ABOUT Focus Questions

- A Focus Question is not “What is this career or job like?” or “What are the skills and tasks in this job or career?” It is about specific content within the work.

- A Focus Question should inquire about an aspect, a process, a mission, or the manner and detail of providing service or product in an organization or community. It can delve into the standards, operations, and interactions in an industry or organization and the community it serves.

- Answering a Focus Question comes from time-lapse learning. You discover and investigate the question through your observation and immersion in the environment. Think of it as an investigation.

- A Focus Question cannot be answered by asking someone (like an expert), nor by looking it up on the internet or in books.

- A Focus Question requires critical thinking and stimulates the curiosity of the audience.

Levels of Thinking (based on Costa, Bloom)

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= getting the facts

= using the facts

= applying the facts

Senior Project Focus Questions Should Involve Levels 2 & 3

Sample Focus Questions:

What is the role of massage therapy in the healing of a serious medical problem?

What are the steps for rebuilding and updating computers for a non-profit organization to prepare for reuse? (NextStep Recycling)

What social, economic, and engineering challenges are associated with the design and marketing of hybrid car engines?

How severe is the problem of poverty in the Eugene-Springfield area and what is being done to address it?

How can fMRI’s help to refine the mapping of motor and sensory control in individual body parts, and in what ways can this help amputees? (UO Center for Neuroimaging)

How do you provide the necessary supports for children in the foster care system due to the many transitions they go through?

How does an advertising business design and produce the most effective advertisements/products?
How can music be used to enhance learning of academic subjects in elementary school?

What are avenues for a political activist/individual to lead efforts for societal change?

How does museum curation adapt to changing technology and public interest with regards to storage of specimens, documenting information, and displays? (Museum of Natural & Cultural History @ UO)

How can I design buildings and houses that will be practical and functional but still use my artistic creative skills?

What are the best current methods of communicating with an Alzheimer’s patient and how does music play a part in stimulating memory? (memory care facility)

What are effective methods to raise political awareness and motivate people to vote?

What dangers do patients face under heavy sedation & how have these dangers been limited? (nurse/anesthetist)

How do creative recycling techniques affect community recycling efforts? (BRING)

What works to reduce juvenile delinquency? (Lane County Department of Human Services)

What medical techniques are needed (doctor patient interactions, technology, etc.) to provide health care in developing countries? (Tanzania)

How does a hair stylist keep up with changing styles; and how does the stylist influence those styles?

What strategies would be most effective in retaining teenage part-time workers in the service industry and reducing turnover?

How would one run an experiment to: immobilize cyanobacteria in silica to produce hydrogen as an alternative energy; and build a most efficient super conductor? (UO Chemistry Dep’t)

How much of a role does censorship play in journalism?

How do non-profits get people to care about and support a cause that doesn’t directly affect them? (HIV Alliance)

How can art be used to help children with the grieving process? (Courageous Kids)

What are the steps in creating an anti-tobacco, alcohol and drug curriculum that will effectively motivate teens in the community to change their ways?

How can Native American culture be brought to more children? (Natives Program)

What are the most common injuries seen by an athletic trainer, and what can be done to prevent them?

What is the process involved in locating a fault that may be lifting the nearby (Alaska) hills? (UO Geology Dep’t)

What are the shortcomings of democracy and how can they be solved? (Oregon House of Representatives)

How can a high school student contribute to examining and improving the nutrition content in school lunches, vending machines, and snack carts of a school district?

What are the key issues to preparing for and running a well executed sports talk show? (KPNW Radio)

How can a business retool its marketing to appeal to a younger demographic? (ClaySpace)

How is an effective set of lesson plans designed, created and implemented for a class of third graders? (4J Summer School)