

Seven Lessons for Home Schooling

By

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Being a teacher is fundamentally one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs - apart from parenthood. It is therefore little surprise that the two roles of teacher and parent are extremely close in nature. After all, each milestone made by your baby was down to the dual role you played as teacher and parent.

However, the divide between what happens at home and what happens at school begins almost as soon as a child crosses the threshold of the classroom. Parents ask, "what did you do today at school?" and children respond, "I don't know, can't remember." The paradox that we face here is that the learning and social opportunities that are available in school are meant to be memorable; full of creativity, fun and stimulating. At times though, there are not enough memorable events at school that inspire a child to want to explain the colourful story of their day. In fact, most children choose to keep home and school quite separate.

We therefore have a duality that can be divided into seven areas helping to explain why so many of our children are becoming disaffected with their school and family life.

Confusion

All children are party to confusion because the teachings of school can be out of context, with too much information being presented for children to make sense of. As one bell rings to signal the end of a lesson, some children may not be ready to move on. Given the time, many children would choose to spend more time on a particular subject, whilst others actually need more time on the same subject. As a result, clarity of learning is often hindered by time restraints and set timetabling.

Class position

Does competitive behaviour really need to be seen as the driving force of learning? The long term effect of learning what position one has within a class environment can produce arrogance in some, and be soul destroying for others. As such, this shapes the way children reflect their position in the world around them.

Indifference

Thirdly, there is indifference. The effect on children who are constantly moving from one classroom to another at the will of the ringing bell can lead to apathy. Children learn to turn themselves on and off like a light switch, resulting in little time for true interest to deepen.

Emotional Dependency

The goodness of children can not always be seen within the classroom as some schoolteachers have to invest a great amount of time managing group behaviour. This causes the emotional needs of some individuals being overlooked, which is why although part of a group, some children feel invisible to their teacher and their peers.

Intellectual Development

Apart from an emotional dependency, children are also dependent on their teachers for intellectual development. Many schools do provide professional development programmes for their staff while others are so adverse to training that they only recruit unqualified staff., in order to mould them to their own school ethos. There are also schools who recruit subject specialists who absolutely love their subject, but not children! How can a child aspire to become a great poet if her English teacher is ensconced with knowledge, but void of communication skills?

Provisional Self-Esteem

Human beings thrive on being told what they are worth. Not all teachers think through their communication, and as a result make flippant remarks which can deconstruct self-esteem. Taking on the approach of positively praising and encouraging children to overcome challenges will enable them to respect and develop their own self-esteem – an invaluable part of growing up.

One cannot hide

In today's educational climate, children are faced with an extremely busy timetable. Just as adults need time to themselves so too, do children. In this time and space, trust and respect develop, allowing privacy to become a legitimate part of life. Current school commutes, attendance and homework can take up to 50 hours of a child's week. If one adds to this the number of hours spent sleeping, eating and engaged in commercial entertainment, a child is left with approximately 9 hours out of every week in which to create an understanding of who they are. Therefore, it is vital that teachers and families work together to provide children with an opportunity to fulfill their childhood.

Working to eliminate these seven reasons must be at the heart of authentic education and also helps explain the continuing popularity of Home Schooling. Throughout the U.K. there are over five thousand families that are choosing to home-school their children. Their children are of all ages, some even taking their GCSE's three years early as their home curriculum has allowed them to complete their learning and follow subjects that truly inspire and stimulate their curiosity.

Melissa Carter

For over 15 years, Melissa has worked within the field of child development encompassing special needs, Waldorf Steiner, Montessori and pre-preparatory pedagogy. Trained at the Tavistock Clinic in Psychoanalytic Observational Studies together with her qualifications in teaching, Melissa developed her practice through working with leading professionals from the education and therapy world, as well as teaching within diverse educational environments.

Melissa is the founder of Bloo House – a Home Education School, providing a highly specialised, personalised and educational service. Bloo House offers primary aged children access to a diverse and inspiring teaching curriculum covering the core subjects, taught over four hours a day, four days a week. In addition, they also offer specialist lessons such as Philosophy Club for older children. Three and four year olds may attend two sessions of afternoon nursery per week, overseen by a qualified nursery nurse.

Most importantly the children have access to an authentic educational curriculum that provides formal learning in an inspiring and unique setting creating time for family life and time to experience childhood fully.