning with the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)**
- 3) **Explore Real Classroom Examples & Applications**
- 4) **Why is Question Formulation Important Now?**
- 5) **Q&A**

We're Tweeting...

@RightQuestion

@AndrewRQI

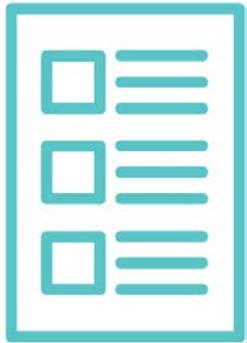
@SarahRQI

#QFT



Access Today's Materials and All of Our Free Resources

<https://rightquestion.org/events/>



Classroom Examples



Instructional Videos



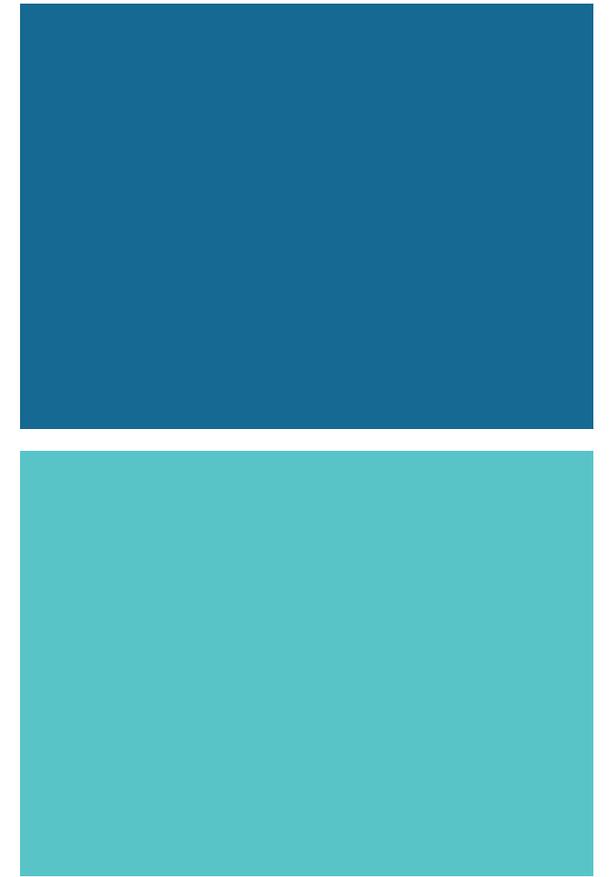
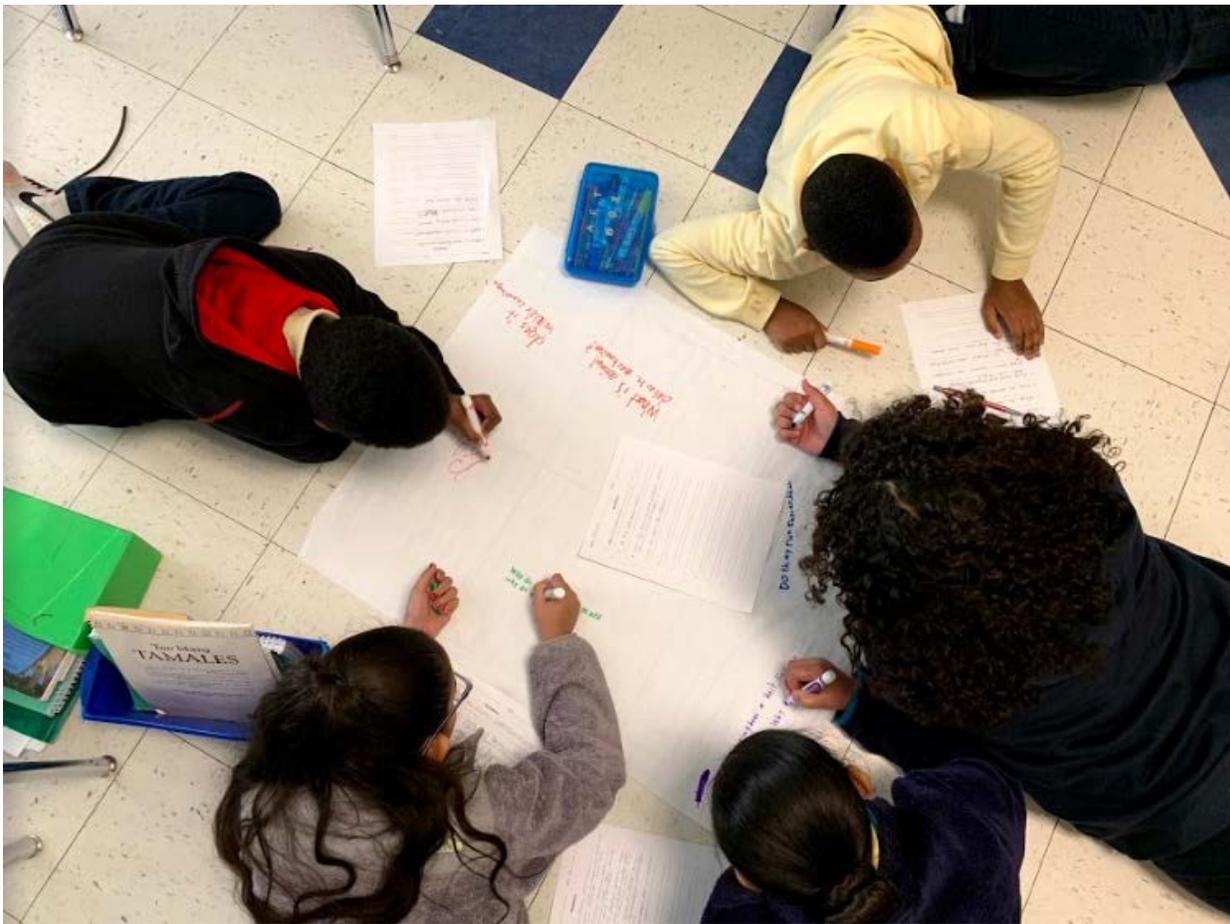
Planning Tools & Templates

Use and Share These Resources



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+ Why spend time teaching the skill of question formulation?

Honoring the Original Source: Parents in Lawrence, MA 1990



“We don’t go to the school because we don’t even know what to ask.”

“There can be no thinking without questioning—no purposeful study of the past, nor any serious planning for the future.”

