



DIVISION OF
Arts and Sciences

Arts and Sciences Division
900 N. Portland Avenue, LRC 331
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
P: 405.945.6718
www.osuokc.edu

Dear Arts & Sciences Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Hello, I am Jason Stone, the Division Head of Arts & Sciences at OSU-OKC. Let's continue our conversation about your future. I am delighted that you chose to invest in yourself and attend to the next video in our series about the Habits of the Mind. The Habit that we are stressing in this video is questioning and posing problems. One of the most important skills you can bring to an organization is the ability to contribute by thoughtfully asking questions.

Questions are great learning tools. Questions give you the ability to seek clarification, gather information, lead processes, and, as your skill improves, confront problems in a way that is more indirect and face-saving for others in the organization. Suggestions that are framed as questions often are less offensive to those with more experience or knowledge. Using questions in this way allows you to help others arrive at the same conclusion without asserting superior knowledge or coming off as arrogant.

Being able to engage in the questioning process will help you in every facet of your learning and professional life. Onboarding onto a new organization is always tricky. Remember back to a time when you started at a new organization. You had to ask about every detail. A former supervisor of mine used to refer to this awkward time as "figuring out where the bathroom is" because literally as a new employee, you have to inquire about the location of the lavatory.

The smart folks at edutopia.org came up with a list of good questions. That list is posted as a resource next to this week's letter. In addition to those great suggestions for questions, one of the Habits of the Mind authors Art Costa writes about 5 characteristics of powerful questions in his book, *Learning and leading with Habits of the Mind*. I would like to share those characteristics and a brief explanation with you:

Characteristic:	Coaching Tip/Explanation:	Example Question:
1. Plural	Invite the answerer to share more than one answer, but remember to only ask one question.	What were the <u>causes</u> of this malfunction?
2. Tentative	Include words like "might" or "could". These words encourage answerers to draw on their experience, expertise, and emotions to construct a better answer.	What things <u>could</u> have prevented this malfunction?
3. Invitational	Use words like "you" or the answerer's name to invite them into the construction of an answer.	What things do <u>you</u> think might have caused this malfunction Nicole?



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4. Cognitively Specific	Use cognitively oriented action verbs to direct the answerer’s mental effort: ponder, reflect, analyze, evaluate, describe, synthesize, or produce.	Can you <u>analyze</u> the malfunction and <u>produce</u> a list of things that might have caused this malfunction?
5. Positive Presupposition	Make it known in your question that you presuppose that the person being asked the question is capable of producing an acceptable answer.	James, <u>based on your expertise</u> , what things might have caused this malfunction?

Questions are important to us in Arts & Sciences. We are here to help you and society answer some of the really big questions: Who are we? Where are we going? and Why are we here? One of the most important realizations you can have as an educated individual is that asking these questions repeatedly is much more important than any answers that you find along the way. Depending on where you are in your life journey, the answers will change but the questions will endure.

Please join me and attend to the other videos in this series. Invest in yourself and your future. Attend to your thinking habits. Your mental habits will determine how far you go. Thank you for your time and attention.

Have a great day and Go Pokes!

Jason Stone
Division Head, Arts & Sciences
LRC 332
Phone: 405.945.3296
Email: esto@osuokc.edu