



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

## THREE LEVELS OF QUESTIONING

By Jim Bentley

### Strategy Description

Students will read any of the SVPDP curricula and formulate related questions, or teachers can formulate questions using the three levels of questioning to use as “tickets out the door,” or for formal written assessments, or for whole-class or small-group discussions. Examples follow.

The questioning strategy is adapted from the Junior Great Books program published by the Great Books Foundation. Questions of fact are the easiest to answer and require the lowest-level thinking skills. Questions of interpretation involve combining facts with drawing conclusions. This is a skill that should be explicitly practiced with students before asking students to work independently to create interpretive questions on their own. Evaluative questions require students to access information from the text and to construct an argument that is defensible based on the text, logic, and personal opinion. These types of questions make for rich discussion and dissent.

### Suggested Grade Level

Elementary through high school

### Estimated Time to Complete

Varies depending on how much time is dedicated to reading and questioning in class

### Objective

- Students will reread text and formulate questions related to key concepts.

### Materials Needed

- SVPDP curricula
- Three Levels of Questions handout (follows)
- Sample questions for pages 1–5 from the Level 1 *Project Citizen* student text (follows)

### Strategy Procedure

Before asking students to write their own questions, it is recommended that a teacher formulate a few of each type of questions for students to practice with. I recommend starting with ten questions with five questions of fact, four questions of interpretation, and one question of evaluation. Answering questions of fact boosts student self-confidence and assists in review of basic concepts. Interpretive questions require students to spend time discussing the text further. Evaluative questions empower students to experiment with ideas learned in class.

## THREE LEVELS OF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Questions of Fact

- These types of questions are *explicit*.
- They are *explained* in the text.
- They are a simple *answer* that can be found in the book.
- Example: How many branches of government are there?

### Questions of Interpretation

- These types of questions are *implicit*.
- They are *not in* the text.
- They require you to make an *inference*.
- Text + what you already know = inference
- Example: Why were the Framers concerned with creating a system of checks and balances?

### Questions of Evaluation

- These types of questions are *implicit* and require you to provide an opinion about something.
- They are *not in* the text.
- You must take a position and defend it by using details from the book.
- These types of questions are like inference questions, but you need to add more of your own personal opinions and your own feelings.
- Example: If you were one of the Framers, would you have argued for or against the Great Compromise? Why or why not?

## THREE LEVELS OF QUESTIONING EXAMPLES

*Project Citizen* text, Level 1, pages 1–5

### Questions of Fact

- How many basic steps are there when doing *Project Citizen*?
- What is a public policy?
- Who makes public policies?
- Why do people often want government to develop or carry out public policies?
- What will you and your class create when doing *Project Citizen*?

### Questions of Interpretation

- Why might a citizen want to participate in their government?
- Is there a problem in your community you wish would go away? What is it? Where might you contact about it? Which level of government might be responsible for the problem?
- Why might a person want to study multiple alternative solutions to a single problem?
- Why do you think governments create public policies?

### Questions of Evaluation

- What do you think is the single biggest problem in your community that should be handled by government?