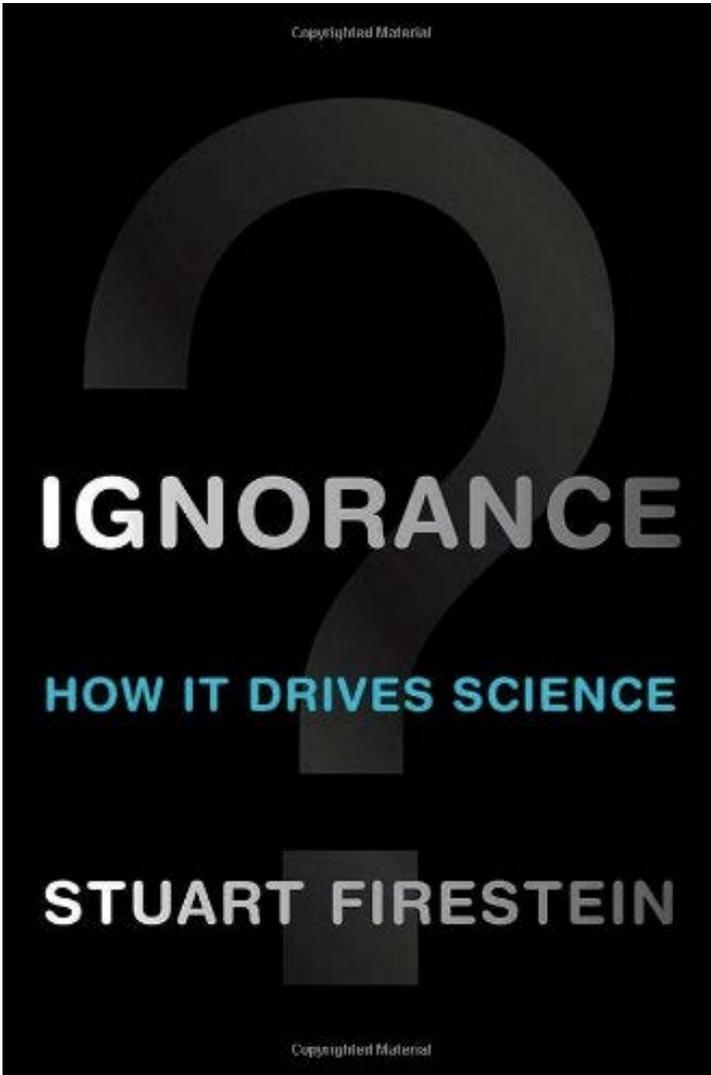
– David Hackett Fischer

University Professor Emeritus of History, Brandeis University

“Libraries allow children to ask questions about the world and find the answers. And the wonderful thing is that once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”

– Laura Bush

Educator & Former First Lady of the United States



“We must teach students how to think in questions, how to manage ignorance.”

– Stuart Firestein

Former chair, Department of Biology,
Columbia University

College Presidents on What College Students Should Learn

“We are here to ask questions—questions about one another and about the world around us. We are at Yale to nurture a culture of curiosity.”

- Peter Salovey, President of Yale University

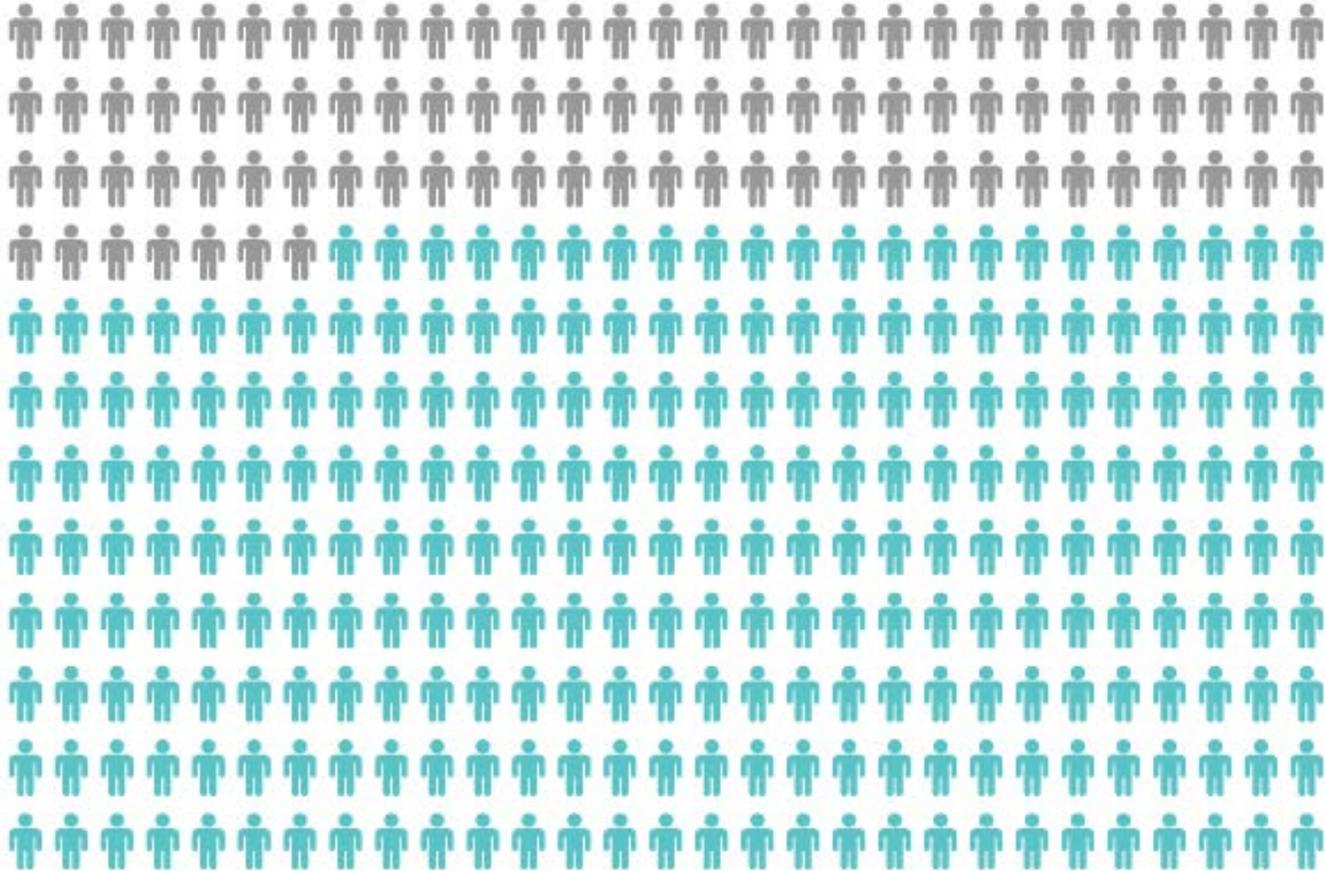
<https://president.yale.edu/speeches-writings/speeches/culture-curiosity>

“...the best we can do for students is have them ask the right questions.”

- Nancy Cantor, Former Chancellor of University of Illinois

The New York Times, August 4, 2002

Yet, Only 27% of Graduates Believe College Taught Them How to Ask Their Own Questions



