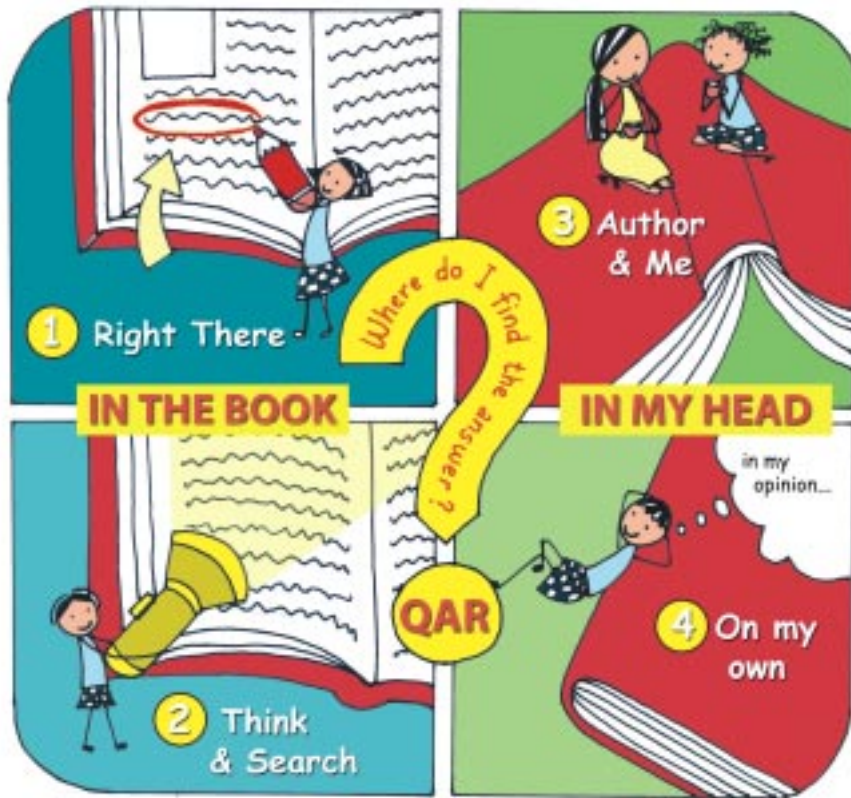




The Art of the Question

Get clued in on QAR—a questioning technique that improves reading comprehension and analytical thinking in students

BY ANCHELLA LAGUMBAY RENGERS



ing comprehension. QAR also builds self confidence because children are now better equipped to find and give the correct answers. QAR teaches children skills that will help them perform better in different subjects as well as in high school, college, and even the working world.

The Heart of QAR

With QAR, you first teach your students that answers can be found in two basic places: *In the Book* (the text itself) or *In Your Head* (students' background knowledge, thinking or the imagination). Whenever students hear a question, they must first determine in which of these two places they can find the answer. *In the Book* and *In Your Head* are further subdivided into two choices each:

In The Book

a. Right There: In other words, “the answer is right there.” These are literal answers that are formulated with words taken directly from the reading material. The answer can most likely be found in a single sentence within the text.

b. Think and Search: These are questions that require the students to think about the information they read and to search through the text to find the information that applies. In other words, the answers are found in several areas of the text.

In Your Head

a. Author and Me: The answer to this type of question combines what the reader already knows and what the author states in the text.

b. On My Own: With this type of question, the child is on her own and must base her answer on her own personal experience, opinion, imagination or knowledge.

As our pupils face the continuous demands of having to demonstrate their higher order thinking skills when reading, we educators need to provide them with strategies to help increase their understanding of what they're reading. An example of such a strategy is QAR, or Question-Answer Relationship. Developed in 1982 by Taffy Raphael at Michigan State University, QAR is a questioning strategy that builds comprehension through question-and-answer discussions.

The Goals of QAR:

- To help students realize the relationship between a question and the location of the answer. The student must try to

find out: can the answer be found in the text or in her background knowledge?

- To increase student performance in answering questions about material he has read. With QAR, the student should be able to give correct, more accurate answers to questions.

Why QAR?

Children are not always able to locate evidence in text to support answers to the questions we ask. Instead, they make up the answers or look in the wrong place. Kids may also have difficulty figuring out how to answer questions that are not directly found in the text. QAR builds children's answering skills and improves read-

Let's Teach QAR

Step 1: Introduce the QAR Strategy

Distribute four index cards to each student. Each card should bear the name of an answer type: Right There, Think and Search, Author and Me, and On My Own.

