

“The only way of learning is by asking” shared a Boston Public Schools student to an audience of over 150 educators from around the country. Through use of the Question Formulation Technique (QFT), students around the world are learning how to ask *their own questions* and are recognizing the power the simple act of asking questions can behold for stimulating new thinking and learning.

This past summer [The Right Question Institute \(RQI\)](#) hosted the event, “Curiosity, Learning, & Democracy: Best Practices in the QFT.” RQI co-directors Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana, RQI staff, and educators from around the country led workshops and sessions on the QFT and learned alongside educators who are driving adoption of the QFT—a teaching strategy used in over a million classrooms to teach students how to formulate, work with, and use *their own* questions.



Thanks to support from the Boston Charity Concert, RQI was able to feature two groups of students and educators from Boston Public Schools and Fitchburg Public Schools during our conference.

On the first day of the conference, humanities teacher Ling-Se Chesnakas and three Boston Public Schools students reflected on how the QFT supports classroom learning. One student shared that, “with the QFT I learned that there are many people who have questions and that I’m not the only one. So, I was able to remember how to ask questions the way that I used to and build my curiosity again.” Building on this sentiment another Boston Public Schools student said, “the more questions you ask, the more information you’ll take away.”

The next day Ellen Gammel, a teacher at Fitchburg at the time, and four Fitchburg High School sophomores led another panel. Her students reflected how, “the QFT is mind-blowing because you are taking a tiny thing and thinking deep about it” and that, “The QFT makes me feel like a power source because my questions inspire other students’ questions.” The panel closed with one student reflecting on how the process of asking their own questions influenced their affect and how they newly viewed their role in the learning process: “the QFT made me feel important.”



These students’ wisdom on how question-asking nurtures more collaborative, inquisitive learning environments is just the tip of the iceberg for how the QFT is bringing greater joy to classrooms in Massachusetts and around the world. And, the QFT does not only bring greater joy to learners. “Why do I continue using the QFT in my classroom after all these years?” Ling-Se posed to the conference, “I have to say, besides the fact that I see student engagement increase, for me as a teacher I get so much joy and excitement.”

Interested in learning more about the work of RQI? Visit [www.rightquestion.org](http://www.rightquestion.org) to access free and easy to use educational resources which can be used across all grade levels and subject areas. We also encourage you to peruse the book [\*Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions\*](#) (now translated into Japanese).

*RQI is a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit organization. RQI makes it possible for all people to learn to ask better questions and participate more effectively in key decisions.*

