

Question Box

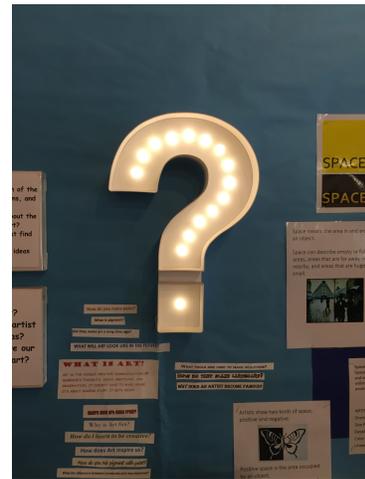
When I was in college (before Google), my Biology 101 professor introduced a Question Box during her first lecture. She invited us to place questions in the box before or after class and then she would read through them and select one or two to answer prior to the following lecture. The only rule was that the questions had to be about biology. She made overheads (remember those?) of the questions so we could see them in the students' handwriting. She read the question and then answered it. Most of these questions had nothing to do with the current topic we were learning. I can only imagine the questions she read through while trying to select one. One time she chose my question, "Why does eating ice cream too fast give you a headache?" (I was asking for a friend. 😊)

Materials:

Box with an opening
Paper
Pencils
Light-up question mark (optional)

This 5-minute period at the beginning of her lectures was like magic. I never wanted to be late, never wanted to miss her answers, wanted to see if my question might have been selected out of the 100 or so she read through.

When visiting a school in Dallas a few years ago, I noticed that the art teacher had a light-up question mark on her bulletin board. When the question mark was lit up it meant that she was going to address a question that day. Kids got excited when they saw that light on. I found the light-up question marks at Target for \$9.99 and thought it would be a great addition to the question box! If you are interested in setting up a question box in your room, I have two light-up question marks to give away. I will give them to the first two people to request them in the comments and just ask that you give me some feedback, photos, and examples of questions students ask.



There are different ways to use the question box. You can read through the questions and choose one that you want to answer, or even better, choose one to challenge students to research the answer. I wouldn't have all students write questions as an assignment, rather, let the questions come naturally.

The point of the question box is twofold:

1. To create excitement around questioning.
2. Give students a place to ask questions that are off topic or that they might be reluctant to ask out loud.