

Franklin University

## FUSE (Franklin University Scholarly Exchange)

---

Scholars Showcase 2018: Innovations in Leadership and Learning

---

10-5-2018

### Who Owns the Questions?

Roberta Niche

Franklin University, roberta.niche@franklin.ed

Follow this and additional works at: <https://fuse.franklin.edu/ss2018>



Part of the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Niche, Roberta, "Who Owns the Questions?" (2018). *Scholars Showcase 2018: Innovations in Leadership and Learning*. 57.

<https://fuse.franklin.edu/ss2018/57>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by FUSE (Franklin University Scholarly Exchange). It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholars Showcase 2018: Innovations in Leadership and Learning by an authorized administrator of FUSE (Franklin University Scholarly Exchange). For more information, please contact [karen.caputo@franklin.edu](mailto:karen.caputo@franklin.edu).



# Who Owns the Questions?

Roberta Niche, M.Ed. | Franklin University International Institute for Innovative Instruction

## Introduction

When instructors are the only ones asking questions, students miss out on important opportunities to deepen their learning and reflect on their understanding. Instructors and instructional designers must create an environment where learners create, organize, refine, and answer their own questions. They must help learners develop a robust “questioning toolkit” (McKenzie, 1997) and allow them to take greater ownership of their learning, deepen comprehension, and make new connections and discoveries on their own (Rothstein & Santana, 2011).

## The Importance of Questions

Hattie’s meta-analysis of “what works best” in education, *Visible Learning*, found that the impact of self-questioning is significant, with an effect size of  $d=0.64$  where anything over  $d=0.40$  is considered strongly impactful (Hattie, 2012).

Self-questioning doesn’t just improve student learning. The ability to ask good questions is an important part of decision-making and problem-solving. Students who possess a robust “questioning toolkit” are better prepared to make meaning from the glut of information on the web. They are able to sift and sort information to filter down to nuggets that are useful or truthful.

“Powerful questioning leads to Information Power – the ability to use information to fashion solutions, decisions and plans that are original, cogent, practical, and effective.”  
*Jamie McKenzie, Questioning as Technology*

“When students know how to ask their own questions, they take greater ownership of their learning, deepen comprehension, and make new connections and discoveries on their own”  
*Rothstein & Santana, Teaching Students to Answer Their Own Questions*

## The Trouble with “Teacher Questions”

Many teachers don’t leave room for student questions. Research consistently tells the same tale; teachers dominate the questioning, spending 30 to 50 percent of their instructional time on it (Albergaria-Almeida, 2010). To make matters worse, a high percentage of those questions is typically lower-level recall.

## Challenge Yourself

### Designers:

- Do your courses include assignments that require students to create their own questions?

### Instructors:

- Do you always provide students with questions you want answered and discussed or do they have dedicated time to develop their own?
- Are you happy with the level of student engagement you have during discussions or when you ask “Does anybody have any questions?”

## Use Perusall to Tap the Power of Peers



Perusall

Harvard Physics professor Eric Mazur developed a free online tool that focuses on student questions. Here’s how it works:

- The instructor uploads a reading assignment (textbook or PDF) into Perusall
- Students log in and read online, highlighting what confuses them and annotating the text with questions, comments, and insights.
- Annotations are collaborative. Students see each other’s markups and respond. Their goal is to post good questions that stimulate discussion and to help others by answering their questions.
- Perusall uses a rubric driven by artificial intelligence to automatically assess the students’ questions and responses.
- Instructors get a “confusion report” showing what parts of the text were most difficult for the students, allowing them to key on students’ questions and misconceptions. Site: <http://www.perusall.com>

## Hold a Socratic Seminar



Socratic

Socratic seminars are formal, student-led discussions. Students learn to listen carefully to others, paraphrase what’s been said, ask questions, then respond with support or disagreement.

- Socratic seminars can be structured in many ways, but the inner-circle, outer-circle or “fishbowl” method (see takeaway card) is perhaps the most easily adaptable to blended and online learning. It is a good structure for involving many students simultaneously.
- Online classes can use the meeting tool in their learning management system or Skype. Inner-circle participants can be displayed, while outer-circle participants use another tool like Chatzy or even a Google Doc.

The role of the instructor in Socratic seminars is facilitator and coach, not content deliverer. An instructor will carefully choose an open-ended idea or piece of text to be examined. After teaching norms for the seminar, the instructor turns responsibility for the dialogue over to the students, intervening only over procedural matters. During the seminar, the instructor observes and makes notes about how each student contributed to seminar.

## References and Contact Information



References



Contact Me

Roberta Niche, M.Ed.  
roberta.niche@franklin.edu  
201 S. Grant Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-947-6874