1. Present a passage to the students. Before reading, clarify vocabulary or concepts that may pose challenges to students. Ask what they know about the topic to spark prior knowledge.

2. Teacher and students read the material together. Teacher models QAR by providing questions, answers, and explanations for each answer type. The index cards that the students have will remind them of the four QAR types. They can hold up the right

QAR at Work

Try out these passages to introduce QAR to your class.

Passage Sample 1: The Odd Spider

Most spiders live on land, but this spider is different. It spends most of its time under water. How does it breathe? It breathes by making a tent full of air bubbles under water.

First it spins a web in the shape of a bell. Then it fixes the web to plants under the water. Next, it swims up to the top of the water and traps a tiny bubble of air with its hairy back legs. It drags the bubble to its web. It does this many times until its home is full of air. Then it sits nice and snug in its web and feeds on tiny fish and other water animals.

Sample Question	Sample Answer	QAR Type
How does the spider breathe?	It breathes by making a tent full of air bubbles under water.	Right There
What makes the spider unusual or different from other spiders?	It spends most of its time under water. It spins a bell-shaped web. It swims.	Think and Search
How does the shape of the web help the spider?	Its bell-shaped web allows it to trap air bubbles that will help it breathe under water.	Author and Me
Why would the spider attach the web to a plant under the water?	Answers may vary. Examples: so that the web doesn't float away; so that the spider will know where to find it.	On My Own

Passage Sample 2: A Sea Monster?

Susan was swimming under water when something came near her. It had a round middle with eight long arms sticking out of it. Each arm had rows of little cups that could hold things tightly. In its middle was a mouth with two beaks as sharp as knife blades.

In the past, many seamen had been afraid of this animal. But Susan was not afraid. She was a scientist learning about the octopus. She knew that it eats crabs and other small shellfish from the bottom of the sea. She knew that some octopuses (or octopi) give out lots of ink when they feel they're in danger. The ink makes a screen so their enemies can't see them slip away. Susan hoped this would not happen because she wanted to observe the octopus and learn more about it.

Question	QAR Type
Where was Susan?	Right There
What is Susan?	Right There
Why wasn't Susan afraid of the octopus?	Author and Me
Why would sailors of long ago be afraid of an octopus? Explain your answer.	Author and Me
If you were Susan in this passage what would you do?	On My Own
Describe characteristics of an octopus.	Think and Search

Remember:

Student responses during the discussions are only as good as the questions created. Just like most things, questioning is truly an art that is developed and honed with time and practice. Question away!

QAR card at appropriate instances. Be sure to model the thought process by thinking out loud.

3. **Highlight where information is located** in text or items in the reading material that help the reader draw conclusions and make inferences from text.

Step 2: Guided Practice

1. **Teacher provides another passage with a set of questions.** This time, instead of providing the answers, the teacher guides the students through the process of finding the answers themselves.

2. **Students identify the QAR type** by pulling out the correct index card, share their answer with the class, and justify their response citing the source and reasoning for their answers.

Tip: You can have students form smaller groups to better monitor their understanding of QAR.

Step 3: Independent Activity

1. **Students are given another passage.** Teacher and students read together and teacher clarifies vocabulary/concepts that may be difficult for readers.

2. **Students themselves make up questions and answers** using the text, then identify the QAR type for each.

Tip: In this activity, students can even make flash cards, writing down the question in the front of the card, and the answer as well as the QAR answer type at the back.

3. **Students exchange questions and answers in groups.** Groups can then share their one or two questions with the class. ★

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ABOUT THE WRITER

Anchella Lagumbay Rengers is a Filipino 3rd grade teacher in California, USA who admits that her students are taller than she is. She is on her eighth year of teaching and has an MA in Cross-cultural Education. She and her husband also serve as volunteers for a youth program at their local parish.



WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT...

Bad Behavior

Is there really something you can do to help the troublemakers in your class? Read on! **BY INES BAUTISTA**

We've all had to deal with them at some point: kids who regularly disobey, disregard instructions, and generally cause trouble in class. Why do they make a teacher's life so difficult? Understanding these children is the first step towards putting a stop to their behavior.

Definition of terms

According to Isabel Bautista-Saplala of the Miriam College Child Development Education Department, disruptive classroom behavior happens "when children repeatedly fail to follow procedures, rules, and expectations that have been clarified and practiced from the start of class, despite reminders. This leads to disruption of the flow of activities, sometimes causing misunderstanding or conflict with other students. Some common characteristics of a child's misbehavior include lack of attention, restlessness, attention-seeking behavior, difficulty to wait one's turn, and lack of self-control." The latter may lead to physical violence.

