

Common Questions on Knowledge Building for Teachers:

Question 1: I have no time to write on the forum. I prefer talking face to face.

Dr Chan: My theory is that if you want to help your students to work on knowledge building on Knowledge Forum, it would be important for you to EXPERIENCE how it works. The analogy is that if you cannot cook, can you teach others to cook? You may read something from a recipe and ask your students to follow. Alternatively, you can tell your students not to be afraid, your teacher can do the same thing sharing ideas with strangers. Together we can improve. We are learning together.

Question 2: What do I write? I do not know what to write.

Dr Chan: You can write questions you have (I need to understand), share ideas (my theory), discuss what you have learned (new learning), and importantly build on others' notes (elaborate, explain, give reasons etc.) to help each other solve problems and improve ideas together. See what I am asking you to do is what you would ask your students to do in your teaching. My theory is if you do these often, you will also become smarter.

Question 3a: Dr Chan, What is your question for us to discuss? I cannot see any question in the view. Isn't it true that good teachers must ask good questions to guide their students?

Dr Chan: Wow. This may be a new idea for you and see what you think. Teachers often think that they must have a KEY question for students to discuss. In knowledge building, we shift the ownership from teachers to students, therefore, we work hard to have students ask their own questions and they continue to deepen their understanding.

--- Other useful questions are metacognitive questions. You can use that with different topics: "What have you learned about X?" "What are some questions you do not understand about X?" "What are some questions and issues you think are important for further inquiry?"

Questions 3b: What if the students ask trivial questions or out-syllabus questions?

Dr Chan: The skilful teachers scaffold students to ask important questions related to the curriculum and key concepts. Classroom talk is used together with Knowledge Forum so important concepts are developed. Well we can be flexible so there are no hard and fast rules that we never post a teacher question. You can also do that as beginners. But we hope to let you know there are different approaches. I have heard teachers insist there must be a key question from teachers and I need to correct that.

Question 4: I thought what you said seems interesting but I still do not know what to do or the procedure. I really need some step-by-step guide.

Dr Chan: There is a trick in how I am supporting teachers to learn. You may call it experiential learning. What is most important is not just the content but the presentation approach. I am modeling and demonstrating in the workshop what I would hope teachers can do in the classroom. As an example, in the workshop, I asked you to work in groups and ask each other questions, and write your questions on posters put on the board (ideas made public), and select several important student-generated questions to discuss on Knowledge Forum. This is exactly what you can follow and try out in your own classroom (see video-links). I urge you much to write on Knowledge Forum because I can demonstrate to you (model) how I as teacher can deal with KF notes. The difference is that my topic is 'knowledge-building' and your topics can be 'adolescence', 'energy crisis', 'history of Hong Kong' etc.

Question 5: I know discussion is good for my students. But they may not learn enough from the curriculum. They will run out of things to say.

Dr Chan: Students will run out of ideas soon if they are just talking and sharing (empty talk). Our goal is to help them build knowledge. Teachers need to provide students with input such as reading materials, multi-media, or experiments to enrich their discussion at appropriate time.

Accordingly, I am now sending you several short papers on knowledge building including a list of knowledge building principles. I have also included a video-clip as an example of how teachers can start discussion linking to Knowledge Forum in the classroom.

http://kbtn-resources.cite.hku.hk/KB_PhaseOne.html

You may refer to these materials and reflect on them as you post your notes on KF.

Technical Guide:

You can post your note Knowledge Forum.

Website: <http://kf.cite.hku.hk>

Database: KBTN-Teachers2

View: D. KLA groups

Please refer to the attached instructions (KF47_UserManual(Workshop).pdf) if you do not have a user account or need simple instructions on how to post a note. You can also refer to the demonstration video on how to write a NEW NOTE

(http://kbtn-resources.cite.hku.hk/kf_user_guides.html#NewNote) and how to

BUILD ON an existing note (http://kbtn-resources.cite.hku.hk/kf_user_guides.html#BuildOn) on our Resources Web.