**Question Formulation Technique (QFT)**

**Rothstein, D. & Santana, L. (2011).**

**What is it?**

QFT is a step-by-step process that helps students learn how to produce their own questions, improve them, and strategize on how to use them. Using the QFT requires that students ask all the questions. The teacher’s role is simply to facilitate that process. QFT can be used to introduce students to a new unit, to assess students’ knowledge to see what they need to understand better, and even to conclude a unit to see how students can, with new knowledge, set a fresh learning agenda for themselves. The technique can be used for all ages.

**What is the purpose?**

It provides a deliberate way to help students cultivate a skill that is fundamentally important for all learning. Teachers tell us that using the QFT consistently increases participation in group and peer learning processes, improves classroom management, and enhances their efforts to address inequities in education.

**How do you do it?**

The QFT has six key steps:

**Step One: Create a prompt**  
The most effective prompts for this activity are statements that are focused clearly enough so that there is a direct link to the purpose of the lesson and are neutral enough so that students feel free to respond to the prompt. Many teachers use prompts that begin with stems such as “Your role/task is to…” or “You want to / A group wants to.” A prompt could also be a description of a class project.

**Step Two: Students generate questions**  
In groups, give students a fixed amount of time (5-10 minutes) to generate a list of questions, adhering to these rules:

1)      Write down the questions exactly as they are said

2)      Do not stop to discuss or answer the questions

3)      Write down as many questions as you can

4)      Statements should be rephrased as questions.

**Step three: Students identify open and closed questions**Ask students to look at their lists and put an “O” by all of the open-ended questions (questions with many possible answers) and a “C” by questions that elicit one answer (a “yes/no” question or a question with a factual answer).  Then, have students change one of their open questions into a closed question and one closed question into an open question.

**Step four: Students prioritize questions**  
Have groups select 3 questions from their list. It could be the three questions they find most interesting or important or the three questions that they think need to be addressed first.

**Step five: Groups share questions**  
When groups present their questions, ask them to share why they selected these three. The questions that the class generates can be used as the focus of a class discussion, a writing assignment, a research project, or as a tool to help you plan future lessons.

**Step six: Reflections**Give students the opportunity to reflect on this process by writing in a journal and/or through a brief discussion.

**How do you learn more?**

<http://www.hepg.org/hel/article/507>

**Rothstein, D. & Santana, L. (2011). Make just one change-teach students to ask their own questions. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press**