

**Learning Forward
Webinar
February 4, 2016**

**Engaging Students with Their Own
Questions**

RYAN CHAMPEAU, PHD



***INTRODUCING THE QUESTION
FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™ (QFT™) INTO
YOUR PRACTICE***



WWW.RIGHTQUESTION.ORG

WELCOME!

We will explore the QFT in brief. but with enough detail to apply it immediately: Results for today....

- Experience the QFT
- Understand the power of the student questions
- Adapt application of QFT to your practice


*It is better to know
some of the questions
than all of the answers.*
James Thurber
1894 - 1961, American
humorist

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF OUR SESSION TODAY?

Great learning results begin with great student questions: Goal of Session is to acquaint everyone with the rationale and the process of using students' questions for learning.

(For the classroom and for our practice)

What are the possible instructional situations when you would want students to ask questions?

- Research projects
 - Professional Development
 - Field experiences
 - Projects
 - Individual and teams
 - Others....
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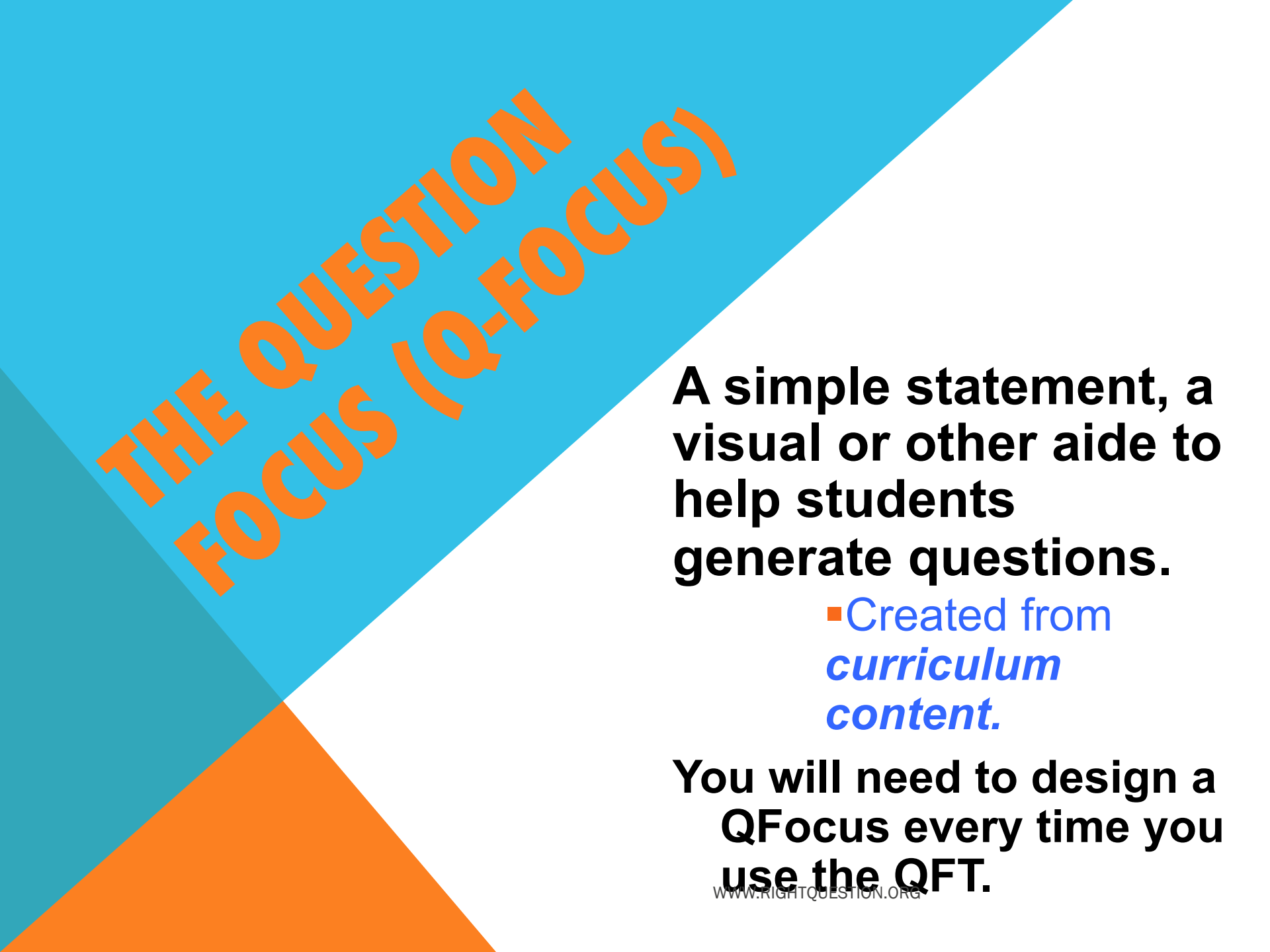
“Just when you think you know all that you need to know, you ask another question and discover how much more there is to learn.”

