

UNIT

3

Questioning

Theoretical and Rationale Foundations of the Strategy

The human condition comes with an innate tendency toward inquiry. Many of the most remarkable and thought-provoking innovations in history originated when a person showed a willingness to question and explore particular issues. In the field of education, questioning has been widely recognized as an engine for improving learning and teaching. Sánchez-Alfonso (2017) traces the origins of the concept to Socrates and the tradition of Socratic questioning, later approaching the contributions of Dewey, particularly associating it with the constructivist paradigm of teaching. For applying this strategy, the role of educators has been extensively discussed. Vélez-Gutiérrez (2018) encourages educators to create spaces where students are invited to question and answer the context surrounding them. Nevertheless, he cautions that these questions must stimulate complex thinking, prompting students to engage in reflection, generate their own ideas, and move beyond logical responses to deeper levels of thought.

The previous statements are aligned with the ideas presented by McLaughlin & DeVogd (2005), mentioning that “inquiry underpins critical literacy. When we read from a critical stance, we use questions to challenge the text, to see past the literal meaning of the text to examine issues such as what the author wants the readers to believe” (p. 62). In terms of critical reading, Sousa (as cited in Talebi & Talebi, 2015, p. 1180) argues that questioning is another strategy to enhance critical reading in the EFL classroom.

Based on our own experience as teachers, students need to work on asking and answering questions for a better understanding, analysis, and reflection of the texts,

rather than just focusing on recalling and repeating information. Our argument is supported by Grellet (2008), who states that “it is often more fruitful to ask questions to which there is not one obvious answer” (p. 229). Nonetheless, we must remark that questioning requires a structured process with a dual purpose; students look for answers to questions, and they pose new doubts regarding these inquiries. Furthermore, allowing students to take action and initiate questioning for others and themselves promotes agency, according to Harmer (2011).

Self-questioning is defined by Taboada & Guthrie (2006) as “a reading strategy in which learners attempt to comprehend and recall a reading text through asking and answering high-level questions about a reading text” (p. 2). Considering its complexity supports the idea that working on questioning is not a process to be done overnight; it requires to follow a series of steps to help students raise awareness of the types of questions to ask and answer about the texts. The questions can be proposed by following diverse frameworks, nevertheless, in this case, we have considered the one proposed by Anderson & Krathwohl (2001), who revised Bloom’s taxonomy to make a hierarchy for thinking skills categorizing them as “Lower Order Thinking Skills” (LOTS) and “Higher Order Thinking Skills” (HOTS). From lower to higher levels students are asked to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create.

The main objective for this unit is to help students identify different types of questions and their importance for critically reading information. Furthermore, learners must be able to pose questions and answer them at different levels of thinking aiming to achieve Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

Unit Three: Questioning

Lesson 1: Raising Awareness

Explain and Demonstrate Stages

Material: Worksheet #9; Text (optional).

Time: 55 minutes.

Suggested Procedure



Step 1- Have students read and analyze a short text (two paragraphs). Then, write three questions about it (Worksheet #9, part A).

Step 2- Ask students to exchange worksheets and answer the questions posed by their partners (Worksheet #9, part B).

Step 3- Instruct students to rate the level of difficulty of the questions and to reflect on the cognitive processes they engaged in while formulating their answers (Worksheet #9, Part C).

Step 4- Explain the types of questions bearing in mind the QARS and how to classify them.

Step 5- As a group, students classify their questions. Direct the process by highlighting the thinking processes that students develop to answer.

Step 6- (Optional) Open a space to reflect on the most frequently proposed questions. Highlight the relevance of all the questions, especially analyzing and encouraging the interpretive and evaluative ones.

The purpose of worksheet #9 is to make students aware of the type of questions they normally ask after reading a text and how easy or hard it is to answer some of the questions. This worksheet is divided into three parts (A, B and C) and it is used to work on the “explain” and “demonstrate” stages of the framework explained previously.

For using this worksheet, it is important to bear in mind the concepts of the Question Answer Relationship Strategy, henceforth QARS. Raphael (as cited in Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018, p. 35) proposed and explained the different types of questions in QARS

by labeling them as “‘Right there’, ‘Think and search’, ‘Author and me’, and ‘On my own’” questions. The answer to the first type of questions, as stated in the name, can be found explicitly in one part of the text. For answering the “‘Think and search questions’”, it is necessary to look at various segments of the reading to find the answer. The third type of questions refers to the ones that can be solved when there is a connection between the readers’ previous knowledge and implicit information in the text. The last type of questions helps the readers to associate the reading with real life, personal experiences or thoughts (Raphael, as cited in Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018, p. 36).