● Agree ● Disagree

**But, the problem begins long before
college...**

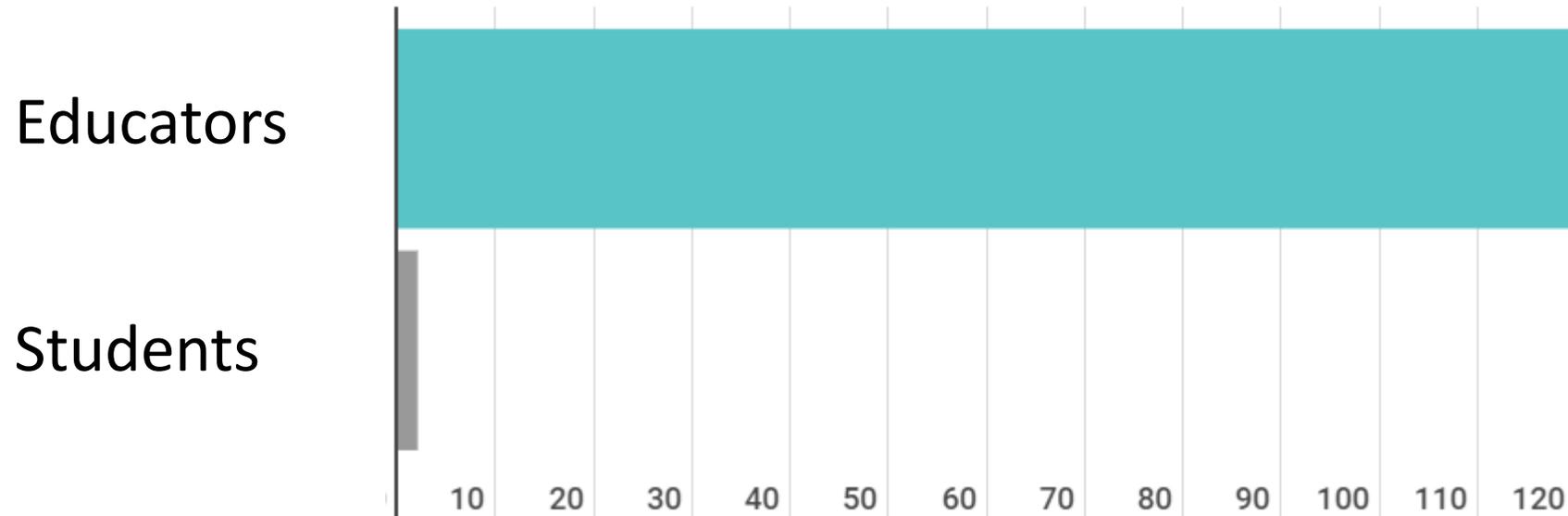
Age Four: “The true age of inquisitiveness”

- James Sully dubbed age four, “the true age of inquisitiveness when question after question is fired off with wondrous rapidity and pertinacity.”
- Young children ask 10,000 questions per year before they begin formal schooling.

Sully, 1896
Harris, 2012

Question Asking by Adolescence

Who's asking questions over the course of an hour?



Educators Recognize the Problem

- Teachers report that getting students to ask questions feels like, “pulling teeth.”
- Students ask less than 1/5th the questions educators estimated would be elicited and deemed desirable.

How can teaching students to ask questions go from a feeling of “pulling teeth” to a feeling of excitement for both teachers and learners?

Moving from the exception...

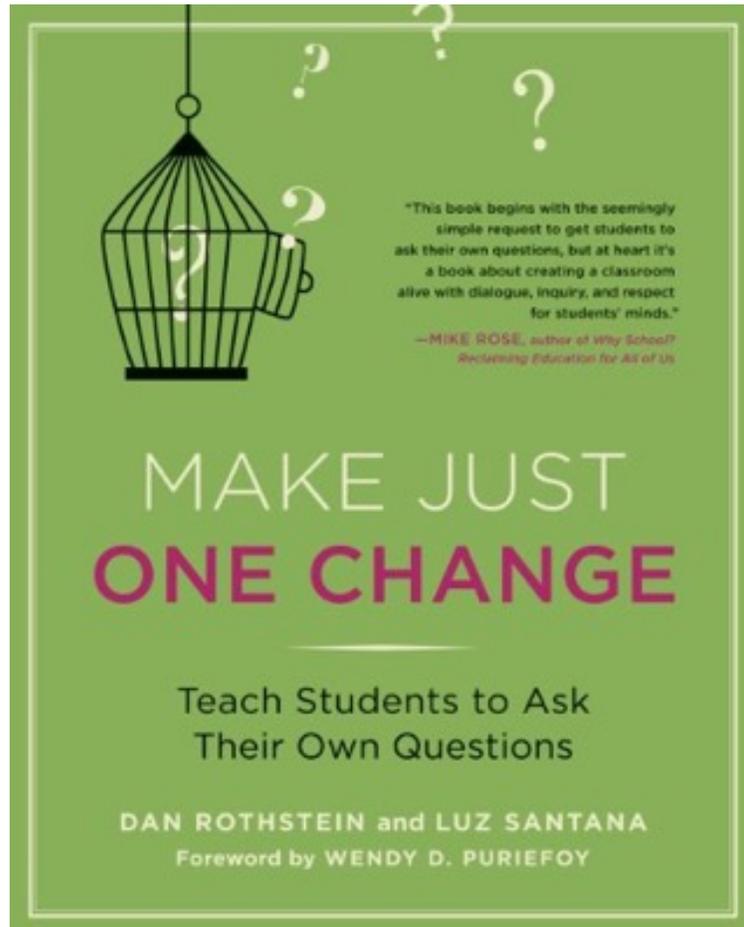


In a 1912 study Romiett Stevens observed: “an unusual lesson because twenty-five of the thirty-four questions were asked by the pupils... **The result was that the lesson developed an impetus born of real interest.** I mention it because this lesson was unique in the series of one hundred.”

The question as a measure of efficiency in instruction: A critical study of classroom practice. *Columbia University Contributions to Education, No. 48*

To the Norm

More than 1 million classrooms worldwide



**What happens when students do learn
to ask their own questions?**



Research Confirms the Importance of Questioning

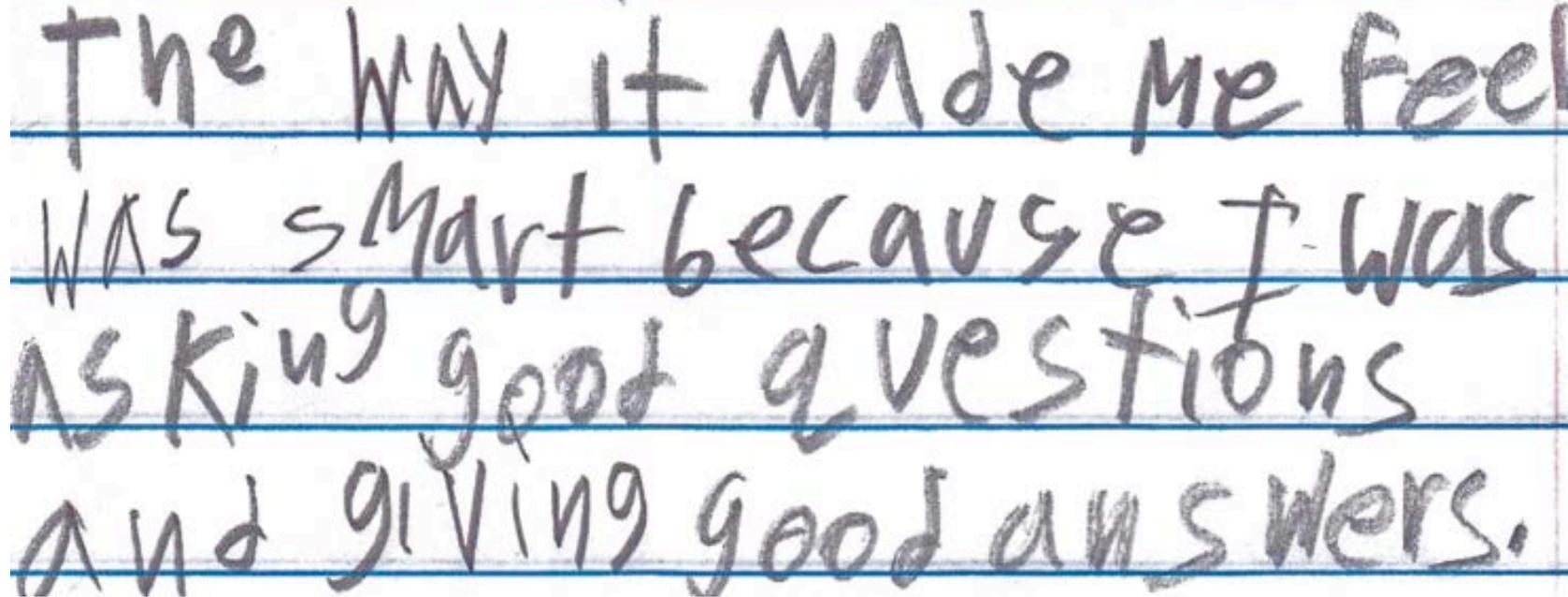
Self-questioning (metacognitive strategy):

- Student formulation of their own questions is one of the most effective metacognitive strategies
- Engaging in pre-lesson self-questioning improved students rate of learning by nearly 50% (Hattie, p.193)

John Hattie

*Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800
meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement, 2008*

Student Reflection



The way it made me feel
was smart because I was
asking good questions
and giving good answers.

