

Questioning Strategy

IDEAS to Use in the Classroom

Model Your Own – Let students know that all readers-even adults-have questions. The next time you do a read-aloud, pay close attention to the questions that surface and share those questions with your kids. As you model make clear the distinction between reading aloud and thinking aloud.

Pair and Compare – In small groups or pairs have students share and compare questions. Encourage them to list new questions generated by these discussions.

Categorize Questions - teach students to categorize questions into the type of question they are asking:

1. Questions that are answered in the text - A
2. Questions that are answered from background knowledge – BK
3. Questions whose answers can be inferred from the text – I
4. Questions that can be answered by further discussion – D
5. Questions that require further research to be answered – RS
6. Questions that signal confusion – Huh? or C

Question Web – These webs are similar to other semantic webs, however a question web differs in that it has a question at its center. The lines that emanate from the center are used to add information that relates in some way to the question, with the ultimate goal of building an answer from all the various bits of information.

Sincere Questions vs. Assessment Questions – We need a balance of the 2 types of questions. Allow more time for students and teachers to ask and explore sincere questions.

Assessment questions are:

- Questions we know the answer to
- Questions we ask in order to check or monitor our students

Sincere questions are:

- Questions we don't know the answers to
- Questions we ponder and wonder about
- Questions that require further research by teacher and students

Using Questions With Poetry – Unlocking a poem’s meaning through questions leads to inferential thinking. The questions serve as prompts to the interpretation of the poem and the inferences about its meaning. There are no absolute answers when interpreting poetry. Langston Hughes’s poem “Dreams” is a good example of a poem to interpret through the use of questions.

Thick and Thin Questions – Thick questions are those that address large, universal concepts and often begin with Why? How Come? I wonder? Or they address large content areas, such as What is photosynthesis?

Thin questions are those primarily asked to clarify confusion, understand words, or access objective content. Questions that can be answered with a number or with a simple yes or no fit into this category. In the content areas particularly, these question categories, which separate broad concepts from smaller issues of clarification, seem to guide students down the path to further insight.

Research Topics from Questions – The easiest way to guide students to focus research topics and pare them down is through their questions. Three organizational forms that can be used to record questions for possible research topics are:

1. I wonder..... booklet - Is a wide range of topics that the student might wonder about. These questions can help narrow a broad topic.
2. Questions/Facts – Is a two-column format with questions on the left side of the paper and answers recorded on the right.
3. Webbing or Mapping – Graphic organizers that record the questions and answers as they are discovered.

Sticky Note Codes – Use sticky notes to mark places of confusion in a text. Students write Huh? on the top half of the sticky note, leaving the bottom half blank. As the student continues reading or rereading to clarify meaning or answer a question, they often clear up their confusion or find the answer in the text. At this point they return to the original sticky note and sketch a lightbulb on the bottom half of the sticky note. This technique supports their effort to monitor their own comprehension as they move toward independence.