

The Fine Art of Crafting Better Questions

Presented by Mary Marcotte, retired Certified Christian Educator

Mkmhouston@gmail.com

“A question is a curious animal, shy and brash and bold and beckoning. A question invites us into a story, creates a story, to consider a old or new story. A question invites us into wondering and pondering. A question gives us space to say, “hummmm, let me think about that for a moment.” Carrie Newcomer

Why questions?

Questions call on the learner to look more deeply and process the material presented. True, lasting learning is more than an accumulation of facts. As a teacher, I cannot simply pour my knowledge into your head. Questions invite the learner into the process of weighing the information, placing it beside what they already know or believe, then deciding how this new knowledge relates to their old knowledge. The learner then decides what to internalize and what will shape future learning.

Mary’s Top Ten Rules for Crafting Better Questions

1. Know why you are asking the question and what you hope to accomplish
2. Avoid yes/no questions
3. Vague is not the same as open ended
4. The power of “might”
5. Beware of the paralysis of superlatives
6. “Breadcrumbs” can both enrich and guide conversations
7. Know your audience
8. Plan time for revisions and sharpening
9. Avoid boring questions
10. Practice “Holy Curiosity”

Make it a practice to collect and curate good questions