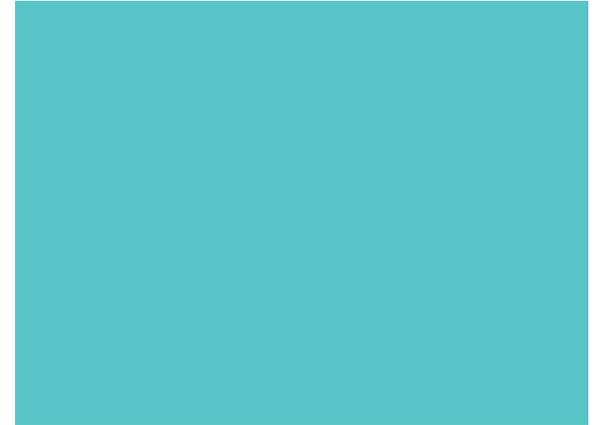
“The way it made me feel was smart because I was asking good questions and giving good answers.”

-Boston 9th grade summer school student

Student Reflection

“The QFT 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.”

- **Student**, Brandeis University



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Collaborative Primary Source Learning with the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT)

Individuals learn to:

- **Produce** their own questions
- **Improve** their questions
- **Strategize** on how to use their questions
- **Reflect** on what they have learned and how they learned it



Rules for Producing Questions

1. Ask as many questions as you can
2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss
3. Write down every question exactly as stated
4. Change any statements into questions

Produce Questions

1. Ask Questions

2. Follow the Rules

- Ask as many questions as you can.
- Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss.
- Write down every question exactly as it was stated.
- Change any statements into questions.

3. Number the Questions



Question Focus



Some students are not asking questions about primary sources.

→ Ask questions. Number the questions. Follow the rules.

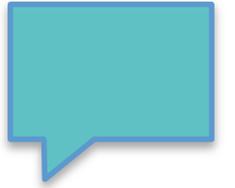


Categorize Questions: Closed/Open

Definitions:

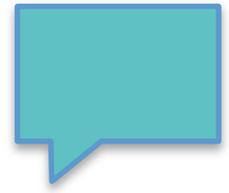
- **Closed-ended** questions can be answered with a “yes” or “no” or with a **one-word** answer.
 - **Open-ended** questions require more **explanation**.
- 

Directions: Identify your questions as closed-ended or open-ended by **marking them** with a “**C**” or an “**O.**”



Closed-ended Questions

Advantages



Discuss

Open-ended Questions

Advantages

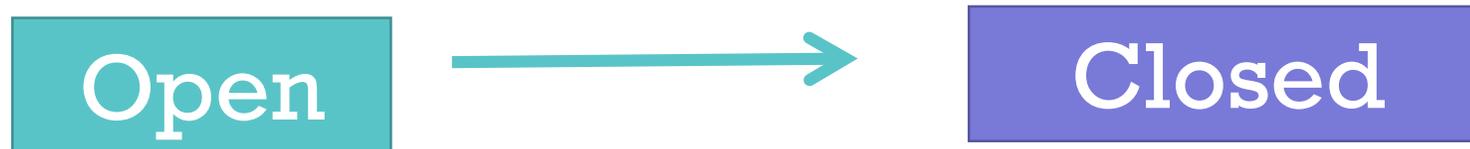
Improve Questions



- Take one **closed-ended question** and change it into an **open-ended question**.



- Take one **open-ended question** and change it into a **closed-ended question**.





Prioritize Questions



Review your list of questions

- Choose three questions that you are most curious to discuss and think about further.
- While prioritizing, think about your Question Focus, *Some students are not asking questions about primary sources.*
- Then, think about why you chose those questions.

After prioritizing, use the chat box to share ONE of your priority questions.



Action Plan



Moving from priority questions into action steps.

In order to answer your priority questions:

- What do you need to *know*? **Information**
- What do you need to *do*? **Tasks**

Write down a couple ideas you have.

Share



Using the Chat Box, please share:

1. One idea you had from your action plan
- and -
2. The numbers of your three priority questions in your original sequence (For ex: “2, 4, 7 out of 8 total”)

Reflect



- What did you learn?
- How did you learn it?

After reflecting, use the chat box to share your response to ONE of the questions above.

A Look Inside the Process



The QFT, on one slide...

1) Question Focus

2) **Produce** Your Questions

- ✓ Follow the rules
- ✓ Number your questions

3) **Improve** Your Questions

- ✓ Categorize questions as Closed or Open-ended
- ✓ Change questions from one type to another

4) **Strategize**

- ✓ Prioritize your questions
- ✓ Action plan or discuss next steps
- ✓ Share

5) **Reflect**

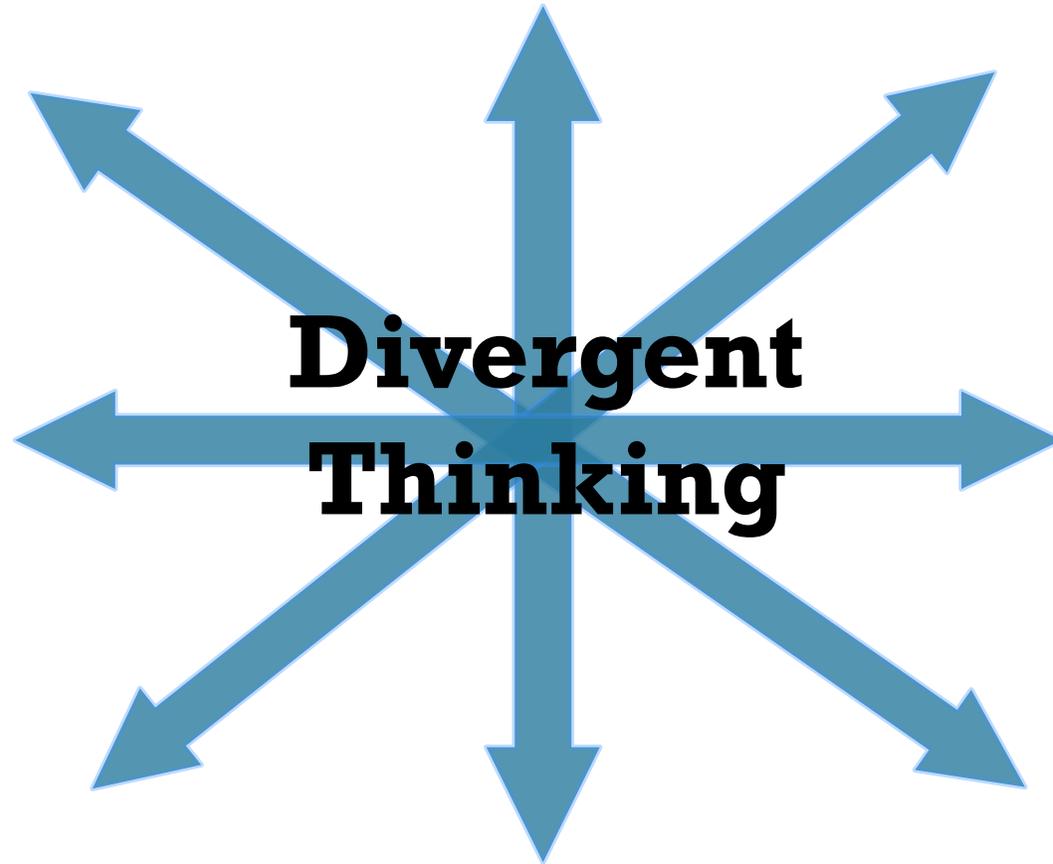
1. Ask as many questions as you can
2. Do not stop to discuss, judge or answer
3. Record *exactly* as stated
4. Change statements into questions

