

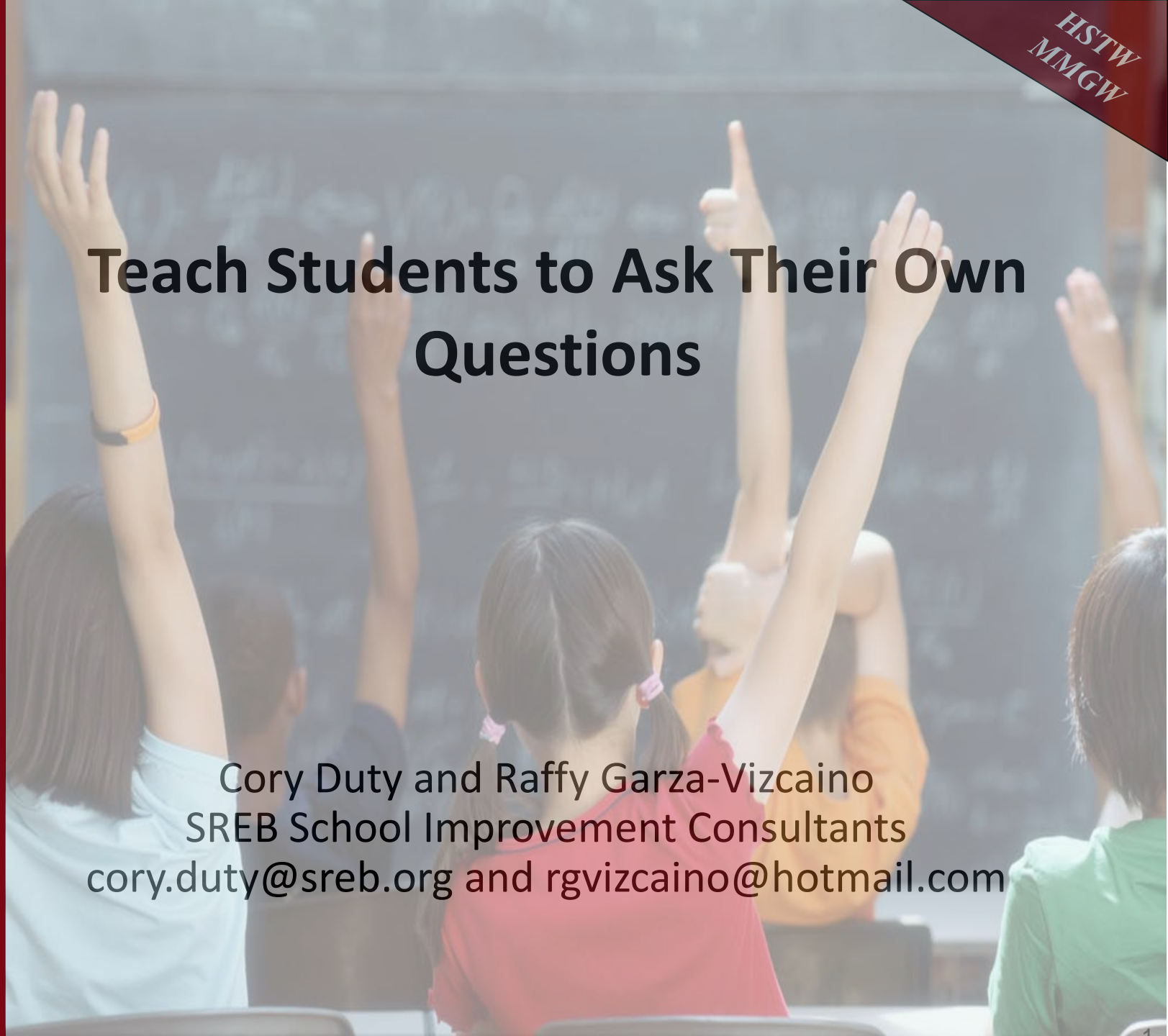


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Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions

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INTRODUCING THE QFT™

TEACHING YOUR STUDENTS TO USE THE QUESTION
FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™

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Components of the Question Formulation Technique

1. The Question Focus (Q-Focus)
2. Students Review the Rules for Producing Questions
3. Students Produce Questions
4. Students Improve Questions
5. Students Prioritize Questions
6. Next Steps
7. Reflection



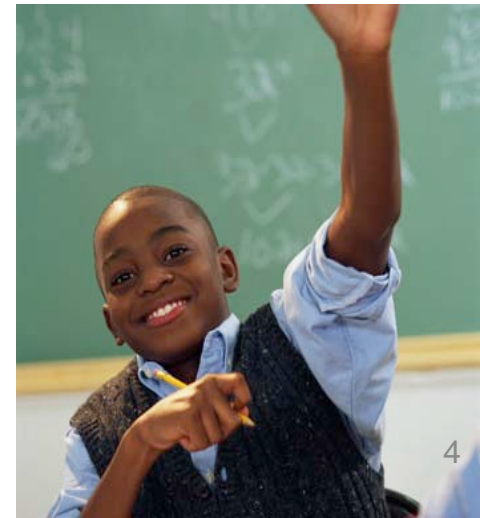
The Question Focus

A simple statement, a visual or aural aid; anything to help students generate questions.

