



THE WAY

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FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL - SENIOR SCHOOL LEARNING

Doing Work or Learning?

As staff, we look at what industry experts have to teach us about education. Recently our Senior School staff have been looking at the work of Ron Ritchhart in his book *Creating Cultures of Thinking: the 8 Forces We Must Master to Truly Transform our Schools*. One of the interesting points he raises for teachers is to notice the prevalence of the language of work orientation in their classrooms, rather than a learning orientation. It has been edifying to catch myself as I am teaching this week to notice how often I am asking my students to 'work hard', 'get on with their work', 'have they done their work', or 'where are they up to in their work'? Perhaps I should be using the language of learning a little more by instead asking 'how is their learning going', or encouraging them with 'keep learning' or 'ensure you are working hard at your learning'.

I reflected with a colleague after we had visited several classrooms, that when we asked students what they were doing in the lesson, they commonly answered with the tasks that were required of them: 'we need to answer these 4 questions' or 'we need to write a paragraph on' and what we really cared about is what they were learning by doing those questions or forming that paragraph. A small distinction perhaps, although it is good to discuss the implications of what we say in our classrooms and how our lessons can be framed, is to ensure our students are focused on what they are learning rather than simply what tasks need to be completed in a given lesson. How can we as parents also help our children to make this distinction? I often ask my children what they did at school today rather than what they learned today. Do you do the same?

