INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Stoplight Questions

Stoplight Questions help students consider how rigorous their research and inquiry questions are. This strategy equips students to evaluate their questioning for deeper learning. It also helps them internalize what defines a quality research question.

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STOPLIGHT QUESTIONS

Summary

This strategy helps students determine whether they have a quality inquiry or research question. As a class, students review their peers' anonymous Stoplight Questions and then decide the “level” of each question. Red questions can be answered with a quick Google search. Yellow questions have potential—they ask “how” or “why,” but they don’t require making inferences or synthesizing information. Green questions encourage students to create new knowledge—some may ask “how” or “why,” but others might be “If... then...” questions that require analysis and thorough understanding of the content. After categorizing questions, the class brainstorms how to revise red and yellow questions for deeper learning. Students improve their questions based on their classmates' feedback.

Procedure

1. Begin with a class discussion about what makes a good inquiry or research question.
2. Have students write their inquiry or research questions on sticky notes and turn them in anonymously.
3. Read each question to the class and ask students what level they think it is: red, yellow, or green.
4. Post students’ sticky notes on chart paper or on a large “stoplight” that reflects each color.
5. As a class, workshop the red and yellow questions. Have students provide feedback on how to make the questions more rigorous for deeper learning.
6. For green questions, ask students to highlight what makes them quality inquiry or research questions.
7. Give students time to take notes and modify their own questions based on their peers’ feedback. Students then turn those questions in for final teacher approval.