Created from *curriculum content*

The goal of the Q-Focus is to accomplish one or more of the following:

- **Generate Interest**
- **Stimulate New Thinking**
- **Introduce a Topic**
- **Deepen Comprehension**
- **Assess Prior Knowledge**



Question Focus Tips

The Q-Focus should be:

- **Clear, brief and sharply focused.**
- **Does not reveal teacher preferences or bias.**
- **It is not a question.**
- **Provokes or stimulates new lines of thinking.**

Q-FOCUS EXAMPLES

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- A seventh grade history used this Q-focus :
Accomplishments of the ancient Egyptians
- A high school Science teacher used “**The Scientific Method**” as a focus for student questions.

THE Q-FOCUS

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You will need to come-up with a Q-Focus every time you use the QFT.

Tip: Introduce the QFT process to your students by using a simple QFocus.

RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

- **Ask as many questions as you can**
- **Do not stop to answer, judge or to discuss the questions**
- **Write down each and every question *exactly* as it is stated**
- **Change any statements into questions**

Students review and discuss the challenges or value of following the rules.

RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

HSTW
MEMGW

- Divide students into small groups of 3 - 5.
- Ask groups to identify a note-taker.
- Let students know you will be giving them a focus for asking questions but that before doing that, there are some rules to review.
- Distribute or post the **Rules for Producing Questions**

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RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

HSTW
MEMGW

- Ask students to review the rules.
- Ask students to reflect about one of these questions:

What do you think would be difficult about following these rules?

Or

Which one of these rules might be difficult to follow? Why?

Tip: Do not skip over the discussion of the rules the first time you introduce students to the QFT.

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PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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Once students have discussed the Rules for Producing Questions:

- Distribute **paper** to each small group
- Introduce the Q-Focus and ask students to generate questions following the rules.

PRODUCING QUESTIONS

Ask students to:

- **Produce as many questions as they can in allotted time**
- **Follow the Rules for Producing Questions**
- **Number the questions**

Tip: The note-taker should also contribute questions.

CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

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Define closed and open-ended questions:

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

CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

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Ask students to look over the list:

- **Step 1**
 - Mark the questions that are **closed-ended** with a “**C**”
 - Mark the questions that are **open-ended** with a “**O**”

CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS

- **Step 2**
**Ask students to name
advantages of closed-ended
questions**

**Then,
disadvantages of closed-ended
questions**

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- **Step 2 Cont.**

**Ask students to name:
advantages of open-ended
questions**

**Then,
disadvantages of open-ended
questions**

CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

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- **Step 3**

Students **practice changing** questions from one type to another.

- “Choose one closed-ended question from your list and change it into an open-ended one.”
- “Choose one open-ended question from your list and change it into an closed-ended one.”

Tip: If students have questions from only one type, for example they only have open-ended questions – ask them to change two of their questions to closed-ended.

PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

- Ask students to review their list of questions and choose what they consider the **three** most important questions. Mark them with an “**X**”
- Remind students to keep the Q-Focus in mind while prioritizing.

PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

- ***Criteria** for prioritizing is usually set by the teacher. Criteria will depend on what you have planned as next steps with the questions. Here are a few alternative examples:
 - Three question *that most interest you.*
 - ...*that will best help you design your research project.*
 - ...*you want/need to answer first.*

PRIORITIZING QUESTIONS

Ask students to think about their rationale for choosing the priority questions and explain their thinking.

“Why did you choose these 3 as the most important?”

GROUPS REPORT OUT

Ask students to share aloud:

1. The question you changed from closed to open-ended

- *Read the original question*
- *Read the new question*

2. The 3 priority questions

3. Their reasons for choosing the priority questions.

Tip: Students can assign a group member to report or collaborate in reporting.

NEXT STEPS

You can ask student to use their questions for the following:

- Homework Assignment
 - Final Reports
 - Independent Projects
 - Research Papers
 - Group Projects
 - Assessments
-
- You could also ask students to decide how they will use their questions.

REFLECTION

Ask students to think about one or more of these questions ***and*** ask one question at a time.

- **What did you learn?**
- **What is the value of learning to ask your own questions?**
- **How can you use what you learned?**

Let's Review

- **Produce your own questions following these 4 rules:**
 - **Ask as many questions as you can**
 - **Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions**
 - **Write down every question as it is stated**
 - **Change any statement into a question**

Choose one of these Q-focus and work with a partner

- Torture can be justified
- Pollution harms Boston residents
- The structure of fractions
- Your rights are protected by the Constitution
- The inside of a cell
- Math anxiety
- The choices we make

Improve your Questions

- Categorize the questions as closed- or open-ended
- Closed-ended questions: Can be answered with yes or no or with one word
- Open-ended questions: Require an explanation and cannot be answered with yes or no or with one word
- Find closed-ended questions and mark w/ a C
- The other questions must be open-ended, mark w/ an O

Prioritize the Questions

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- **Choose the 3 most important questions:**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- **Why did you choose these as the most important**

Choose the Question Focus

Key Points:

- The design of an effective Q-Focus is similar to the work you do to design an effective prompt
- The Q-Focus should be designed to stimulate student questions
- The design of the Q-focus depends on your purpose and where it falls in your unit or lesson
- Generate as many Q-focus ideas as possible as part of the process of developing an effective focus to stimulate students questions-

Thanks for Coming to Our Session!

More QFT resources can be found at
www.rightquestion.org

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