

TABLE 1.1

The Right Question Institute's Question Formulation Technique

	<i>Teacher role</i>	<i>Student role</i>	<i>Student thinking abilities</i>
The Question Focus	Set goals for use of the QFT and develop a QFocus.	N/A	N/A
Rules for Producing Questions	Introduce Rules for Producing Questions; facilitate discussions.	Discuss challenges in using the Rules for Producing Questions.	Metacognitive: Think and hear from each other about the challenge of "thinking in questions."
Categorizing open- and closed-ended questions	Give instructions to start process; monitor and support student use of the Rules for Producing Questions.	Work in small groups to ask questions related to the QFocus.	Divergent: Produce their own questions by following the Rules for Producing Questions.
Improving the questions	Facilitate discussion about open- and closed-ended questions.	Discuss advantages and disadvantages of open- and closed-ended questions; practice changing questions from one type to another.	Metacognitive: Think about purpose and use of different kinds of questions for securing information. Convergent: Practice changing questions to sharpen scope of inquiry.
Prioritizing the questions	Provide instructions on how to prioritize the questions. Monitor and support student prioritization.	Discuss, compare, assess, and prioritize questions. Select three priority questions and explain choices.	Convergent: Analyze, compare, and assess all questions and select three as focus for next steps.
Next steps	Provide direction for using the questions.	Use the questions for purposes set by the teacher.	Convergent: Use the questions for specific purposes and learning goals.
Reflection	Facilitate the reflection process.	Discuss what was learned, how it was learned, and what they now know or feel differently about.	Metacognitive and convergent: Thinking about the thinking and learning process and about where they are now compared with where they were when they began.

TABLE 2.1

Steps for designing a QFocus

1. Define the purpose	<p>What do you want to accomplish by using the QFocus? Keep your teaching goals and learning outcomes in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate interest. • Stimulate new thinking. • Deepen comprehension. • Gather information about student understanding.
2. Generate possible ideas	<p>List several ideas for possible QFocus. Keep in mind your purpose and what students will be doing with the questions. List all kinds of ideas in different formats: statements, pictures, etc. Listing a variety of ideas is key for finding an effective focus. Sometimes first idea that comes to mind is not the best to achieve your purpose. Having several ideas will allow you to evaluate and choose one that best meets the criteria and fits your purpose.</p> <p>Think about several ways to present the same idea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List statements, visual and other strategies. • Look for simple ideas. • Keep statements as brief and simple as possible.
3. Identify pros and cons for each idea	<p>Look at each QFocus idea you have listed and think about what will be the pros and cons. Keep in mind the criteria when identifying pros and cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a clear focus • Is <i>not</i> a question • Provokes and stimulates new lines of thinking • Does not show teacher preference or bias <p>This part of the process will allow you to do an initial assessment and narrow down the ideas that will help you meet your purpose.</p>
4. Choose one QFocus idea and assess against four criteria	<p>Choose one of the ideas from your list that best meets your purpose and see if it meets the four criteria listed in step 3. If the QFocus doesn't meet the criteria, you can rephrase it or choose and assess another idea. You can easily rephrase it by adding or deleting words. If it meets the criteria, go to the next step of design.</p>
5. Imagine questions students may come up with	<p>You now have a QFocus that can fit your purpose. As a last step think about possible questions your students might ask. The purpose of this step is to try to assess the potential of the focus in helping students produce questions and the direction the questions might go. You will not be using these questions.</p>

Other Helpful Tips to Use During the Prioritization Process

As students are engaged in a full-throttle discussion about which questions to make their priority ones, they may revert to familiar student behavior and call you over to answer a question, clarify or simply to settle the matter with a voice of authority. It's

TABLE 6.1

Tips for prioritizing questions

<i>Students may . . .</i>	<i>Teacher's role</i>
At first, focus on trying to figure out what the teacher wants, and may try to directly draw the teacher into the prioritization process.	Refrain from being pulled into their prioritization discussion or engaging in a back and forth with students.
Ask teacher about how to choose	Respond to any questions with a reminder to the class as a whole about the criteria the teacher set for selecting the priority questions.
Want teachers to give their opinions, to weigh in and clarify "Is this what you mean by a priority question?" or "What is an example of a question we should choose?"	Do not judge, positively or negatively, any questions being considered by the students as priority questions as they are discussing them.
Want models of a priority question	<i>Do not</i> model a prioritization process or give suggestions about possible priority questions. Modeling will push students to prioritizing questions in the same direction as your example.
Want confirmation that they are on right track	Do not respond positively or negatively to student questions. Teachers should withhold judgment.
Have too few questions	Just make sure students have enough questions to complete this step. Students should have a minimum of five to six questions in their list in order to prioritize.
Be unable to agree on which three questions	As a last resort change the strategy and instruct students to choose three questions individually or for each student to choose her/his most important question.
Want to choose more than three questions	Encourage students to choose three. It is not a big problem if they choose four questions. They just have to explain why they could not let go of the fourth question.