– Sixth grade student, J.L. Stanford Middle School, Palo Alto, CA



THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™

- 1. The Question Focus (QFocus)**
- 2. The Rules for Producing Questions**
- 3. Producing Questions**
- 4. Categorizing Questions**
- 5. Prioritizing Questions**
- 6. Next Steps**
- 7. Reflection**



THE QUESTION FOCUS (Q-FOCUS)

A simple statement, a visual or other aide to help students generate questions.

- Created from *curriculum content.*

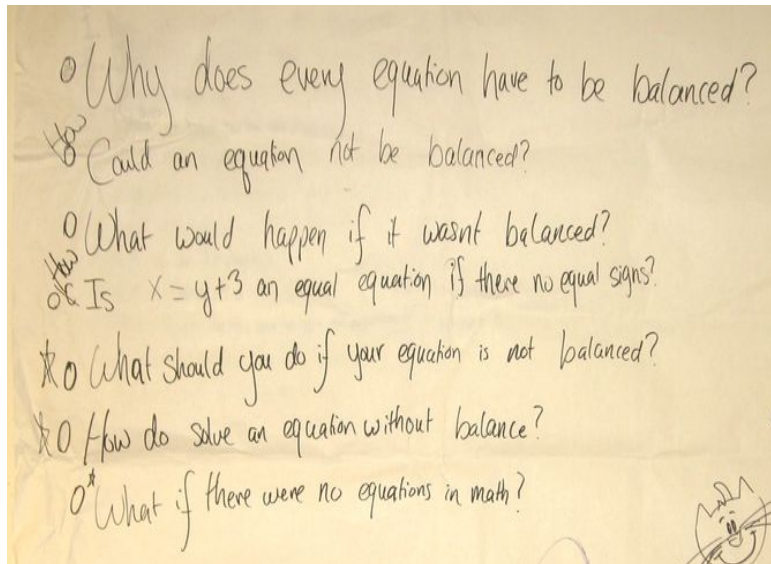
You will need to design a QFocus every time you use the QFT.

LET'S GIVE THE QFT A TRY!

*Think of a statement or a
visual as your Q-Focus*

What is your Qfocus?

QFOCUS: EQUATION = BALANCE



Why does every equation have to be balanced?

(How) Could an equation not be balanced?

What would happen if it wasn't balanced?

(How) Is $X=Y+3$ an equal equation if there no equal signs?

What should you do if your equation is not balanced?

How do you solve an equation without balance?

What if there were no equations in math?