When a student acts up or begins behaving badly, other students are affected as well. "It disrupts the flow of activities [of the rest of the class]. Children react to the one who misbehaves in a variety of ways, the most natural reaction being 'irritated.' Younger children, I observed, are moved to call on an authority like the teacher to help manage the behavior and situation, while older children may still resort to authority but are more moved to deal with the one who misbehaves independently by asserting themselves verbally or physically. Boys are more physically assertive while girls are more verbally assertive. In extreme cases, classroom peers may shun or move away from the one who misbehaves primarily to protect themselves," says Bautista-Saplala.

Why do they do it?

There are several reasons why a child misbehaves, says Raffy Reloza, a counselor and Director of Link Center for the Deaf and Leap School for Young Children. It doesn't all boil down to being *KSP* (*kulang sa pansin*) as most teachers and parents believe, although this too could be a reason. "You need to look at the bigger picture and see what their environment is like and what their experience is like." Reloza says it is important to begin with the child's environment. It is possible that if the class is too large, and the room is cramped and hot, a child can display signs of bad behavior.

"Another reason could be the teacher's teaching style," Reloza adds. "Is the teacher too authoritarian? Does he or she reprimand his or her students in front of everyone else? Look at your approach in disciplining. With the wrong manner of disciplining, children react in a certain way. If the child has problems at home and the teacher shouts at him or her, the problem will not be dealt with."

Another teacher-related cause could be the teacher's inconsistency. "Every teacher's responsibility is to manage the class well. This plays an important role in teaching and shaping children to behave appropriately at the right time and place. Setting clear procedures and expectations and following these consistently from the first day of school avoids misbehavior. Unclear procedures and rules and inconsistent implementation of these lead to misbehavior," says Bautista-Saplala. Moreover, if the teacher doesn't follow the rules that she herself sets for the children, it will destroy the students' respect and can lead to even further harm.

If these problems have been addressed and the student still misbehaves, Bautista-Saplala suggests looking at the child himself or herself. "Other reasons could be that the child is bored or uninterested in the class activity, has unmet physical needs such as being tired, sick, or hungry, has unmet emotional needs, doesn't receive enough structure or guidance from adults, or has low self-esteem. It could also be due to the child's temperament or that he/she is reflecting certain family problems at home. Sometimes too, children may simply be reacting to a situation, like incidents of grabbing or pushing or teasing [from their classmates]."

According to Reloza, "A lot of these kids have issues at home. Some of these kids work and help their parents after school. It's a struggle. Imagine the stresses the kids go through." He was able to find out what some of these stressors were when he talked to a group of grade four and five public school students. "I asked what their problems were and they talked about the rape of a girl who was just a year older than them, the death of a child who got pushed in school and died in a stampede, older guys recruiting them for gangs, pornographic materials being shown to them..." This is why we must take into consideration other reasons for our students' behavior and as Reloza imparts, try to "see the situation from the child's perspective."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMART PARENTING

What you must do

Because there are several possible causes of bad behavior, it is important to find out why your student is acting up. Only then can you address it. Bautista-Saplala has outlined the possible reasons for misbehavior and the actions you can take to either prevent it or troubleshoot once it has taken place.



REASON	ACTION
Unclear classroom procedures	Establish a clear set of procedures, routines, rules, expectations, and consequences when these are not followed. Practice these daily. Try to set these at the start of the school year. Work at implementing these <i>consistently</i> . Post a visual reminder of classroom rules and regulations to remind your students.
Disorderly classroom environment	Arrange and label your classroom in an orderly fashion that matches your routine and procedures. Let your students know their respective seats and spaces. Orient the class on how to go about activities and on your expectations in using the classroom. Assign responsibilities to students to help them care for their room responsibly.
Inappropriate expectations	Prepare lessons and activities that match the age and capabilities and learning styles of your students with realistic challenges to keep them interested.
Boredom	Use a variety of teaching strategies and materials for instruction. Manage maximum classroom participation well. Always come to class prepared.
Unmet physical needs	Set a time at the beginning of your class to learn how your students are doing and to address some physical needs like going to the bathroom or having a drink of water. Be sensitive to their other physical needs during the rest of the day and address sickness or pain using available resources.
Unpleasant situations (such as grabbing, pushing, teasing)	<p>Approach and process the situation with the students involved calmly. Clarify what happened and how kids reacted. Involve them in problem solving afterwards. Label the action, not the child, when correcting misbehavior. Processing allows kids to pause and calm down from their emotions. It also raises their awareness of their social-emotional self and helps them gain control and responsibility over their actions, and learn to respond instead of react.</p> <p>According to child psychologist Dr. Honey Carandang, discipline is not just about letting children know the <i>should not</i>s or <i>don't</i>s but in making them understand the <i>dos</i> or positive alternatives to misbehavior.</p>