Closed-Ended:
Answered with “yes,” “no”
or one word

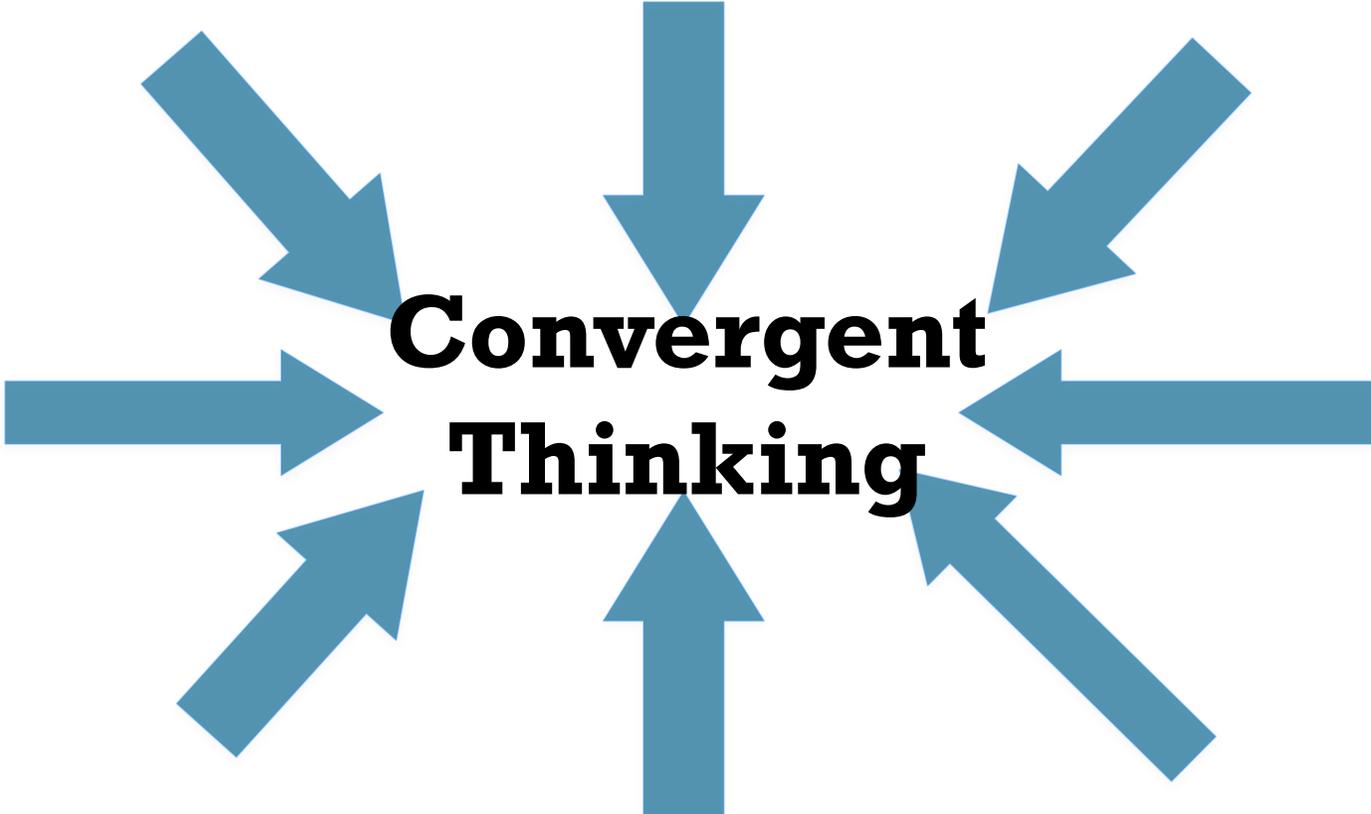
Open-Ended: Require
longer explanation

**Three thinking abilities
with one process**

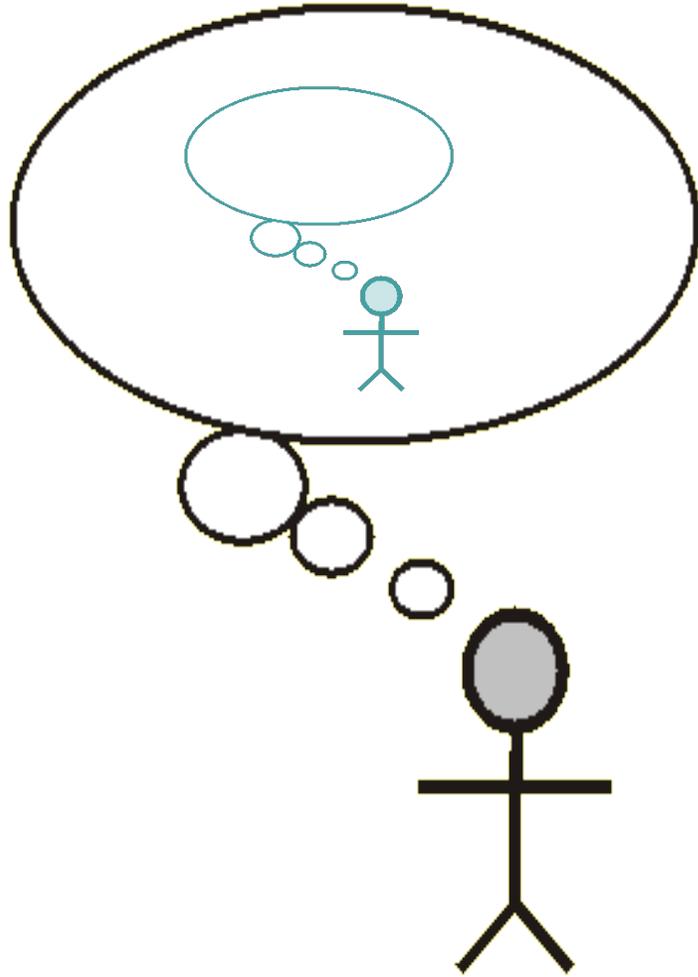
Thinking in many different directions



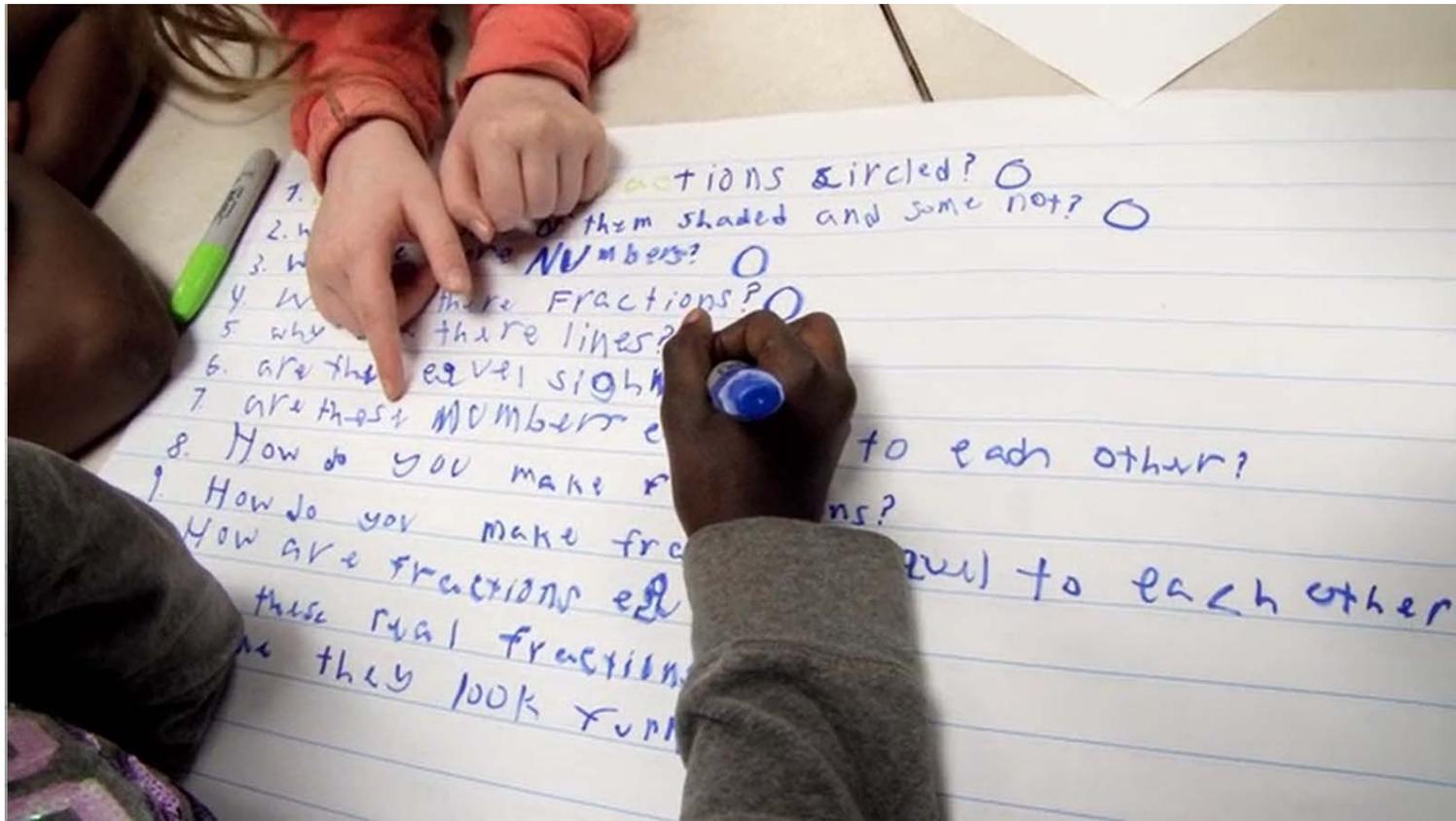
Narrowing Down, Focusing



Thinking about Thinking



Metacognition



+

Exploring Classroom Examples

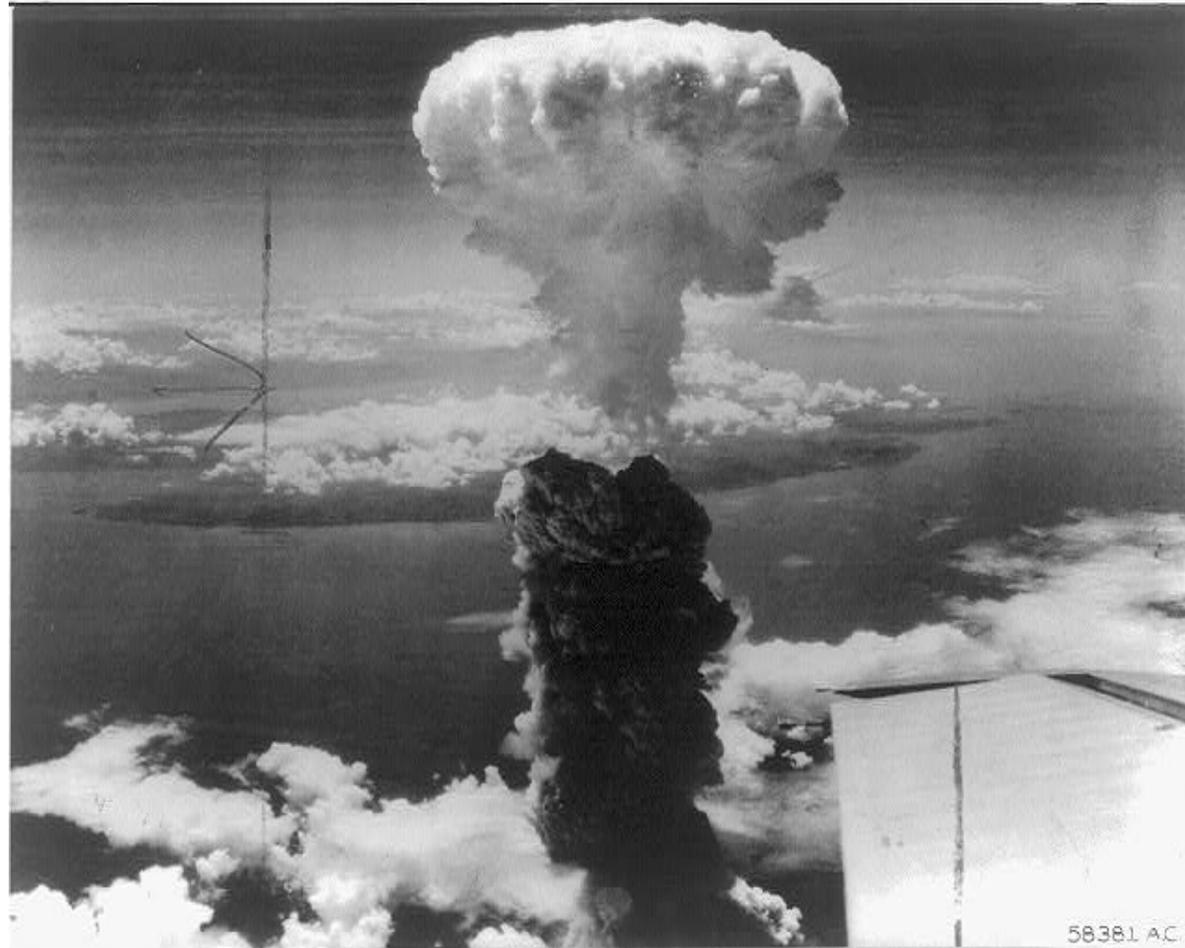
Classroom Example: High School

Teacher: Kelly Grotrian, East Brunswick, NJ

Topic: 11th Grade U.S. History

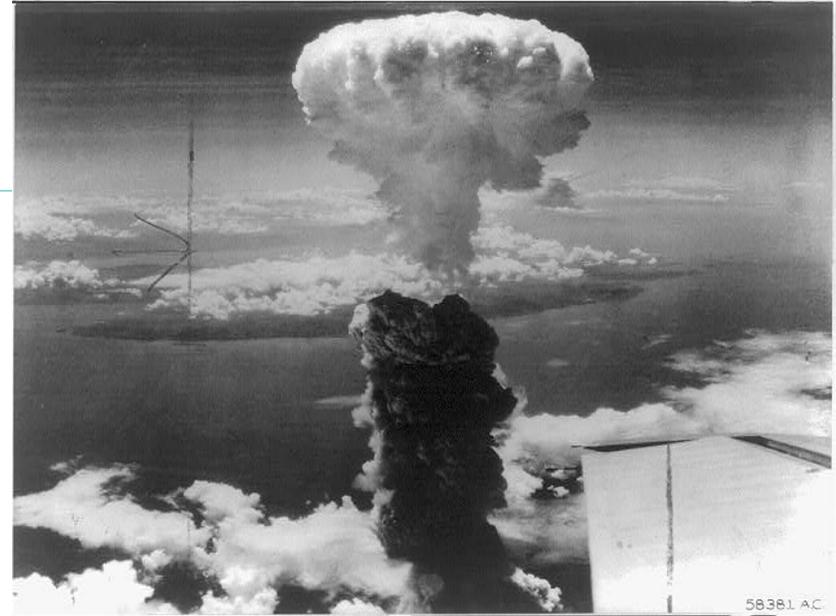
Purpose: To conclude a unit on World War II and lead into an informed debate about US use of atomic weapons

Question Focus



Student Questions

1. What is this?
2. Who did this?
3. How did this affect people?
4. **What were the environmental & economic implications of dropping the bomb?**
5. How many people were hurt?
6. **Is that a plane wing in the bottom right?**
7. Did the people in that plane drop the bomb?
