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QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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One of the most important tools an instructional developer has for helping a faculty member design a course is the question. Questions, themselves, however, can be both threatening and constraining if not used in a well thought out manner. Our attempts to understand the questions we use in working through an instructional development process have led us to believe that two types of questions are commonly used in our development efforts:

- releasing questions and
- focusing questions.

The list below is an attempt to identify the more common types of questions we use as developers. *These are not the "right" questions nor the only questions. They are simply questions that work for us in our daily development efforts.* You may wish to use this list to help you enhance your own development style.

QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO RELEASE CREATIVE ENERGY AND REMOVE CONSTRAINTS

TANTALIZER

Suppose we could develop a course which would . . . ?

What would you say if we could . . . ?

SHANGRI-LA

For now let's not worry about constraints. If you could have your ideal...?

If you had all the money, time and resources what would you do with . . . ?

INDULGER

What would be most satisfying for you in this course?

If you could really do something which interested you in this course what would it be?

SHIFTER

Let's look at that issue from a totally different perspective. Suppose

We've been talking about the value of "A". Suppose we assume that "B" is more valuable. What then?

PREACHER

Tell me what you really believe is important here. What do you value about . . . ?

WIDE ANGLE LENS

What else relates to this topic?

We've been working with "A" and "B" so far. How are "A" and "B" connected to the rest of the subject? What else is important?

OPENING THE BOX

Suppose we didn't have to do "X", what would that mean?

Let's forget about that for a moment and look at this instead.

SCANNING THE HORIZON

What do other programs do about this problem? What's working for them?

What do the five best programs in the country include at this point? What can we learn from them?

QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE CLARIFICATION AND FOCUSING

THE ARROW

We've covered a lot of ground. Suppose we just focus on

THIS OR THAT

You've said "A" and you've also said "B". Which is the one which . . . ?

There seems to be an inconsistency here. Do you mean "X" or "Y"?

WHAT DOES THAT TELL US

I've heard you say "A" and yet you still refer to "C" and "D" in the same general frame of reference. What does that tell us about the three of them?

RELATIONSHIPS

Is there a connection between

Can we explore the relationship between "A" and "F" for a moment?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Could you explain to me how "A" and "B" differ?

How does "A" compare with "C" then? Are they . . . ?

PATTERNS

We've been talking about "A", "B", "C", and "F". Is there a larger picture in which they all belong?

What's the "big picture" here? What are we really trying to say?

PREREQUISITES

What do I have to know to be able to learn "A"?

Suppose the students don't really understand "C". Will they be able to learn "D" or will they have to go back and learn "C"?

THE BRIDGE

I heard you talk about "A" and then you described "C". Isn't there a "B" somewhere?

Take a moment, please, and explain how you got from "A" to "C". I think I'm missing something here.

IMPLICATIONS

Suppose we do "A" and "B". What are the implications of that?

If we do "A" and "B" and that yields "C", is "C" what we want?