Steps of the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)

A practical application to help you brainstorm learning questions

Step 1: Design a Question Focus (QFocus)
The QFocus is a stimulus for jumpstarting the generation of questions. Choose a topic that you are and/or might consider for research (e.g. Social emotional learning impact on student in the 20/21 school year)
The QFocus may be anything as long as it is not a question and it is related to the content or intended learning outcomes. A good QFocus should be simple, clear, and encourage divergent thinking.
Write down your QFocus at the top of your working doc.

Step 2: Produce Questions
Create a list of questions following these rules:
1. Ask as many questions as you can about your research topic
2. Do not stop to answer, analyze, or judge questions
3. Write down every question exactly as it comes to mind
4. Change any statements into questions

Write down all your questions below your QFocus.

Step 3: Rework Questions
On your list of questions, label the closed-ended questions with a "C" and open-ended questions with an "O"
- Closed-ended question: questions can be answered with a "yes," "no," or with a one-word answer.
- Open-ended question: questions require more explanation and cannot be answered with a "yes," "no," or with one-word.

Select a few questions and convert your closed-ended questions into open ended questions and convert your open-ened questions into closed-ended questions.
Add these reworked questions to the bottom of your list.

Step 4: Prioritize Questions
Choose **three** priority questions you are most interested in using to guide a research project. Keep in mind the QFocus (research topic) you identified earlier.

Step 5: Explore Further
Choose **one** of the priority questions you selected, turn that into your new QFocus, and repeat steps 2-4.

Step 6: Reflect
Identify three questions that you are happy with and three questions that may help you advance your research.
- Why did you choose these six questions?
- What did you learn?
- What did you notice about the quality of your questions?
- When did you notice the quality of your questions change?

THANKS FOR READING!

A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO NEXT...

Put these steps into practice

If you haven't already, start to actually apply these steps – and continue to apply them.
Asking good questions is a skill that needs to be intentially cultivated, just like riding a bike. If you know how to ride a bike, you probably didn't learn from just reading the steps. You also probably didn't master the skill the very first time you rode.

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