PART B

Title: _____

Author: _____

Your name: _____

ANSWERS

Once you have read and understood the text, answer the three questions posed by your partner.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Please move in to **part C**.

PART A

Title: _____

Author: _____

Your name: _____

QUESTIONS

Once you have read and understood the text, write three questions about it.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Once you have written your questions, exchange the worksheet with a partner.

○ **Title:** _____

○ **Author:** _____

○ **Your name:** _____



REFLECTION



1 On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being hard and 5 being easy...

• How would you rate the level of difficulty of **question 1**? _____

• How would you rate the level of difficulty of **question 2**? _____

• How would you rate the level of difficulty of **question 3**? _____



2 Could the answer be explicitly found in the text?

If so, which one(s)? _____





3 Did you have to connect the information in the text with your own experience to answer any of the questions? _____

If so, which one(s)? _____



Unit Three: Questioning

Lesson 2: Beyond Literal Questions

Guide Stage

Material: Worksheet #10; Text.

Time: 70 minutes

Suggested Procedure

Step 1- If you think your students already know the types of questions in QARS, go to step two (2). If not, start by reviewing them with an emphasis on “author and me” and “on my own” questions.

Step 2- Have your students read and analyze the text thoroughly.

Step 3- Divide your class into pairs (or groups of three students); have them brainstorm different questions about the text.

Step 4- Provide each group with worksheet # 10 and have students reflect and discuss possible questions to be posed in each section.

Step 5- Have your students, in each group, write two questions in the sections “Author and me” and “On my own”, respectively.

For using this worksheet, it is important to consider the types of questions in the QARS. Its purpose is to guide your students on how to ask “Author and me” and “on my own” questions to move from literal to more interpretative questions.

Worksheet#10 is divided in two sections. The first part displays silhouettes of the author and the reader, representing the connection between the information in the text and the ideas of the reader. The parallel is key for proposing and answering “Author and me” questions, which must be written in the speech bubbles. The second section depicts a character and his reflection in the mirror, where the questions must be written. The drawing represents the internal process when creating “on our own” questions, since these ideas express the students’ knowledge.

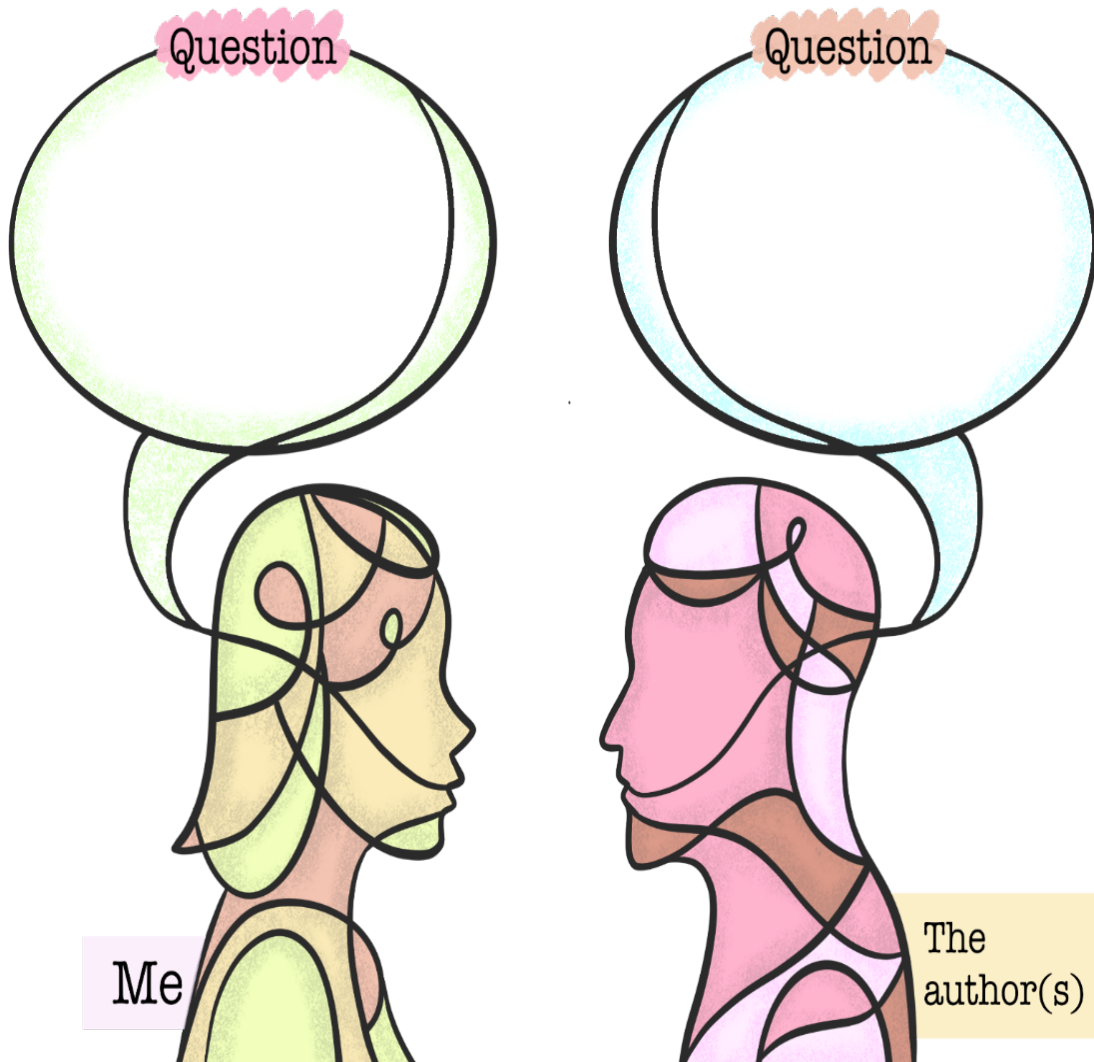
Considering this worksheet focuses on the “guide” stage of the framework (McLaughlin & Allen, 2009), during the development of the lesson, the teacher works along with students, helping them solve doubts and encouraging them to ask what they are really interested in knowing.