Elementary Example

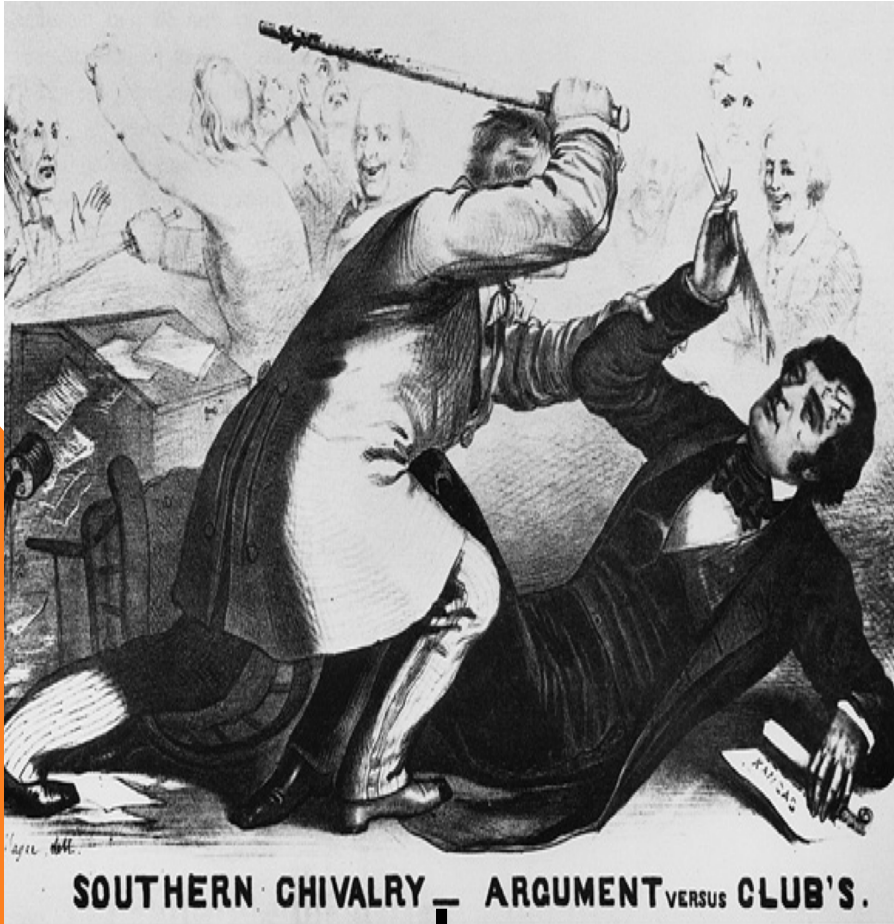
QFocus



- Why don't they have bones?
- Why are some white and some brown?
- Do they reproduce?
- What are the rings on them?
- What is their habitat?
- What is their texture?
- Do they poop?
- What animal is that?
- How do they move?
- What do they eat?

Secondary Example

QFocus:



- Why are they fighting? ○
- Are they fighting? C
- Are they part of the government?
- Where were they?
- What started the fight?
- Who are they?
- Were they signing anything?
- Who else was there?
- Why are you hitting him?
- Why didn't cal 911?
- Was this related to slavery?
- Why are you take a pen?
- Were they in court? C
- Why are they in court? ○
- Who hit who first?
- Why is he hitting him with a bat?
- Who died?
- Why they smiling?

RULES FOR PRODUCING QUESTIONS

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

What might be difficult about following these rules?

PRODUCING THE QUESTIONS

QFocus:

1. Follow the Rules for Producing Questions.
2. Number your questions.

IMPROVING THE QUESTIONS

You might have these two kinds of questions in your list:

- **Closed-ended questions** – they can be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.
- **Open-ended questions** – they require an explanation and cannot be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.

IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

2. Name advantages of asking **closed-ended** questions.

IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

3. Name disadvantages of asking **closed-ended** questions.

IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

4. Name a few advantages of asking **open-ended** questions.

IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

5. Name a few disadvantages of asking **open-ended** questions.

IMPROVE YOUR QUESTIONS

6. Review your list of questions and change one closed-ended question into an open-ended.

Then, change one open-ended question into a closed-ended one.

PRIORITIZE YOUR QUESTIONS

Choose the three most important questions from your list.

Keep in mind the QFocus.

Mark each priority question with an “**X**”

SHARE YOUR QUESTIONS

Please share:

- The questions you changed from closed to open-ended and from open-ended to closed. Read each question as originally written and how it was changed
- your three priority questions
- your rationale for selecting those three
- the numbers of your priority questions

USING STUDENT QUESTIONS IN OUR WORK

Students can use their questions for many purposes, Here are a few examples:

- Conduct Research
- Self Introspection
- Reports
- Conduct Experiments
- Independent Projects
- Write Papers/Essays
- Group and Individual Projects
- Socratic Seminars/Debates
- Prepare for Presentations/Interviews

TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGY

EQUIPPING CITIZENS WITH SKILLS FOR MICRODEMOCRACY

Building an individual's agency to advocate for themselves

Builds student agency!

Captures natural learning




WHAT IS THE QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE™?

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) is a simple, but rigorous, step-by-step process designed to help students produce, improve and strategize on how to use their questions. This same process has wide application beyond the classroom.

The QFT allows individuals to practice three thinking abilities in one process: **divergent**, **convergent** and **metacognitive** thinking.

RIGHT QUESTION STRATEGY

The Right Question Strategy teaches two foundational skills:

1. How to formulate questions (taught via our Question Formulation Technique™)
 2. How to focus on decisions and use specific criteria for accountable decision-making
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HOW DO WE USE QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING?

How do you use questions in your current practice?

The QFT can help improve the use of questions.

THANK YOU!

MORE RESOURCES

<http://rightquestion.org/>

Contact Information

Ryan Champeau@aol.com

262-391-9810