8. Did the people dropping the bomb know what they were doing?
9. Did they make the bomb?
10. **Who was responsible for dropping the bomb?**
11. **What led to this event?**



12. **What happened as a result of dropping the bomb?**
13. Where was the bomb dropped?
14. Had people been given warning?
15. How long did it take to notice effects of the bomb?
16. When did this happen (at what point in the war)?
17. **How many lives were lost as a result?**

Next Steps:

- **Students chose priority questions to respond to in a homework assignment that night**
- **Homework and subsequent lessons lead into a debate about whether the United States was justified in dropping the atomic bomb**

Virtual Classroom Example: 4th Grade Social Studies

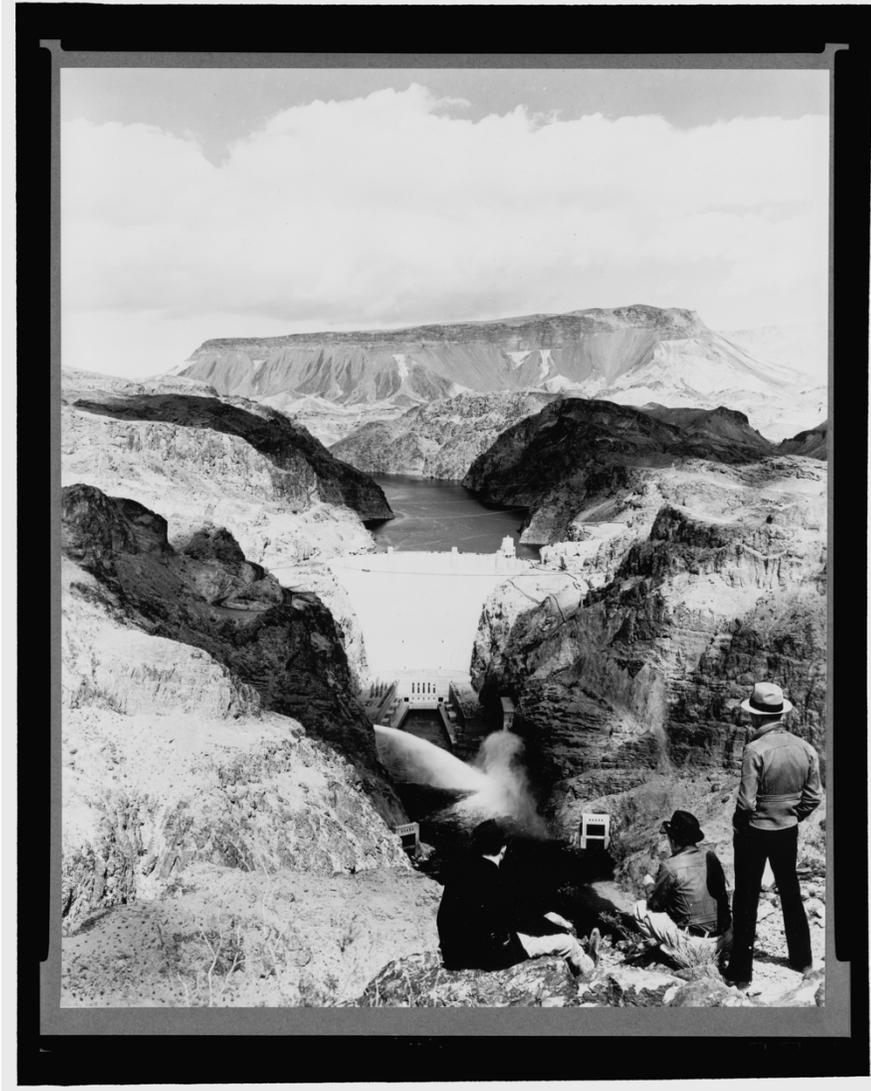
Teacher: Alyssa Park, Gardnerville, NV

Topic: The Hoover Dam

Purpose: To analyze a primary source and launch a mini-inquiry – using Google Forms!



Question Focus



Library of Congress:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b07810/>

Question Focus...using Prezi!

