

Repairing the Ruins

The Art of the Question

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“A genuine question is, when still within the questioner, an expectant vacancy, a receptive openness, a defined ignorance, and, above all, a directed desire of the intellect.”

Eva Brann, *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*



Knowing That

Acquisition of Organized Knowledge

- Didactic Instruction
- Lectures
- Textbooks

Knowing How

Development of Intellectual Skills

- Coaching
- Exercises
- Supervised Practice

Knowing Why

Enlarged Understanding of Ideas and Values

- Socratic Questioning
- Participation

Law of the Teacher

“A teacher must be one who knows the lesson or truth to be taught. Know thoroughly and familiarly the lesson you wish to teach; or, in other words, teach from a full mind and a clear understanding.”

John Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*





Remove Obstructions and Give Guidance

Education is a science of relations.

Our part is to “remove obstructions and to give stimulus and guidance to the child who is trying to get into touch with the universe of things and thoughts which belongs to him.”

Charlotte Mason, *School Education*





Use questions to:

- check for understanding
- build intellectual habits
- explore fundamental human questions



Check for Understanding



Hold students accountable for the acquisition of organized knowledge

- Targeted questions
- Cold call
- Check with a variety of students
- Hold out for all the way right answers
- Wait time

A silver pen with a clear grip is resting diagonally on a notepad. The notepad has white pages with light blue horizontal lines. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Targeted Questions

Who was Calvin Coolidge?

What did he value?

Where did he grow up?

How did his childhood contribute to his values?

When did he become president?

Which parts of the economy improved when he was president?

What happened after his presidency?

Build off the objectives of the lesson.

Ask students to reproduce in their own words the lesson content.

Build Intellectual Habits



Develop Intellectual skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, measuring, critical judgement

- Ask for evidence and examples
- Ask for clarification of words
- Push for precise language
- Coaching and leading by example

A silver pen with a clear barrel and a silver clip is lying diagonally across a piece of white paper with faint horizontal lines. The paper is slightly crumpled and has a soft shadow cast to its right.

Habit-Focused Questions

What do you mean by _____?

Why do you think that?

Where do you see evidence for that in the text?

How does this example compare to yours?
(provide a counter example)

Can you think of something similar?
(ask for an example or analogy)

What do you think about what _____ just said ?
(habit of engaging in dialogue)

**Teach how to support opinions with evidence,
evaluate ideas by comparison and analogy,
and engage in academic discourse.**

Ponder Ideas and Contemplate Values



Questions that enlarge understanding

- Socratic questioning
- Participation
- Dialectical thinking
- Questions that have no “right” answer

Get to the Fundamental Human Questions



- What ideas presented correspond to reality?
- What is noble about what has been said or done? How do you know it is noble? Who says it is noble?
- What symbols are used to point to a metaphysical truth?
- What were the consequences of this or that action? Are those consequences suffered alone or by the community?
- In what ways does this text teach self-denial?
- What moral obligation is placed upon me now that I have this knowledge?

A silver pen with a clear barrel and a silver clip is resting diagonally on a white notebook with blue horizontal lines. The notebook is open, and the pen is positioned as if ready to write.

Idea-Focused Questions

What is the author getting at?

Is there an aspect of reality here? How do you know?

Is there a fragment of truth? Where?

Which ideas presented oppose the gospel?

Does scripture teach anything in opposition to the ideas presented here? Where?

What would your parents say about this idea? Your pastor, priest, or bishop?

Reveal student assumptions by asking dialectical questions. Force students to explain why they believe something to be true or how they agree or disagree and why.



Create a classroom culture where questioning is normative.

- Show curiosity.
- Remain neutral.
- Model disciplined thinking.
- Take students' statements and ideas seriously.
- Explore wrong answers.
- Probe their thinking with follow-up questions.
- Allow struggle.
- Be comfortable with silence.
- Require respectful intellectual discourse.

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**Thank you
for listening!**

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