

# Questioning Strategies

Questioning strategies can combine the Elements of Reasoning with the Three Story Intellect to create better precision, clarity, depth, significance, and coherence in class discussion. When applied in the framework of Socratic Questioning, faculty can use open-ended questions to explore the various components of a question/issue while developing in students a better awareness of the dimensions and levels of thinking. Three types of questions help students structure their understanding of the topic: clarifying questions; reasoning questions; and substantive questions.

## Clarifying Questions

### Description

Seek additional information in order to better to gain a clearer understanding. Uses illustrations, examples, and analogies.

### Standards

accuracy, fairness, precision, relevance, & clarity of meaning

### Examples

*What does religious freedom mean? Who was Thomas Jefferson? What does the First Amendment say? What are the two religion clauses of the First Amendment? What religious group dominated New England? In what order were the colonies founded? What similarities existed between the colonies with respect to religion? What differences existed among the colonies with respect to religion?*

### Levels

First level -- define, identify, describe, list, name.

Second level -- classify, sequence, compare, contrast.

### Dimensions

basic concepts, data, purpose, and question/issue

## Reasoning Questions

### Description

Explore logical connections in arguments and seeks rational coherence

### Standards

adequacy, clarity of expression, consistency, justifiability, and reasonability

### Examples

*The most common fallacies include: appeal to authority; ad hominem; hasty generalization; sweeping generalization; begging the question; circular reasoning; red herring; straw man; appeal to majority; appeal to tradition; appeal to novelty; ambiguity; argument ad nauseam; undistributed middle; black and white thinking; false alternative; non-sequitur; extended analogy; false cause; and shifting the burden of proof. See common fallacies page for descriptions & specific examples.*

### Levels

Second level -- analyze, reason, explain, infer.

Third level -- evaluate, hypothesize, generalize, speculate, apply a principle, forecast

### Dimensions

interpretations, inferences, implications, assumptions, and consequences

## Substantive Questions

### Description

probe the deeper, broader, and more significant dimensions of a question / issue

### Standards

completeness, depth, significance, insight, breadth, and flexibility

### Examples

*What assumptions about human nature ground the religion clauses of the First Amendment? How did the framers of the Constitution differ in their perspective on the church/state relations from British rulers? How might we interpret the concept of religious liberty in light of Freud's perception of religion? What might have happened if we imagined the various colonies remained divided on issues of religion?*

### Levels

Second level -- analyze, reason, explain, analogize.

Third level -- hypothesize, evaluate, imagine, judge, apply a principle

### Dimensions

assumptions, points of view, interpretations, & implications