

## DePaul Center for Urban Education Research Base

### Students Construct and Analyze Questions

Core Element	Connections Structure	Basis in Research	Relevant Research
Students develop strategic reading and thinking skills by analyzing and developing questions about content, including math, fiction, and non-fiction.	Students construct questions at different levels and in different formats—open-ended and multiple choice. Test preparation is not isolated but instead is embedded as students construct and analyze questions.	Students develop a greater understanding of what they are learning with the use of questioning. Students develop a greater ability to respond to questions when they analyze them.	International Reading Association, 2000. Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997. Rafael, 1982. Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 2001.

The following research supports the emphasis on the construction of questions by students:

Questions are an important part of the classroom interaction and can help the students achieve a deeper understanding of a text. But, students learn what to focus on by the type of questions that go beyond the literal level and lead students into higher level thinking.

One of the most powerful learning techniques is self-questioning. When students are in charge of the questions, they take control of information and become active learners. Students must be taught to question themselves about their learning. They must learn about the levels of questions and practice asking from all levels.

Classroom methods to help students understand and practice include the following:

- Questioning the Author (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997), in which students assume greater responsibility for their learning by actively interacting with text and engaging in discussions about the meaning of text
- Explaining the difference between thin (literal) and fat (higher level) questions for your students. Questions-Answer Relationships (QAR) (Raphael, 1982), or Bloom's Taxonomy for older students.

- Assigning a student to ask the questions after a short, silent reading passage
- Taking turns asking questions in small groups
- Working in small groups to create questions to exchange with another group
- Encouraging students to monitor their comprehension by constantly asking themselves questions as they read, such as “Do I understand this?”

Questions need to be less on assessing comprehensions and more on helping students grapple with text ideas as they construct meaning. They should help guide students as they dig to make sense of the information. Learning to ask these types of questions will teach students to focus on quality and depth of meaning rather than superficial understanding (22).

New Directions in Reading Instruction Revised,  
International Reading Association, 2000.

Teaching students to ask their own questions improves their active processing of text and their comprehension. By generating questions, students become aware of whether they can answer questions that require them to integrate information from different segments of text (51).

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks  
for Teaching Children to Read, Center for the  
Improvement of Early Reading Achievement,  
September 2001.