

Inviting Student Questioning

Learning Activity
Shannon White

OVERVIEW: This activity is designed to help students formulate high quality, broad, answerable questions. This activity could be done prior to the Geography and Culture Mini-Magazine class project, or as an introduction to any research project where the students will be formulating a research question on which to focus their research.

SUGGESTED COLLECTION PIECES:

- CPM.988 (Day Cap)
- CPM.967 (Scarf)
- CPM.924 (Drawers)
- CPM.873 (Dress)
- CPM.3249.AB (Shoes)
- CPM.1015 (Petticoat)
- 91.251 (Parasol)

OBJECTIVES: Learners will...

- Formulate questions about a collection piece
- Challenge one another's questions to obtain more information
- Revise questions to foster more questions

DESCRIPTION:

- 1.) Observation.** The basis of questioning is wanting to obtain more information about an object or idea. Before initial questioning begins, an observation is made or an idea is presented. For this activity, allow the students to begin questioning by making observations about an item in this collection. Present the item to the class, then have students write down only what they can see. (For example, the dress is long and black. It does not have sleeves. Etc.)
- 2.) Questioning Stage I.** Based on their observations, have students write down one or two questions they have based on the limited information they have about the collection piece (i.e. only what they can see).
- 3.) Critique.** Allow students to critique each others' questions by asking them to judge whether the question is broad enough, is specific enough, leads to more questions, etc. (This will depend on your criteria for their research question.) Let students share their ideas about the questions in small groups prior to sharing their questions aloud.
- 4.) Revise.** Based on the students' critique, practice revising the questions to meet the necessary criteria for the project. How could each questions be changed to better serve its purpose?
- 5.) Repeat.** Practice steps 1-4 again. If students have grasped the concept of question-asking be starting with observations about a concrete object, then increase the level of difficulty by presenting students with an abstract idea. Ideas could be controversial topics that affect the students' lives, or the presentation of a new invention that has not yet been created. Be creative with

the kinds of ideas that you present to your students. Try to make the idea relevant to their everyday lives to increase engagement.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS:

Formative Assessment. The discussion and critique will serve as a formative assessment of students' understanding of asking good questions that meet specified criteria for a project or research paper.

Summative Assessment. The summative assessment for this activity will be the students' final research question for their project/paper.