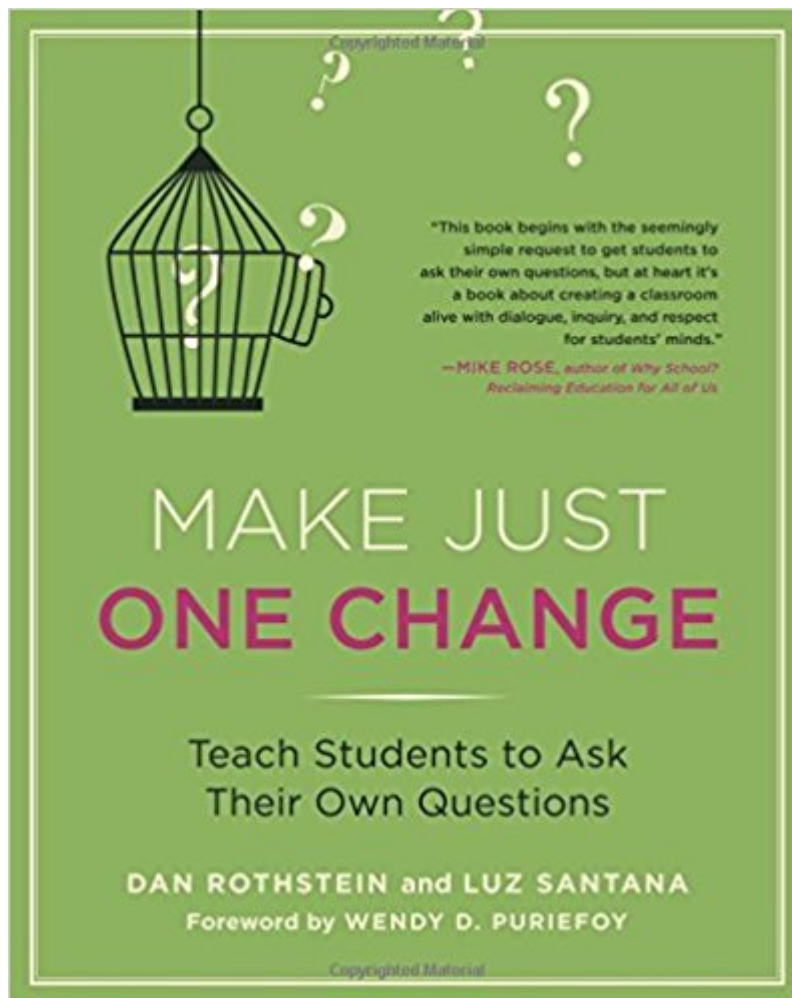




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# Make Just One Change: Teach Students To Ask Their Own Questions



## Synopsis

The authors of *Make Just One Change* argue that formulating one's own questions is "the single most essential skill for learning" and one that should be taught to all students. They also argue that it should be taught in the simplest way possible. Drawing on twenty years of experience, the authors present the Question Formulation Technique, a concise and powerful protocol that enables learners to produce their own questions, improve their questions, and strategize how to use them. *Make Just One Change* features the voices and experiences of teachers in classrooms across the country to illustrate the use of the Question Formulation Technique across grade levels and subject areas and with different kinds of learners.

## Book Information

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"As the title of this book indicates, Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana believe that education can be transformed if students, rather than teachers, assume responsibility for posing questions. This idea may sound simple, but it is both complex and radical: complex, in that formulating good, generative questions, and being prepared to work toward satisfactory answers, is hardly a simple undertaking; and radical, in the sense that an apparently easy move can bring about a Copernican revolution in the atmosphere of the classroom and the dynamics of learning. The authors modestly quote physicist Niels Bohr who once said, 'An expert is someone who has made all possible mistakes in a field and there are no more to be made.' In reading this powerful work, I was reminded of what Albert Einstein said, when he learned of Jean Piaget's

pioneering questioning of young children: “So simple only a genius could have thought of it.” • Howard Gardner, The John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education “[The authors] provide . . . an inspiring vision of education at its best and an extraordinarily clear, low-tech, practical intellectual tool for turning that vision into reality.” • from the foreword by Wendy D. Puriefoy, president, Public Education Network “The protocols described in this book are easy to follow and adaptable to a variety of classrooms and subjects. These simple strategies can lead students to go into more depth in their learning and stretch the standard curriculum beyond the textbook. Students’ energy, motivation, and perseverance increase noticeably when they have more ownership of the topics they are studying.” • Hayley Dupuy, sixth-grade math and science teacher, J. L. Stanford Middle School, Palo Alto, California “Just when you think you know all you need to know, you ask another question and discover how much more there is to learn.” • Sixth-grade student, J. L. Stanford Middle School, Palo Alto

