



Twenty Questions

Overview

Twenty Questions is a way of retrieving or recalling previously learned information and processing it. During the exercise, students ask each other questions that have potential responses of yes/no about a topic to identify the concept. By having students generate questions themselves, students will recall and process content and provide the instructor the opportunity to assess and correct student misconceptions. Ideally, there is a slight delay between when students learn the content and when they retrieve the content.

Twenty Questions is an ideal activity for: quick content review and identifying distinguishing characteristics of concepts.

Twenty Questions meets the following [WSU Learning Goals](#): critical and creative thinking, scientific literacy, information literacy, diversity, communication, and depth, breadth, and integration of learning.

Group size: 2-3 | **Active Time:** 10 mins | **Prep. Time:** Low

Active time is an estimate and may vary depending on your class.

Implementation

Suggested Tech Tools: Blackboard Discussion Board, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Padlet, VoiceThread

Instructor:

Assign each student a specific concept to be an expert in—students should have ample time to become the expert on their given concept, whether in-class, or outside of class as a homework assignment. Share with students all concepts that have been assigned so they know how to focus their questions during the activity.

Students:

1. **Partner A:** Take five minutes to ask your partner questions to identify the concept they were assigned. Questions can be about distinguishing features or applications of the concept. **Partner B:** Your responses should be yes/no only.
2. Switch roles. This time, your partner gets five minutes to ask you questions.

Variations & Tips:

- Allow students practice with multiple concepts in **face-to-face** courses by arranging them in two parallel lines facing each other. Have students do the activity and move to the next partner in five-minute cycles.
- In **online** courses, have students use VoiceThread or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to build a sense of community.
- Engage **video conference (VC)** students by using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Create breakout groups where students can ask their questions and provide their answers.
- In **large-enrollment** courses, create small-groups of student-experts and assign focus-sections. In sections, students can post their questions on Padlet.
- For **all course types**, consider assigning concept expert groups. Set up Blackboard Discussion Boards for each group to prepare together before the activity.
- Encourage students to think about distinguishing features and applications when shaping their questions.

You may also be interested in:

Student Generated Test Question
Defining Features Matrix
Drawing for Understanding

Resources:

[Rethinking the Use of Tests: A Meta-Analysis of Practice Testing](#)

Let's explore the possibilities together!

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To find more activities, visit the LI website and select Teaching Tool Boxes.