The art of asking good questions using the Question Formulation Technique

Glenn Koelling, Adrienne Warner, & Lori Townsend of the University of New Mexico

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01  Warm Up

02  Research as inquiry

03  The QFT

04  Elements of the QFT

05  Variations on the QFT

06  Q&A
Hello!

Slides URL
https://tinyurl.com/ECILQFT
But first . . .

- Your name, institution, & position
- What is something that you are good at doing?
- How did you get good at the thing you are good at doing?
A few questions. . .

- How did you learn to ask questions?
- Are you asked to teach research questions?
- If you teach research questions, how do you approach it?
Research as inquiry
How we often see the Research process

Topic selection, developing research questions, & thesis
Finding sources
Writing/speaking (including formatting & citation)

What’s missing?
Beginnings are hard

It’s a steep start
What’s over that rise?

Curiosity is motivating
But curiosity feels risky

*Why not pick something boring but safe?*
Multiple paths are available

And choosing is hard
Choosing is hard

*When you are just getting started*
It can be circular & recursive

*but you are making progress*
Let's try moving from this Research process

- Topic selection, developing research questions, & thesis
- Finding sources
- Writing/speaking (including formatting & citation)
Inquiry with curiosity & exploration (topic selection, developing research questions, developing thesis)

Learning about (finding, reading, and citing information sources)

Communicating (note-taking, reflecting on and recording process, writing/speaking in genre)
Research is learning
And we rarely learn in a straight line
Support curiosity and inquiry with the QFT

*While mitigating risk*
The Question Formulation Technique
First

- Watch the video.
- Pay attention to anything that sparks your curiosity or raises a question for you.
Write down as many questions as you can, going for quantity over quality. Aim for 10 questions.
Then

- With a partner, sort your questions into **open** and **closed** questions.
- Pick out your top three questions (& prepare to share one).
Review

Closed-ended questions
- Can usually be answered with “yes” or “no”, or
- a short, specific piece of information, or
- a Google search
- Leave little room for your interpretation and analysis.

Open-ended questions
- There may not be a clear consensus on the answer.
- Usually require more investigation of multiple sources, plus your analysis.
- Require lengthier responses.
Then

- With a partner, sort your questions into open and closed questions.
- Pick out your top three questions (& prepare to share one).
Next

- Rewatch the video.
- In pairs, ask even more questions, knowing what you now know
- Prepare to ask one more.
Major elements of the QFT
Major elements of the QFT

Something to ask questions about
A video, a snippet of text, an image, their own topic

Generation of questions
Quantity over quality

Sort into open and close-ended questions
With guidance

Choose the best questions
On their own or with partners
Choose one or two of your questions and add them to this page using the sticky note tool.
Letters from UNM archive
Glenn’s video
“The Yurok tribe is reversing centuries of ecological damage to their land and making it more resilient to climate change by marrying two systems that might seem contradictory: indigenous land management practices and modern Western economics.

In this episode we talk to Yurok Tribe Vice-Chairman Frankie Myers about how the Tribe recovered stolen land with the help of a carbon offset program, the creative ways they're bringing the salmon back, and the role beavers play in the ecosystem.”

**Source:** How to Save a Planet Podcast

https://gimletmedia.com/shows/howtosaveaplanet/5whkp60/the-tribe-thats-moving-earth-and-water
Answering the basics

- **WHO (Population):** Yurok Tribe, indigenous peoples, Native American
- **WHERE (Setting):** reservation, tribal lands, forest, river
- **WHERE (Location):** United States, California, Klamath River
- **WHEN:** Recent
- **WHAT:** land management, carbon offset program, salmon, beavers, forests, fire
Questions for further investigation

- What are the approaches to land management being taken by the Yurok tribe in the Klamath watershed?
- Do these approaches exemplify indigenous land management more broadly?
- How do these approaches differ from Western approaches to land management?
Keywords and searching

- Land management, forestry, land use
- Indigenous, Native American
- Yurok, Klamath
Follow the evidence
Revised questions

- How have indigenous women been involved in traditional forestry and current activism around forestry?