While implementing these measures, it is important that you gain your students' trust. According to Reloza, "Build rapport slowly. Then the child will feel they can talk to you. You can begin by asking how they are at home—a gradual approach to finding out their situations at home and in school. . . If a teacher just spends extra time and effort to be a mother or father figure [which these kids may lack at home], it will make worlds of difference to them. They need one adult they can cling on to—one particular teacher to guide them through it."

If you have already established a "terror-teacher" reputation, you can ask another teacher to talk to the student for you, a teacher the student trusts and will open up to. However, Reloza says is best if you deal with the issues yourself. It is also important to deal with the problems immediately after something has occurred. "If you catch a child bullying another child, don't wait for another teacher to talk to them. Do it right after the incident. Pull the child aside later on and ask them what is wrong."

There will be cases, however, where as a teacher, you cannot deal with the situation yourself. Bautista-Saplala and Reloza both suggest approaching well-trained guidance counselors and the child's parents.

Working with parents

"Communicating and collaborating with the family is helpful especially for kids



My Personal Challenge

HOW A STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR CHANGED THE WAY ONE TEACHER SEES HER STUDENTS. By Isa Bautista-Saplala

An unforgettable and challenging experience I had was with a 5-year-old creative, competent, yet "special" boy who broke his crayons intensely into pieces when angered, hurled wooden blocks at his classmates, and simply had a hard time facing, managing, and understanding his emotions. I tried a variety of action plans and interventions with him, often taking him one-on-one for an extra 15 to 30 minutes after class just to process his feelings and some situations that affected others. This left me exhausted sometimes, and feeling like a failure at the end of the day. It was tough and arduous trying to understand, deal with, and love the heart beneath my special boy.

It was only when we started working with his family and with development professionals that we came to understand what it was like to have "Asperger's syndrome" and realize that he would need another environment where he would learn and improve better. [Asperger's Syndrome is a disorder that is characterized by a person's inability to interact with other people, delay in the development of motor skills, and idiosyncratic behavior. It is hard to diagnose because there are no delays in language skills or other areas of the child's development.] The difficult times with him, though, were still worthwhile as he taught me to confront myself, raise my patience, and widen my perspective of things.

who lack structure for consistency in intervention in school and at home. Often, misbehaving kids with open and cooperative (sometimes even creative) parents show marked improvement in behavior earlier than those from unresponsive home environments," says Bautista-Saplala.

In approaching your student's parents, Reloza stresses the importance of focusing on the behavior and not on the child. "Never label the child and tell the parents, 'your child is like this or like that.' Instead, tell them what you've observed in school and tell them what the parents can do. Make sure that the parents don't get angry at the kids." If the parents just scream at the child, it will not address the bad behavior and it might even make it worse.

It is easy to get caught up in an incredibly heavy teaching workload and dismiss misbehaving students as KSP or troublemakers. But if we see each student as an individual, with a background to the behavior he or she displays in school, our perspectives will widen. This will make it easier to step in and be there for them. "Pay attention and focus on the possible problems of your students. The



best strategy is to deal with those who need it the most first," shares Reloza.

Bautista-Saplala adds that it is also important to be ready for bad behavior in our classrooms. "It is valuable for teachers to prepare themselves for these situations professionally and personally. Professionally, by equipping ourselves with good classroom management skills, and personally by building

our own and our students' sense of self for a positive sense of self. This will breed positive helpful behavior."

Surrounding our students with a positive, trusting, and loving environment may not completely eliminate the possibility of bad behavior, but it will lessen the chances of students acting out because they have no one to talk to and no one to trust. ★

ABOUT THE WRITER

Ines C. Bautista is currently taking her MA in English Language and Literature Teaching at the Ateneo de Manila University. She is also the editor-in-chief of Candy magazine, a publication for teens. Before this, she was a high school English teacher at Assumption San Lorenzo and a college English Literature teacher at the Ateneo.

AN ATTENDEE'S NOTES ON...