The authors of *Make Just One Change* argue that formulating one’s own questions is “the single most essential skill for learning” and one that should be taught to all students. They also argue that it should be taught in the simplest way possible. Drawing on twenty years of experience, the authors present the Question Formulation Technique, a concise and powerful protocol that enables learners to produce their own questions, improve their questions, and strategize how to use them. *Make Just One Change* features the voices and experiences of teachers in classrooms across the country to illustrate the use of the Question Formulation Technique across grade levels and subject areas and with different kinds of learners. “As the title of this book indicates, Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana believe that education can be transformed if students, rather than teachers, assume responsibility for posing questions. This idea may sound simple, but it is both complex and radical: complex, in that formulating good, generative questions, and being prepared to work toward satisfactory answers, is hardly a simple undertaking; and radical, in the sense that an apparently easy move can bring about a Copernican revolution in the atmosphere of the classroom and the dynamics of learning. The authors modestly quote physicist Niels Bohr who once said, “An expert is someone who has made all possible mistakes in a field and there are no more to be made.” In reading this powerful work, I was reminded of what Albert Einstein said, when he learned of Jean Piaget’s pioneering questioning of young children: “So simple only a genius could have thought of it.” • Howard Gardner, The John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education, Harvard

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Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana are codirectors of The Right Question Institute (RQI). Prior to his work with RQI, Rothstein developed and implemented education programs in Kentucky, Massachusetts, and Israel. Santana is a former counselor and parent advocate.

Innovative concept. The book is an easy read but at some times it could seem repetitive. I would have liked to have heard more about the brain research associated with inquisitive thinkers and also more results based data on the application of the technique. The book uses case studies which are applicable and relevant. Overall I think that this book presents a new strategy and technique for teachers which is helpful for students. The book does an exceptional job of breaking down each part of the questioning technique.

This book is full of great information on helping students become questioners instead of just answerers, which is the role they are accustomed to. What I like is that it is geared toward any age level. Many of the examples are from older grades, but I have used the technique with my third-graders and was thoroughly impressed by their efforts. I haven’t implemented the entire process yet, mostly because I was excited and jumped in before finishing the whole book. Because there are a lot of things to consider, it would be good to read the whole book before implementing it, but since my class is young, I don’t think it hurts to practice it a bit at a time. I love teaching them to be deeper thinkers and why that is important!

In an era where education is focused on rigor, engagement, and depth of thought, the Q-Focus technique and Make Just One Change revolutionized how my students approach their writing.

Empowering them to think about ideas that directly relate to their own lives (social media, art history, globalization) students were able to read complex texts toward writing well-developed free response questions to rigorous subjects. I saw my students' reading and writing grow significantly over the year, they enjoyed class activities, and thought more deeply about subjects that overwhelm most adults. The Q-Focus technique is something my students use in every class, on every writing assignment, and can carry with them through college and career. I wish I had learned this in high school! As a doctoral candidate, I can see how research processes are mirrored in the Q-Focus, preparing students to be highly competitive in a changing global marketplace. I would recommend this book to EVERY teacher of EVERY subject.

As I apply the QFocus and the other aspects of the Question Formulation Technique to my curriculum and lesson/unit designs, I can foresee how this will positively improve students' engagement and responsibility for their learning. Another easy read with deep, complex learning outcomes- just what we are hoping for our students. This is a great fit for those of us who are in a state implementing CCSS. Take notes in the margin as you read as to how you're envisioning implementing this in your classroom. Then, as you're planning, just look at your notes to remind yourself of your ideas and right there next to your note, is the information necessary for implementation. A lot of fun!

Gives you the skills to empower your students to think independently and develop their own questions. The techniques are not difficult to adopt into your methods. Also has on-line community to hook into. I posted a question and got a bunch of helpful responses. Excellent and inspiring. If you can get past the typos (I found 5), this book is great! For a book put out by a Harvard affiliated publisher, and in its 2nd printing, there shouldn't be any typos.

RightQuestion.Org - Go there. This book demonstrates the power of the the skill of how to explore, investigate and learn through questions. If we learn how to question, we learn deeply and usefully. Aren't we all trying to enable the student to be the worker, the discover, the thinker. If a student can't frame a question, the student learns only through what others have determined she/he should know, don't know -- the curiosity must be there; and the language of curiosity must be available. Excellent for first timers in the classroom, and for old-timers who need to be reminded.

This was the most important lesson in my life yet. The book goes straight to the point, is very

succinct and direct. It took me few days to grasp it and start using process. Very last chapter is more marketing for QFT than informational, but I guess you need self-advertisement when introducing new process, especially thinking process.

I used this technique this summer, and the curiosity that it fosters is much needed in the classroom. I worked with middle schoolers on this, and they generated so many amazing, thoughtful questions, that helped form a richer discussion. I look forward to working with high schoolers on the question formulation technique.

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