



Question-Handling in the American Classroom

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Handling questions when you don't understand the question

Manage & navigate too-broad, irrelevant, and offensive questions

What to do when you don't know the answer

The question-handling environment

Overview/Objectives

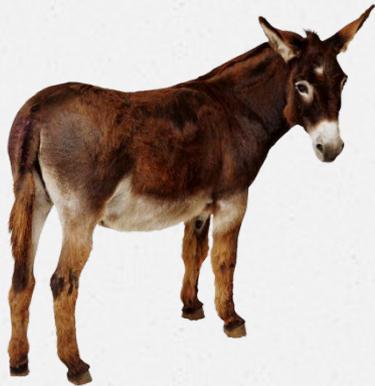


Animal Classifications

Introduction to Biology

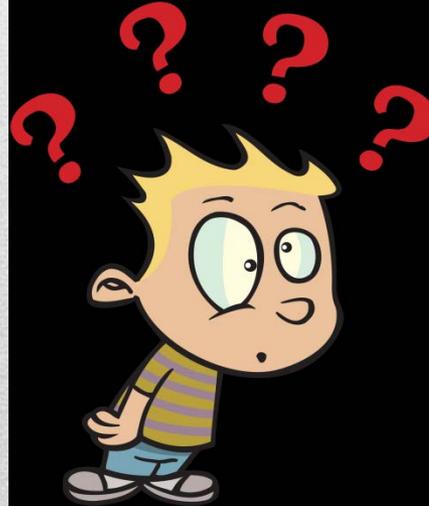
Mammals

- o Have hair or fur
- o Give birth to live young
- o Mammals that live on land have 4 legs
- o Have lungs and need air to breathe
- o Warm-blooded animals



Handling Questions in the Classroom

When you don't understand the question...





Do you understand the question?

- Potential issues:
- You don't understand their speech.
 - Accent or speed
- You miss a key word or two.
- You don't understand the essence of their question / what exactly they are trying to ask.





Strategies for understanding the question

- Option 1:
 - Ask the student to rephrase the question.

How would you ask students to rephrase questions?



When you still cannot understand the question

- Option 2:
 - Ask another student to rephrase the question for you.





When you aren't completely sure if you understood the question

- Option 3:
 - Attempt to restate your understanding of the question and ask the student if you are correct.
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Is the question off-topic?

Learning to manage and navigate, too broad, irrelevant, and/or offensive questions



