

Fundamental Truths About Learning At Home

Fundamental Truths About Learning in the Home … Have you ever encountered the word osmosis? Learning takes place through the process of osmosis. Even as soon as a child is born, the infant is immediately sensitive to his surroundings perceptually. Events around the child leads him to the earliest exposures of learning. The very young child sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches. Structured learning in school is more formal yet the osmotic process still goes on. Homeschool learning may be less formal or structured but a very strong sense of osmotic learning takes place. In fact , this unconscious immersion in the child’s immediate environment has a very strong influence in the child’s growth, character and ability to learn. So much is absorbed from the immediate environment, the home. Displays of different character virtues strongly impacts the child through the osmotic process. Why does learning make more impact in a home that exudes strong family bonds? Why is learning difficult in a seemingly hostile home even if the child is not directly involved in any hostile situation? A learner , a young learner, basically absorbs from imitation to intrinsically learned knowledge. Whatever a young learner sees will be imitated. Whatever is imitated in actions tends to become intrinsic knowledge. External knowledge or value systems that the child replicates or imitates is eventually internalized…this settles down in the heart of the child…whether it is good or not good, acceptable or not acceptable…biblical or unbiblical… And when this kind of knowledge has settled in, this leads to competency…a mastery of the action imitated and internalized. Therefore, what should our children imitate from significant others in the home, internalize and later on, be competent in? Again and again, educators and parents are reminded about giving the children the opportunities to express natural abilities in learning, **play!** How else will a toddler discover color unless he is allowed to play with a toy that has color? The colored toy will teach about reds, blues and yellows if the child is holding it, tossing it, exploring it and if there is an adult immersing the lesson about colors in ways that the child will sense, imitate and internalize, then chances are competency in colors will later on emerge. What is a better way to teach a lesson to pre school children and even graders but to expose, imitate, and play with the material to be learned? Adult intervention is important and vital, yet the child must also be allowed learning situations where trial and error will be experienced. Create an environment that is safe for the child to discover in. Pouring from a pitcher to a tumbler is a created environment to learn how to pour liquids. A little spill can be wiped by the child himself. A big spill can be mopped clean. What other created environments can you think of ? A natural environment for experiencing trial and error is like being in a room while doing some creative movement routines with fun music. Suddenly the child prefers to do an exaggerated movement and falls. Pick up the child and learn from it. Was that supposed to be the movement for the day? If not, then what did you experience by executing that particular movement? Was falling down good for the body?Etc…etc… what other natural environments can the child learn from in a trial and error situation? Every child has a unique approach to learning. It is often mind boggling to even know what this approach should be. Rather than finding out what the approach should be first, why not find out what your child is interested in first? A child who is endlessly interested in race cars would enjoy the story of God’s Creation by an intertwining of ideas. Tickle your student’s imagination and ask when God probably invented the race car! Going through the sequence of creation, your student would definitely be watching out for ‘when’ the car was created. Finish the story and wait for a reaction! ‘Where’s the race car?’ play a secondary game and ask the student to choose from among the created living things, which might possible be able to build a car! A student who learns that it can be learned will definitely learn it…learn something. A student needs the assurance that he has the ability to learn. Then the teacher supports it with proper learning opportunities. When something is not learned, check the learning environment and approach used. Don’t condemn the student who has, by all means, the ability to learn! Real learning means only one thing, it is to be used by the student. A concept being introduced needs to be applied and reinforced in practical ways. A lesson that has been forgotten does not necessarily mean that the student is forgetful. Could this mean that the lesson was not really learned at all? Authentic and meaningful learning often occurs when time is deliberately wasted. Schedule a loosely structured activity for a whole afternoon. Let the student experience his ability to study on his own. At the end of the period, listen to the student share discoveries. Don’t you sometimes need an afternoon to discover what you need to do by wondering what you need to do? The appropriate context must always be in mind to make way for learning. Teach about the beach in the beach! Through meaningful conversations, a network of ideas and the proper setting, learning will definitely take place. The classroom is only a conduit for planning and summarizing. But outdoors is the endless resource of thinking and processing. Have you ever experienced learning about caves inside a real cave? Tests ! These are important but not all the measures of assessment. If the curriculum asks for it, we must abide. But wrong answers don’t necessarily measure what is not in the intelligence. It only reveals more of the student in the context of that subject area. Teachers therefore, act on what is revealed and check out the fundamentals once again.

About the Author

I am Ani Torres, a pre -school coordinator and academic coordinator of The Master's Academy Home School program in the Philippines. An Accredited home school system, TMA offers alternative educational experiences to families while at the same time ensures the status of the child in documentation in accordance with the Department of Education's standards. I am married with a 22 year old son, a 15 year old stepson and a 6 year old little boy! My youngest is being homeschooled using the materials recommended by the Department of Education in the Phils. My husband , Chris, is a technical department head at the Christ's Commission Fellowship.