What do you see?

Look at the whole picture.

Look at the zoomed in pictures.

Write down your observations.



Zoom In 1

Zoom In 2

Zoom In 3

Zoom In 4

Library of Congress:

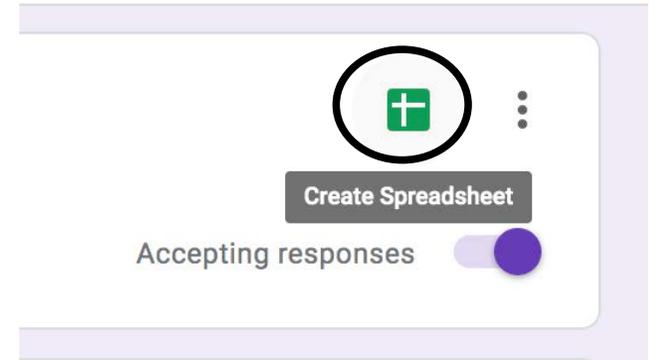
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b07810/>

Student Questions

1. Where is this?
2. Why is there a river?
3. Is it a desert?
4. Is it near the grand canyon?
5. When was this picture taken?
6. How did they take the picture?
7. Was it in the 1900's?
8. Where does the road lead to?
9. What is the road called?
10. Is the sculpture (or whatever it is) in the middle of the road a rock?
11. Where is the building located?
12. Do people live in that building?
13. Is it a work place?
14. Is there water at the bottom of the building?
15. Is the road from the last picture lead to the building?
16. How did they build that building?
17. How do people get to the top to the bottom?
18. Is the water falling from the rocks a waterfall?
19. Can people visit the building?
20. How does the water get there?

