Source Entry for “Schools Kill Curiosity”

Part 1 MLA Citation

Berliner, Wendy. “ ‘Schools Are Killing Curiosity’: Why We Need to Stop Telling Children to Shut up and Learn.” The Guardian, Guardian News, and Media, 28 Jan. 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jan/28/schools-killing-curiosity-learn>.

Part 2 Summary

**The passage “’Schools Are Killing Curiosity’: Why We Need to Stop Telling Children to Shut up and Learn,” by Wendy Berliner is about** how children get less curious when they start school and as they get older. **According to the writer**, teachers should place more emphasis on encouraging students’ curiosity, which may be even more important than encouraging focus and good behavior. **The writer mentions that** children are born curious but when they start school, they stop. **The writer emphasizes** how certain teachers stimulate and promote children’s curiosity. **The writer uses** the example of a nursery school that confiscated toys from two-year-old children and replaced them with household items. This approach motivated the kids to be more imaginative and creative. **The writer concludes by** quoting Paul Howard-Jones, professor of neuroscience and education at Bristol University, who said, “Children should be prompted and encouraged to ask questions even though that can be challenging for the teacher.”

Part 3 Reflection

In “Schools Kill Curiosity,” Berliner argues that traditional education doesn’t encourage curiosity in students. I agree with this idea because schools often prioritize memorization and testing over cultivating a love for learning and exploration. This was evident in my personal experience as a student. In 2016, while attending school in Burkina Faso, I asked my history teacher why we were learning mostly about Western culture instead of our own heritage. He told me that if I wanted to pass his class, I had to follow the curriculum. I stopped asking questions and focused on getting good grades, which is an example of how schools can hinder curiosity. Reading this article made me realize how important curiosity is in education and how it can benefit our personal growth. I believe that teachers should prioritize fostering curiosity in their students.

Part 4: Rhetorical Analysis

The Guardian article, “’Schools Are Killing Curiosity’: Why We Need to Stop Telling Children to Shut up and Learn,” by Wendy Berliner, is a feature piece. The audience is the general reading public. The purpose of this article is to inform. The author’s writing style is factual. She employs research facts to back up her claim. This piece has a logical tone. Berliner successfully persuades readers by using the appeal of logos. Berliner is a credible source because she is the author of a book titled “How to Succeed at School. What Every Parent Should Know.” The Guardian is a reliable source because they were rated the most trustworthy online UK newspaper brand – ranked as such by 73% of regular readers. The Guardian’s values include encouraging a welcoming and open culture, standing up for what they think is right rather than what seems convenient, and aiming for perfection to serve their audience’s interests.

Part 5 Notable Quotables

“Dr Prachi Shah, a developmental and behavioral pediatrician and research scientist. . . says: ‘Promoting curiosity in children, especially those from environments of economic disadvantage, may be an important, under-recognised way to address the achievement gap. Promoting curiosity is a foundation for early learning that we should be emphasising more when we look at academic achievement’” (Berliner).

“When teachers teach young children not to ask questions, it is not surprising that high-performing students studied by American researchers in 2013 were found to be less curious, because they saw curiosity as a risk to their results” (Berliner).

“Children are born curious. The number of questions a toddler can ask can seem infinite – it is one of the critical methods humans adopt to learn” (Berliner).

Matt Caldwell headteacher says, “School kills curiosity. When do children get to ask questions about things that interest them? As soon as they are at primary school they have to shut up and learn. It’s not the fault of teachers. They have so many targets to meet” (Berliner).