“Work Smarter, Not Harder!” – Asking a Teacher for Help

Students have questions. That’s a good thing. Actually, it’s a great thing! As teachers and school personnel, we went into the field of education because we want to help!

It’s wonderful if your student feels comfortable asking questions before and after class. They are getting the full benefit of their education!

But what about the students who feel nervous and shy? Who are reluctant to raise their hand in class or to come forward and ask for help?

Here are some suggestions:

* Realize that teachers and administrators are here to help! There is no reason to feel embarrassed. Students will not “get in trouble” or “be punished” for asking too many questions.
* Know when it is the appropriate time to ask questions. If it’s in the beginning of a lesson or directions, the teacher might ask for you to wait for the end of the explanation. Don’t take it personally! It just means that we want to get through the beginning, because our experience tells us that we are likely going to answer your question in just a few seconds.
* If you STILL have a question at the end of the directions, then raise your hand.
* If you have been given time in class to work on an assignment, that is probably also a really good time to ask.
* At the end of class – you can approach your teacher with the question, but be prepared to be told that teacher might be either prepping for the next class and/or needing to leave. Don’t be discouraged. **ASK FOR A TIME WHEN YOU CAN MEET**. Lunch? After school? Before school? Most teachers will be willing to work with you.
* Ask a specific question. As a teacher, it can be very difficult to answer things like “I didn’t get it.” Or, “what do I need to know for the test?” A much better approach is, “Could you please explain question 3 to me?” Or, “I’m having trouble understanding the difference between a compound sentence and one with a clause. Could you explain that to me again, please?”
* Use the study guides teachers provide, and look at them early. A good way to approach your teacher is, “I was working on the study guide, but I need clarification on these two items.”

Using polite language and being considerate of a teacher’s time will help you learn. Figuring out what you want to ask before you meet is an even better way to learn! That ensures that you get the information you need to have.

Good luck and remember to come to us. We are here to help!