

Designing Effective Projects: Questioning Elaborating, Hypothetical, and Clarification Questions

Questions for Different Kinds of Thinking

Different kinds of questions generate different kinds of thinking. These definitions and examples describe three kinds: elaborating, hypothetical, and clarification questions.

Questioning Technique	Definition	Examples
Elaborating Questions	These questions help to extend and broaden the importance of the meaning. Students can elaborate on the question making it more personal to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the implied or suggested meanings?</i> • <i>What does this mean to you?</i> • <i>How could you take the meaning farther?</i> • <i>What could the next step be?</i>
Hypothetical Questions	These questions help to explore possibilities and test theories. These are the “what would happen if…” questions, allowing students to use their imaginations based on the facts they have learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What if the earth had no sun?</i> • <i>What if the polar ice caps melted?</i> • <i>What if Charlotte in Charlotte’s Web had lived?</i> • <i>What are the possible pros and cons?</i>
Clarification Questions	These questions help to define words and concepts and clarify meaning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How did the character get to this point?</i> • <i>How did they gather the data? Was it a reliable process?</i> • <i>What is the sequence of ideas and how do they relate to one another?</i>