



All About Adolescent Literacy

Question the Author (QtA)

What it is...

Questioning the Author is a comprehension strategy that requires students to pose queries while reading the text in order to challenge their understanding and solidify their knowledge (Beck et al., 1997).

Primarily used with nonfiction text, QtA lets students critique the author's writing and in doing so engage with the text to create a deeper meaning.

Why it's so great...

QtA aims to engage all students with the text. Although it requires a bit of prep work, you will reap the rewards of your labor through the student interactions and discussions in your classroom.

How to create it...

Beck et al. (1997) identify specific steps you should follow during a QtA lesson:

1. Select a passage that is both interesting and can spur a good conversation.
2. Decide appropriate stopping points where you think your students need to delve deeper and gain a greater understanding.
3. Create queries (questions to encourage critical thinking) for each stopping point.
 - a. Ex: What is the author trying to say?
 - b. Ex: Why do you think the author used the following phrase?
 - c. Ex: Does this make sense to you?

How to use it...

1. To introduce the strategy, display a short passage to your students along with one or two queries you have designed ahead of time.
2. Model for your students how you think through the queries.
3. Invite individual students or small groups to read and work through the queries you have prepared for their readings.
4. Remember that your role as the teacher during this strategy is to facilitate the discussion, not lead it. When students ask questions that go unanswered, try to restate them and encourage students to work to determine the answer.

Beck, I.L., & McKeown, M.G., Hamilton, R.L., & Kugan, L. (1997). *Questioning the author: An approach for enhancing student engagement with text*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

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