Worksheet #10-A: Author and Me (Photocopiable)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the text carefully; then, pose two “author and me” and “on my own” questions respectively.

Author and me



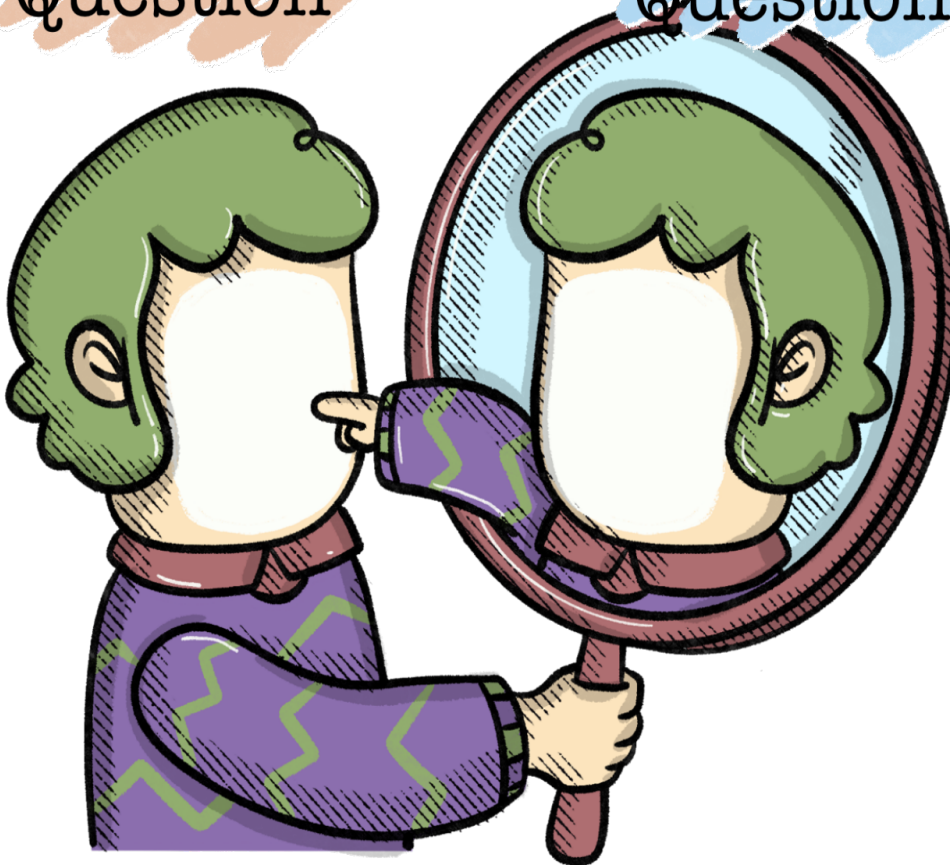
Worksheet #10-B: On my Own (Photocopiable)

On my own

Write the questions in the heads of the character and his reflection.

Question

Question



Remember

Own thoughts + own knowledge =
Answer of "on my own" questions

Unit Three: Questioning

Lesson 3: Asking and Answering Questions

Practice Stage

Material: Worksheet #11; text.

Time: 90 minutes.

Suggested Procedure:



Step 1 – Instruct students to read and analyze the text thoroughly.