The First Philippine Multiple Intelligence Convention

BY DALI SORIANO

We were an energetic and all wired up—a group of more than 2000 participants from Aparri to Jolo packing the Manila Hotel Convention Hall last February 11 and 12, 2005. The occasion: the first ever Philippine Multiple Intelligence Convention. The main attraction? No less than the father of the Multiple Intelligence theory himself, Dr. Howard Gardner, who took time out of his busy schedule in the United States to visit the Philippines. This Harvard Graduate School and Boston University professor and chairperson of many US government education projects accepted the invitation to visit our country in order to "learn about contemporary Philippine society and culture, including educational issues that are of greatest concern." It was indeed a rare opportunity for parents and educators to listen to such a highly acclaimed psychologist and an intelligent author and educator.

Challenging the IQ Theory

The audience quieted down for the first plenary session, where Dr. Gardner gave us a basic understanding of the Multiple Intelligence theory, which is based on 20 years of work and challenges the traditional assumption of the Intelligent Quotient (I.Q) theory. Proponents of IQ assert that an individual is born with a single intelligence that can be measured by a single test and does not really change over time. Dr. Gardner's research made the revolutionary conclusion that there are eight intelligences which an individual can possess in varying degrees, and can be measured by what he or she is able to do well. What is so encouraging about his theory is that these intelligences can change with good education and exposure to a varied and rich environment.



The Eight Intelligences

Dr. Gardner described the eight intelligences as independent computers in the brain, each one processing its own kind of information. These “computers” operate at different capacities in each individual, and they are “activated” when the person is presented with a certain type of information that needs to be processed. Here are the eight intelligences and what they allow the human being to do:

Math-Logic Intelligence	Reasoning and problem solving; working with numbers
Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence	Physical activities, muscular control
Interpersonal Intelligence	Understanding, socializing with and reaching out to others; leading and organizing groups
Intrapersonal Intelligence	Knowing oneself; being aware of one's strengths, weaknesses, feelings, thoughts and beliefs
Naturalist Intelligence	Understanding how the environment, plants, animals, and the human body work
Spatial Intelligence	Visualization, creating and recognizing patterns, navigating
Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence	Verbal communication, expressing oneself through words
Musical Intelligence	Sensitivity to sound, rhythm, melody and pitch. Expressing oneself through sounds

Multiple Intelligence Myths

While sharing his knowledge with us, Dr. Gardner was also quick to caution us about Multiple Intelligence myths. One is that Multiple Intelligence is an educational goal. Gardner stressed that MI is a scientific *theory*, not a goal. The MI theory does not tell teachers what to do in the classroom, although knowledge of it will help them improve in imparting knowledge to their students.

One myth that annoys him the most is the belief that MI is the same as learning style. Learning style, he clarified, is a way of learning no matter what the content is. Multiple Intelligence is the different ways individuals respond to different kinds of content.

He also challenges the myth that intelligence cannot be changed. Dr. Gardner believes that intelligence *can* change in a favorable environment.

Breakout Session

With new ideas buzzing in our heads, we participants then had workshop sessions, where we were asked to translate the MI

theory into concrete classroom activities. Finding my way to the verbal-linguistic group, I watched Linda Warfel of Scholastic Books (an international children's publisher), presenter of “Making Literature Come Alive the MI Way,” demonstrate a Read-Aloud lesson using several picture books which included fiction and non-fiction, and a poem. The Read Aloud poem, “There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly,” was interactive, requiring participants to play different animal roles. All the participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Ms. Warfel ended her presentation with the story book, *What A Wonderful World*, which the participants sang with her. This model lesson used at least four intelligences. Using your new knowledge of MI, can you identify them?

Dr. Howard Gardner's message to all teachers:

- Know your students
- Teach to their intelligences
- Help them use their minds well
- Teach for understanding
- Teach in more than one way
- Approach goals using various intelligences

A Classroom Activity using M.I.

Here's an activity you may want to try. I hope your students will enjoy this as much as mine did.

I read a story book to my students and made sure everyone understood it well. I then asked them to join a group based on what they thought they were good at. They chose from these five occupations:

- Builders
- Artists/Painters
- Musicians
- Entertainers
- Dancers

I assigned different types of tasks to each group that allowed them to make the most of their skills. Here are the results: The Builders made a game board based on the story. The Artists/Painters drew how the characters felt during certain parts of the story. The Musicians composed a piece that brought out the sounds of the story. The Entertainers wrote a script and presented a skit. The Dancers choreographed dance steps that showed the different emotions of story characters.

Each group took turns presenting their masterpieces. They enjoyed doing their activities as they delved deeper into the story.

Try it and have fun!

ABOUT THE WRITER

Dali has retired from teaching children in schools and now teaches teachers instead, and she loves it. Reading is her passion and she enjoys sharing her discoveries with colleagues in the profession.