Student Questions...using Google Forms!

Students entered their questions in a google form, which populated a google sheet they could use to categorize their questions as open and closed.



QFT

Remember the rules:

1. Ask as many questions as you can.
2. Don't stop to judge, evaluate, or answer any question.
3. Write down each question exactly as it is stated.
4. Change any statement into a question.

Get your family involved- invite them to come ask questions with you!

Your email address (apark@dcsd.k12.nv.us) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not you? [Switch account](#)

* Required

Link to Q-Focus:
<https://prezi.com/view/7llazUJdwVWZvmN03jEa/>

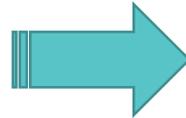
The pictures in the slideshow are what I want you to ask questions about.

It might be helpful to write down some observations (things you notice) BEFORE you ask questions.

Remember to click through the slideshow- you can go back and forth as much as you need to.

Use specific language/words when you can.

WRITE DOWN ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS ON A PAPER FIRST!



Mark each question "C" for closed or "O" for open. If you can't decide, mark it "C/O".

Make sure that you do your work in YOUR column only.

	QUESTIONS	KAISON	ROBERTA	MATTHEW	KA
1	Will the river be named?				
2	I wonder if that's in NV (Nevada)?				
3	Was this picture taken years ago?				
4	Is the building still there?				
5	What is this place like today?				
6	When would the dam be put into commission?				
7	How did those people get there?				
8	What if the wall breaks?				
9	Why is the road windy?				
10	What if they slip and fall?				
11	When was the dam built?				
12	How can people take pictures?				
13	How might the dam effect the geography around the river?				
14	Is that a building on the mountain?				
15	How did they take the picture?				

Next Steps

Days 1-3

Ask & Improve Questions

Using google forms and google sheets

Day 4

Gather Basic Information

Students picked 3 closed-ended questions to answer
Read from a collection of 4th grade, Hoover Dam books on [Epic!](#)
Shared answers in a collaborative google slide deck

Day 5

Prioritize Questions (Again!)

Pick from the whole class list: 3 questions you would need to answer to write a historical fiction story on the Hoover Dam.

Days 6 & 7

Further Research

They will spend time looking through a “playlist” of resources categorized by the major themes – how dams work, life during the great depression, etc. and answer their second set of priority questions.

Virtual Professional Learning Example

- Topic: Japanese American Internment primary sources
- Purpose: A live webinar introducing educators to using the QFT with primary sources during distance learning using Padlet.



Question Focus



Lange, Dorothea. (1942) Oakland, CA, Mar. 1942.

A large sign reading "I am an American" placed in the window of a store on December 8, the day after Pearl Harbor. The store was closed following orders to persons of Japanese descent to evacuate from certain West Coast areas.

[Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a24566/>.

Selected Questions

- Are there other images that Lange took in Oakland on that day?
- Did Dorothea Lange happen upon this site or was she prompted to go there and take the photo?
- How did photography change or influence public opinion about Japanese Americans?
- Why do they need to claim they are American?
- What makes someone American?
- Has anything changed in our reactions to “foreigners” or has it just shifted slightly?
- Does “Americanness” need to be performed in some way to be valid?
- What happened to the store owner after this photo was taken?
- Who is the “I?”
- How significant is the car?
- What message is the store owner trying to relay to the community by posting the sign?
- How did other business owners in the area react to this action?
- What may the shop owner fear if it prompted them to hang that sign in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor?
- Did the owners already experience some negative reactions, or was this in anticipation?
- Was it done out of patriotism or fear?
- Did all Japanese Americans relocate? What were the consequences of resistance?

What do I do with the questions students produce?

- Students can look for answers to their priority questions (and generate new questions) through researching Library of Congress collections of Japanese American Internment primary sources:
 - <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/internment/> A primary source set on Japanese American internment with teacher's guide
 - Women Come To the Front - Dorothea Lange: <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/wcf/wcf0013.html>
 - <https://blogs.loc.gov/picturethis/2015/02/day-of-remembrance-photographs-of-japanese-american-internment-during-world-war-ii/> blog post that links resources throughout Library collections
- Lead students through primary source analysis using the TPS “Observe – Reflect – Wonder” tool, starting with their priority questions. Then, see what questions remain, or what new ones have been generated.

LIBRARY **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



Make Your Own Padlet

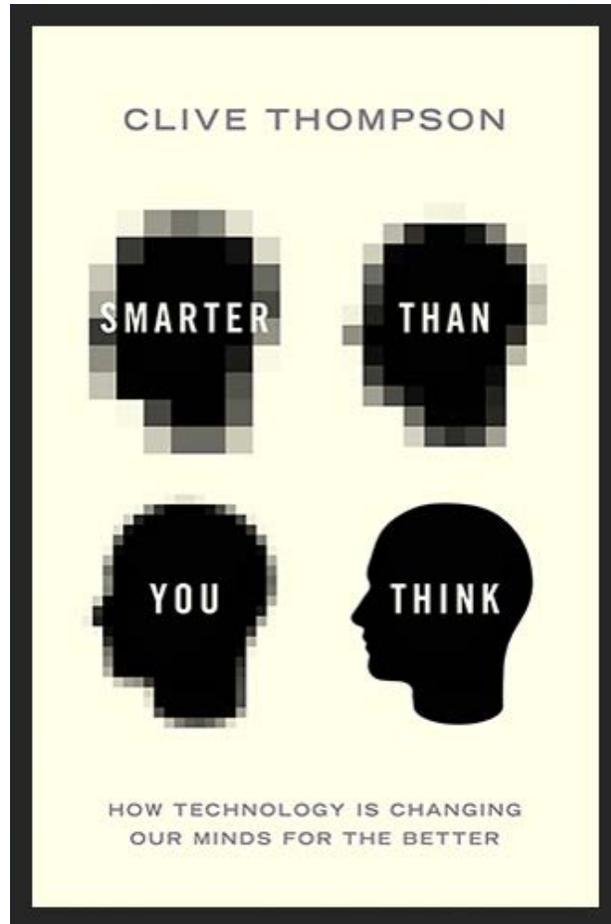


Access the QFT Padlet Template Here:
<https://padlet.com/sarahwestbrook1/QFT2>

Access a quick guide to using Padlet:
<https://rightquestion.org/remote-learning-resources/>

**Why is the skill of question formulation
so important now?**

In the Age of Google



“How should you respond when you get powerful new tools for finding answers?

Think of harder questions.”

– Clive Thompson

Journalist and Technology Blogger

Questions and Democracy



“We need to be taught to study rather than to believe, to **inquire** rather than to affirm.”

– Septima Clark



What are your questions for us?

Before You Go

Please take our survey

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2020_LOC_Webinar

Certificates for Live Participation Only

Email kmcg@loc.gov

Thank you! Enjoy!



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Access today's materials (and more!): <http://rightquestion.org/events/>