Step 2 – Distribute Worksheet #11 and ask students to formulate two questions for each of the four cognitive categories (Remembering, Understanding/Applying, Analyzing, and Evaluating/Creating) based on the interests and doubts arising from the reading.

Step 3 – Have your students exchange their worksheets with a classmate, who will then add two additional questions per quadrant. Repeat this action until each worksheet contains a total of 16 different questions.

Step 4- Have students read the questions and choose some per quadrant to be answered. Follow the next criteria: Select one (1) out of remembering, one (1) out of understanding/ applying, two (2) out of analyzing, and two (2) out of evaluating/ creating.

Step 5- Have your students turn the page and find the Response Creation Chart (RC2) worksheet. Have them answer the six (6) questions they chose in the previous step (Worksheet #11 – Response Creation Chart RC2).

Step 6- (Optional) As part of the students' independent practice and to reinforce the strategy, provide a new reading and encourage them to formulate and respond to two questions per cognitive quadrant.

The purpose of this worksheet is to provide students with opportunities to pose and answer questions based on specific question starters that follow the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy, specifically its revised version categorizing LOTS and HOTS. The "practice" stage of the framework for strategies of teaching (McLaughlin & Allen,

2009) guides its development.

Regarding the theoretical support behind the design of this worksheet, it is crucial to go back to the two sections comprising it: The Question Creation Chart and the Response Creation Chart. Ideally, they are printed or photocopied back-to-back for an appropriate implementation.

For the purpose of this book, we adapted the Question Creation Chart (QCC) proposed originally by Wiederhold (1997) and revised by Finney (2012) in *Let's Talk Science*. The QCC, also known as Q-Matrix, is a technique developed in the 90s whose objective was to provide teachers with a series of question starters to move from factual questions to evaluative ones (Idek, 2016). Helping students to be conscious of the structure and the types of questions may support students to delve into complex thinking skills, proposing inquiries to achieve a deeper understanding, analysis, and reflection of texts. Eventually, rehearsing these abilities will cause a positive impact on the students' oral and written production.

Thus, what have we added to the QCC? The reader can write the basic information about the text and formulate questions that, although they do not follow the question starters, still align with the appropriate cognitive category. The final addition was a numbered format to organize the set of questions.

The Response Creation Chart (RC2) was inspired by the need to include a suitable space for students to consolidate answers to the questions posed. This format allows learners to categorize answers and remember the characteristics of each level of critical thinking since they are all clearly presented in the chart. Furthermore, the organization of the Response Creation Chart contributes to people focusing their attention on the questions connected to analysis, evaluation, and creation. The space provided for writing these answers is larger, which encourages a wider dissertation of your thoughts. Another relevant element is decision. Students answer the questions they feel more engaged with, which reminds them that building arguments to support a position is the core of critical thinking. Finally, an adjustment of the colors in both charts has been made so that the quadrants could match and be more user-friendly.

Worksheet #11-A: Question Creation Chart – QC² (Adapted from: Let’s talk science – Explore curiosity, 2016)
 (Photocopiable)

Title: _____ **Author(s):** _____ **Type of text:** _____

Year of publication: _____ **Directions:** Once you have read the text, write one question for each quadrant. Then, exchange worksheets with a partner and write a different question in each quadrant.

	Is/ are/ was / were	Did / do / does	Can	Could / Should	Will / Would	Might	Other structures
Who	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
What	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17
When / Where	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21
Remembering (Right there questions)							
How	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31
Why	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35
Evaluating / Creating (on my own questions)							

Worksheet #11-B: Response Creation Chart (Photocopiable)

RC²: Response Creation Chart

Directions: Read the questions posed in the QCC and choose some of them to be answered in each quadrant. Do not forget to write the number of the questions.

Evaluating/creating question:

Evaluating/creating question:

Analyzing question:

Analyzing question:

Understanding/applying question:

Remembering question:

Title:

Author(s):

Name:

Date:

Unit Assessment

Give your students a self-assessment checklist to be completed considering the process carried out throughout the unit. Your students need to add a tick symbol next to each of the statements if they consider they have achieved this goal.

Reflection

In class, your students write an entry of their reflective journal where they analyze their learning. Moreover, they are asked to write about their emotions, strengths and difficulties they experienced during the development of the activities proposed for the questioning unit. Reflecting about the process, students write further actions to improve their understanding of the topic and strategy.



Unit 3 Questioning Self-assessment Checklist (Photocopiable)

Name: _____ Date: _____

After finishing the proposed activities for fostering critical reading skills (questioning), I can:

- Write some questions about texts I read
- Distinguish the types of questions I usually ask after reading a text.
- Ask and answer more questions that make me reflect and better analyse the text.

Use the self-questioning when working on other subjects and different types of texts.

Further actions I can take include:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____