Video Example





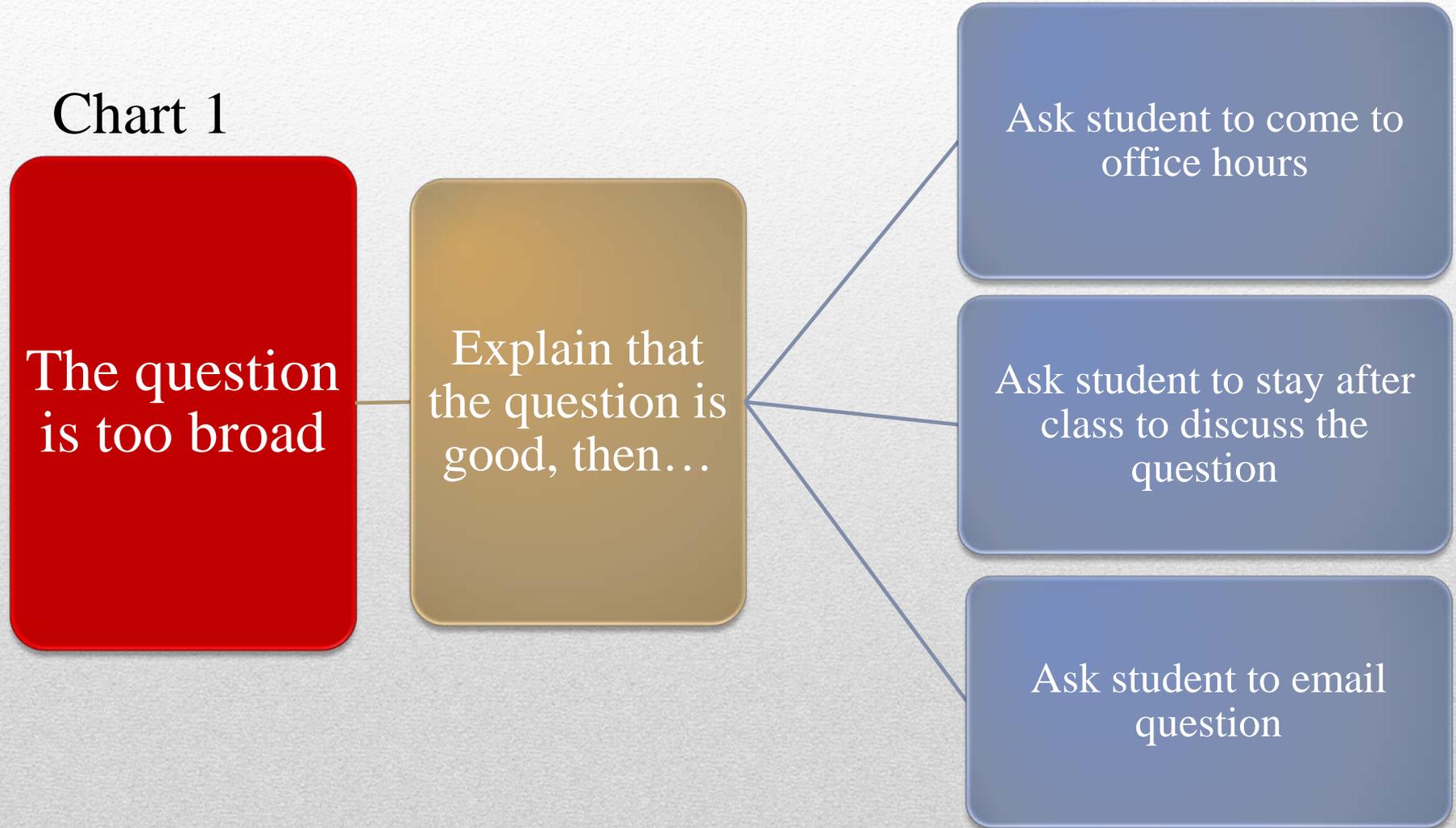
Off-topic Questions

- Questions that are good, but beyond the scope of the class or the day's lecture (**too broad**)
- Questions that are **irrelevant**
- Questions or comments that are even **offensive**
- Questions that interfere with other students' learning

How do we navigate and then deflect these questions?

