

## PARENTS FOSTERING A LOVE OF LEARNING

During my time as an educator and school Principal, I have seen many young students focus on their learning and time at school in many different ways. To a large extent, children will focus on learning in areas that interest them the most; often this will be additional to the classroom learning of core knowledge.

I am a strong advocate of literature and reading, but it is rare that a family will be able to satisfy all the reading requirements of the most inquisitive. Access to a good Public Library is a fond memory of mine from my school days; and one which can foster a great sense of imagination and understanding. For the most, numerically and scientifically minded, books about great historical investigators and explorations can be a source of knowledge and inspiration. At the simplest level, a dictionary or sets of numerical problems can be a comforting source of engagement for the most motivated and gifted.

Students who are always exploring will show higher levels of engagement and participation in class, hence aiding their educational activities. There are endless sources of information available for students to love and devour. It's all about finding the right one for them; whether that's in narrative or factual accounts. The encouragement from families and parents for a child to read this material will help them feel supported in a positive learning environment. If a child believes reading and learning are good things to do, they will more likely settle down to 'a good book', whatever that might be. Giving children access to a wide range of material and resources, I believe, is the key to encouraging their inquisitiveness. Ideally, this will be a child's choice rather than a parent's selection.

In recent times, children have begun to learn extensively from the internet too. While this may open students up to distractions, it cannot be denied that The Net can provide a plethora of current, immediate and extraordinarily detailed information and activities. Global thinking is encouraged by The Net; therefore, expanding a child's knowledge and understanding of global affairs in a diverse and multicultural world. It can also improve the critical and comparative thinking skills when analysing similarities and differences between that of one's local sense of culture. Perhaps it can be argued that a child reading and learning via the Internet will inherently effect their 'warm ware' (as opposed to hardware and software); social relationships and local knowledge.

*"KNOWLEDGE is power" – Sir Francis Bacon, 1597.*

Accessing diverse reading material, online learning and networking can encourage complex knowledge and thought processes. But conversations at high levels of sophistication can provide a child with the vocabulary, sources for further stimulation, and broader understanding that will enable them to see patterns, and to identify when patterns are disrupted. Conversations with like-minded thinkers can be inspirational! That person could be a:

- Peer at school;
- A parent or relative; or
- A specialist in some field of your child's interest.

Conversations allow information to be heard, processed intellectually, and the child responding with the next product of their thinking. This allows them to explore information and place it into their relevant world. The availability of words that adequately and conveniently describe a phenomenon, will bring great satisfaction and 'power' to a young person. As Sir Francis Bacon in Elizabethan England wrote, 'knowledge is power'. If knowledge is power, according to Bacon and others, the acquisition of words and symbols to describe the patterns a child sees in their world will help them to be empowered and highly valued. The skills of communication, organisation, forward planning and motivation to learn are the key gifts a parent can foster and nurture within their child.

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