

Interlocking Frameworks: Object-based Learning, Critical Thinking and Questions

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens
2026 Mansion Docent Training

Questions

Closed Questions

Closed questions: Cognitive/memory questions: Ask for what you already know or can see. Answers involve simple recall and are either right or wrong.

Who
What
Where
When

Closed questions: Convergent questions: Ask you to do something with the information you already have or can see. Find similarities, differences, patterns, relationships. They ask you to categorize, to organize information, to find central themes. There are right or wrong answers.

In what ways
How
Why

Open Questions

Open questions: Divergent questions: Ask for new ideas, for inferences. They are open-ended, meaning there is no one right answer. To answer, one must gather information from past experience, link it to new information being explored, and create new understandings and interpretation.

Imagine
Predict
How might
What are some possible consequence

Object-based Learning (Visual Literacy)

Perception: Use of the senses with links to memory (what does it remind you of?), interests, and attitudes (how do you feel about it?)

Description: Using language to give a systematic inventory of the object's physical attributes; use of a vocabulary that moves from simple to more complex concepts

Analysis: Finding relationships and patterns between the parts and the whole; similarities and differences when comparing two or more objects; probing to find links between objects and people.

Interpretation: Finding new understandings, new meanings; making connections among the past, the present and the future.

Critical Thinking (Bloom's Taxonomy)

Knowledge: Student collects information; recalls previously learned information; describes what she can see.

Analysis: Student can break ideas down into component parts; understand relationships among parts; classify; categorize; sequence; get the main idea; draw conclusions.

Synthesis: Student can work with parts, combining them to form a new structure, new meanings; infer; predict; create.

Interlocking Frameworks: Object-based Learning, Critical Thinking and Questions

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens

2026 Mansion Docent Training

Some Definitions

Framework:	A structure (network or outline) to organize information, perceptions, and experiences; a concept taken from education theory
Object-based learning:	Learning from things, uses the skill of visual literacy (reading things)
Critical thinking:	Higher level thinking skills and reasoning
Inquiry:	A teaching method that uses a framework of questions and other components to foster active participation in the learning experiences; on a guided tour, inquiry drives the conversation forward

Beyond Questions...

Inquiry is more than questions.

Inquiry also uses:

- Wait time
- Probing
- Good listening
- Clearly stated questions
- Praise
- Redirection
- Risk-taking!