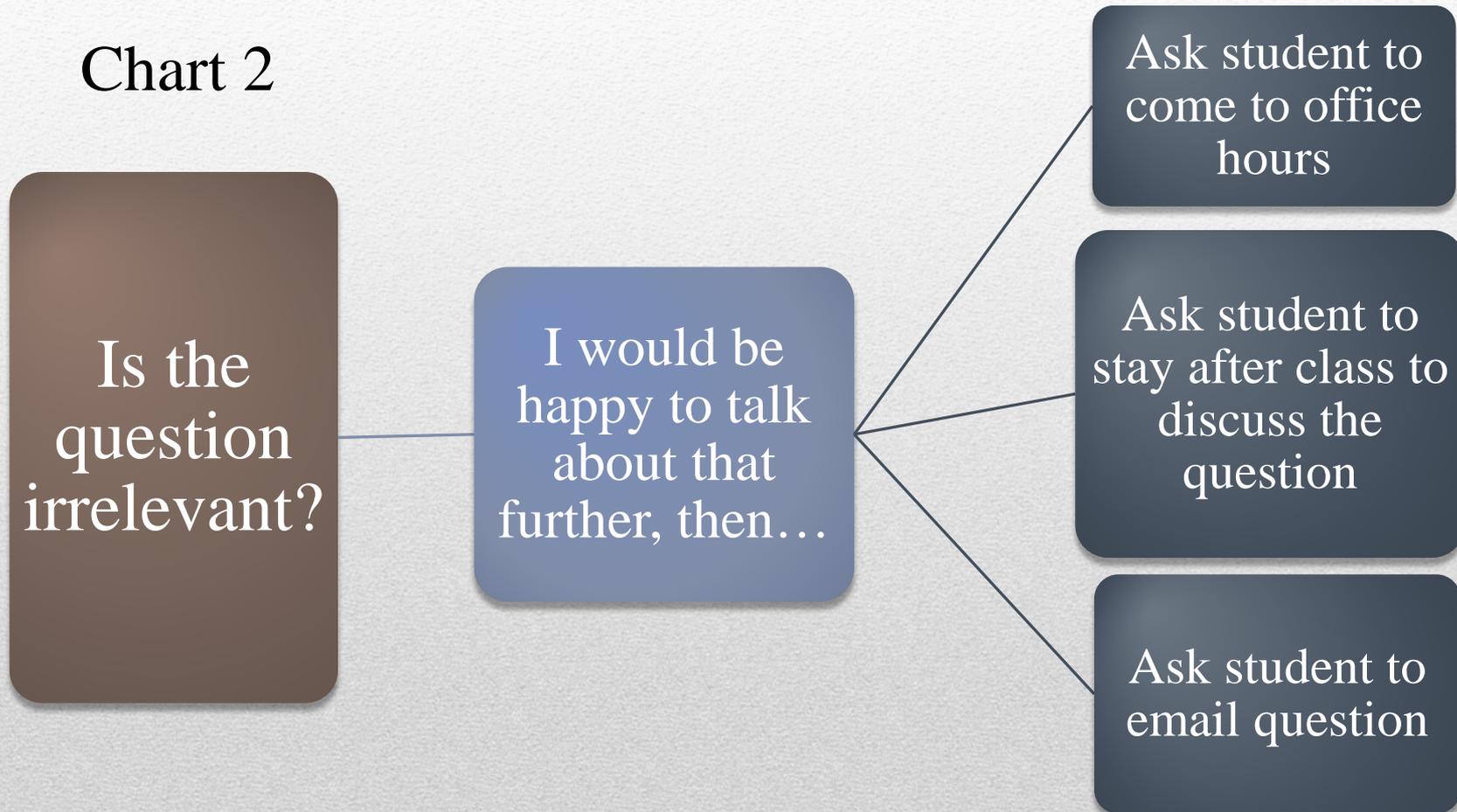
Navigating the Question

Chart 1



Navigating the Question

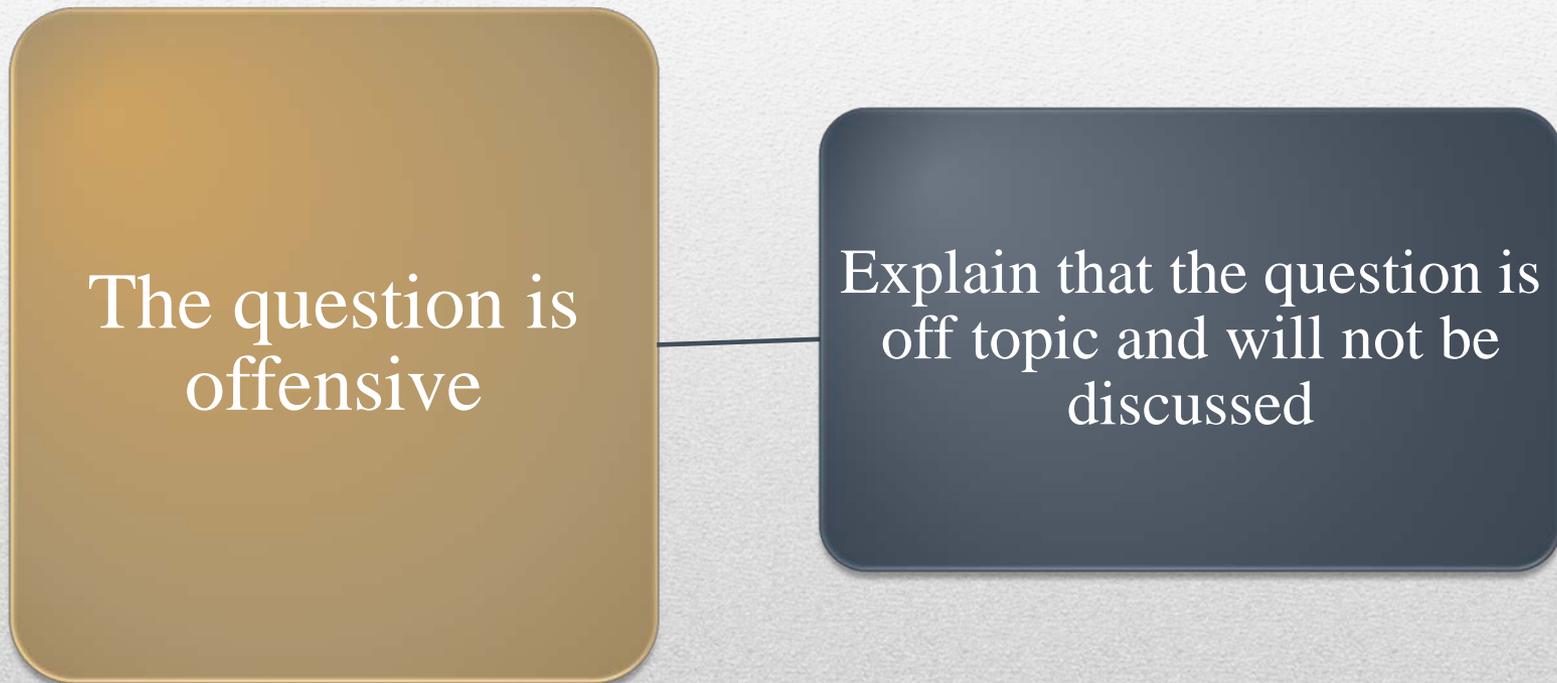
Chart 2





Navigating the Question

Chart 3





Topic: Animals in Tallahassee

Is the question relevant?

