The genius of TDQ is the way Fisher and Frey break down the process into four cognitive pathways that help teachers "organize the journey through a text" and frame an extended discussion around it. Together, these questions ignite students' engagement and discussion because they strategically lead students to a place of understanding where explicit and implied meanings and interpretations can be debated.

1. Does the Test Say? This first phase of questioning addresses general understanding, in which students attend to the major points in the text. These questions are paired with key detail questions that drill down further, most notably as they explore the relationship between the main idea and supporting details.

2. How Does the Text Work? This next questioning phase involves the mechanics of the text, including problematic vocabulary words and phrases. Going deeper still, text structure and author's craft questions ask students to locate the ways authors employ different literary devices to forward a plot, explanation, or argument.

3. What Does the Test Mean? Here, the four-phase questioning process culminates as students are inspired to move beyond the text to forward a plot, explanation, or argument.

4. What Does the Text Say? The final phase of questioning addresses the text and its interpretation. Teachers are encouraged to pose questions about text?