- How can I understand indigenous forestry through indigenous feminism?

- How have these approaches been shown to improve outcomes for both the health of the land/ecosystem and the economics of the tribe?
Revised keywords

- Indigenous, Native American, American Indian
- Ecological knowledge, forestry, forest management
- Women, feminist/m
- Activism
Adrienne’s Adaptation
Extended Workshop
Advanced Undergraduates
What the research question does.
Question Formulation Technique
McNair/ROP Workshop with UNM Librarians

November 2022
Adrienne Warner, adriennew@unm.edu

This activity gives you a chance to apply the library and research skills you’ve learned to your own project. It is also intended to be a technique you can apply to future course assignments in order to transform everyday questions into potential research questions.

**Step 1.** Identify the broad topic you’ve been assigned or are working on:

**Step 2.** Write down every question you can think of about this topic. Don’t worry about question quality or demonstrating your knowledge. The point here is to go for quantity and curiosity. Aim for 10 questions. Note: if you get stuck, ask a question that a librarian might ask yourself if you were researching this topic.
Before we go. . .

- How could you adapt this for your context? What audience do you think this would work best for?
- What prompt would you be excited to share with students?
Readings


Resources

- Handout examples from Adrienne & Glenn
- Right Question Institute: https://rightquestion.org/what-is-the-qft/
Questions?

https://tinyurl.com/ECILQFT
● Photo of curious dog by Chris Arthur-Collins on Unsplash. https://unsplash.com/photos/qGkVJ7Tx36s
● Photo of paper question marks by Olya Kobruseva from Pexels https://www.pexels.com/photo/question-marks-on-paper-crafts-5428833/
● Child at foot of stairs Photo by Jukan Tateisi on Unsplash https://unsplash.com/photos/bJhT_8nbUA0
● Photo of path by three sisters by Lori
● Photos of Otis and Rosie by Lori
● Photo of tightrope walker by Loic Leray on Unsplash
● Photo of path and person walking by three sisters by Lori
● Photo of edwing murmuration by linda hall on Flickr https://www.flickr.com/photos/hallright/37783722575/
● Video of Bosque del Apache by John Fowler on Flickr https://flic.kr/p/2ckKhC1
● Photo of Sandhill cranes in flight at sunset by Diana Robinson on Flickr https://flic.kr/p/DFTdd1
● Photo of Sunrise over Bosque Del Apache by sarowen on Flickr https://flic.kr/p/9rPPRM
● Photo of 3 cranes at pink sunset by John Fowler on Flickr https://www.flickr.com/photos/snowpeak/4152675183/
- Transplant tiny plant Photo by Jael Rodriguez on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/hp6vX7SvrCs
- Person bouldering Photo by Mark McGregor on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/Ns8trMR4Om8
- Dog raising paw Photo by Camylla Battani on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/AoqqGAqrLpU
- Faucet parts Photo by Alexander Andrews on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/N0YrpVDBevw
- Children with party favors by Nancy C Wood:
  https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/NWood/id/258
- Puzzle pieces Photo by Gabriel Crismariu on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/sOK9NjLArCw
- Sunset at Bosque del Apache by John Fowler at
  https://www.flickr.com/photos/snowpeak/4152675183/
- Ancient stone arch and keystone in the sky photo by isabella66 on Adobe Stock
● Photo of small plant on rock by Nagara Oyodo on Unsplash
  https://unsplash.com/photos/kE0o9syjDZQ
● Who’s been using my phone? Photo by Chris Isherwood on Flickr. https://flic.kr/p/bwNdRP
● Baseball game at Heart Mountain
  http://digitalcollections.archives.csudh.edu/digital/collection/p16855coll4/id/44870/rec/1
● Early visitors at Handkerchief Pool in Black Sand Basin
● Owney the dog https://www.si.edu/object/owney-dog:npm_0.052985.274.1
● Buffalo Soldiers at a meal https://nmdc.unm.edu/digital/collection/Buffalo/id/10