- Do they have flamingos in Wisconsin?
 - Are animals in Tallahassee similar to animals in North Georgia?
 - You know what manatees remind me of? The girls on Friday night at Bullwinkle's!
 - Why does Tallahassee have so many small parks?
 - Caring about animals is stupid, we should just get rid of them. Why does the city care about them? We should hunt them down.
 - What laws are in place to protect the local animals?
-



What if you understand a student's question but don't know the answer?

Strategies & Cultural differences



Not every question requires
an immediate answer

Don't be panicked!

You just need to
know how to
handle your class
and students.

There are many
good ways of
answering
questions!

Handling Questions



Option 1:

That's a very good question! But, honestly, I don't know the answer right now. Could you email that question to me? I need some time to think about it. I will get back to you soon.

- In your culture, do you feel comfortable to say “I don't know”?
- Make sure you do get back to your students with an answer.

What to say when you don't know the answer...



Option 2:

Does anyone know the answer? I want to hear what others think.

Option 3:

I like your question, but I've never thought about that before.
I will let you know.

What to say when you don't
know the answer...

- It is OK to be honest with your students if you don't have the answer right away.
- It is OK to ask for help.
- It is important to always get back to your students with an answer.

Cultural Differences



The Question Handling Environment

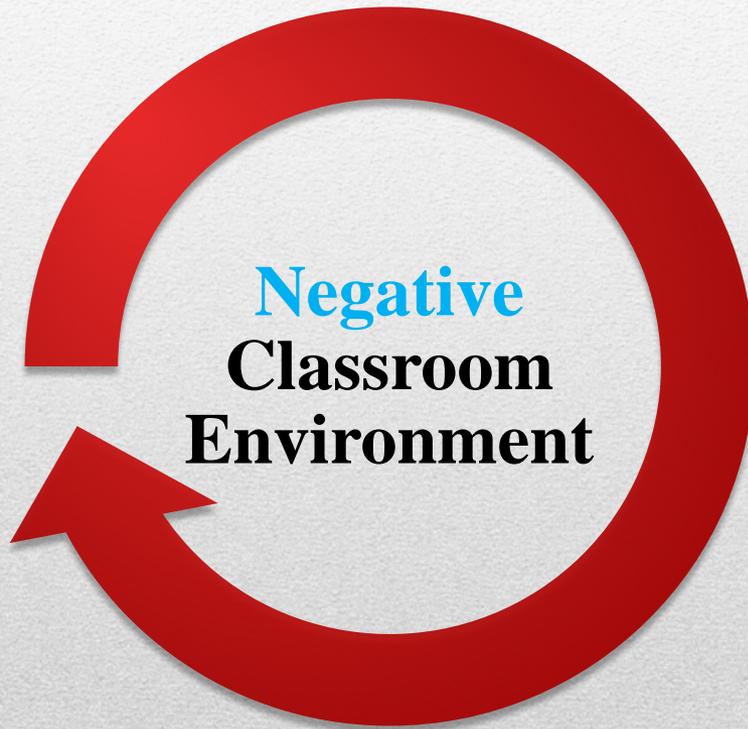


The Question Handling Environment

- Let's start with a brief skit
 - The TA who responds poorly to students
 - The TA who handles everything properly



Fostering a Negative Environment



- Body Language
 - Equal Opportunity
 - Teacher Attitude
 - Time during Discussion
-

Fostering a Positive Environment



- Body Language
 - Equal Opportunity
 - Teacher Attitude
 - Time during Discussion
-

Takeaways

BODY LANGUAGE

Make eye contact

Face your students

Be approachable



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Answer a variety

Call on a different students

Reiterate office hours



TEACHER ATTITUDE

Reputation

Attention to students

Positive attitude



DISCUSSION TIME

Beginning of class

During class

End of class



Question-Handling

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graph TD; A[Question-Handling] --- B[When you don't understand the question]; A --- C[When the question is irrelevant (too broad, irrelevant, or offensive)]; A --- D[When you understand the question but don't know the answer]; A --- E[Creating a question-friendly environment];
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When you
don't
understand
the question

When the
question is
irrelevant
(too broad,
irrelevant, or
offensive)

When you
understand
the question
but don't
know the
answer

Creating a
question-
friendly
environment

Review

Birds

1. Have feathers and wings
2. Lay eggs
3. Have 2 legs
4. Ear holes instead of ears
5. Warm-blooded animals

