



THE WAY

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FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL DIRECTOR OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Does your child ask questions or sit and listen? Which is better?



As I consider my classes over my teaching career, I would estimate that only 2-3 students would be regular in asking questions. I read hundreds of report comments each year, and a frequent observation from teachers about their students is that they are very quiet and they should ask more questions. There are many reasons why students may not want to ask questions including culture, fear of appearing silly or ignorant, shyness in general, or some other reason.

Recently I came across an article titled “Is It Better to Ask Questions or Listen Carefully?” by Lory Hough based on some research conducted through Harvard Education. In her concluding remarks, Lory identifies 3 key reasons why questions from students are important:

- They help the teacher see where the confusions are and allow for more effective lesson-building.
- They build interest, curiosity and support learning directly.
- Students can be empowered to take ownership of their learning.
- They help students practice their thinking and make connections.

On the one hand, I am not overly concerned about the fact that most students don’t ask questions in class. They are still listening and learning for the most part. On the other hand, it seems that there are some valuable benefits and so it is something that should continue to be encouraged.

Perhaps a challenge you could set for your child/ren would be for them to ask at least one question that will help their understanding in class each day. I will set the same challenge for my Year 9 daughter. Let me know how you go.

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