



An easy way to motivate students and encourage engagement is to capture their attention by posting a HOT (High Order Thinking) Question for the class to discuss. HOT questions require students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information instead of simply recalling facts. Teachers can use a HOT question as a focus for the unit and engage students in multiple activities that will help them answer effectively. One question can be the driving force of multiple activities throughout the course of many days or weeks.

- Create a question that will get students engaged with the lesson after the main objective has been selected. Quality Questions will:
 - focus on important content
 - promote one or more carefully defined instructional purposes
 - facilitate thinking at a stipulated cognitive level
 - communicate clearly what is being asked
- Post the question at the beginning of your lesson/unit and let students know they will need an answer to it by the end of the lesson/unit. This HOT question will be the focus of the lesson/unit.
- Require students to complete a performance task that demonstrates their understanding of the lesson content and that answers the HOT question.
- Examples of performance tasks include (but are not limited to):
 - writing an essay in response to the question
 - designing a project that highlights the key goals of the lesson
 - developing a model that represents the solution
 - designing an experiment to test a hypothesis
 - creating an advance organizer



Additional Tools

Socratic Seminar

The purpose of a Socratic Seminar is to reach a deeper understanding of the concepts in a text. Participants systematically question and examine issues and principles related to a particular topic covering different points-of-view. Seminars are conducted as a group conversation and this format supports students in constructing meaning through disciplined analysis, interpretation, listening, and participation (The National Paideia Center, n.d.).

For more strategies and/or resources, visit houstonisd.org/EffectivePractices



ALERTS

The Beginner's Guide to Understanding Rigor, (Blackburn, 2012) states that "As you design lessons that incorporate more rigorous opportunities for learning, you will want to consider the questions that are embedded in the instruction. Higher level questioning is an integral part of a rigorous classroom. Look for open-ended questions, ones that are at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (analysis/synthesis). It is also important to look at how teachers respond to student questions."



QUICK TIPS

Try asking questions that require students to explain how components work together or affect one another. Allow students opportunities to interact and listen to their peers as they share their thinking in small groups. Good questioning requires planning since you want the class to engage in multiple activities or performance tasks before they can come up with an answer.