

{ Creative
Courageous }

Ideas



Home
Education
↓
High School

by Beverly Swalwell

Most, if not all home educators suffer from some degree of panic, uncertainty or confusion as their children approach the high school years!!! This shaking of your confidence in what you have chosen to do and believed was the right choice for perhaps 8-10 years can be frightening!

Here's hoping that some of the following ideas/suggestions/personal experiences will grant you courage to persevere and carry on in what you have begun!

Keep on encouraging your student according to his/her God given strengths/interest/passions. Mix and match curriculum options that will prepare your student to pursue career choices that will advance directly into income earning. This may include volunteering and/or mentoring in the field of interest as well as taking courses directly related to the career choice rather than spending time on courses that are not directly related and will have no future value in their field. An example may be a student who is passionate about photography may want to invest in the equipment, join a photography club, take some digital photography and business management courses, volunteer with or mentor under a professional photographer, and other related ideas that would enable them to begin their own business instead of spending time and money on education that may not apply. This does require some thinking outside of the box and of letting go of the idea that the grade 12 diploma is essential in every case.

Distance Learning through on-line options are a reality of the technological age that we live in. (This is not referring to on-line high school credits working toward the diploma offered by some schools – virtual schools). Many colleges and university offer courses through distance or on-line learning as part time students. There is an on-line school that offers Apologia sciences (among a whole list of others) over the internet called the Potters School (<http://www.pottersschool.org/>) where I believe you can take a single or few courses. Athabasca University is another option to consider giving your young person (minimum age is 15) a head start on some college level materials. These choices allow students to begin taking college level courses at earlier ages, but the drawback is that they also are more costly options. Apprenticeships! These do include more than just the construction trades! There are opportunities in Agriculture, Baker/Cook, Landscaping/Gardener, Locksmith, Painter/Decorator. The entrance exam can be written at 15 and there is a complete study guide on the website. (<http://www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca/>)

30 Level Courses – Transcript - Almost every college and university in Canada will start by stating that the grade 12 Diploma is necessary for admission. This is true if you are looking for the easiest path of least resistance into a post secondary university. However this is not the full truth but rather what is easiest for the institution! What they do not explain right away is that most programs list prerequisites specific to each program/degree. These are often a 50% or 65% mark in a 30 level Math, English and Science. Obtaining high marks in five 30

level courses would put a home educated student above the minimum requirements! A family started on this route in grade 10 with their daughter who knew she wanted to apply to Mount Royal for the nursing degree. They studied and wrote one 30 level course at a time over a couple of years and were well prepared for university entrance with a transcript containing high marks. This may appear to be more work than obtaining the diploma, but is actually a more streamline avenue. College and universities do need to be challenged to develop clearer policies on 'alternative admissions'.

College Plus! – This is a US based program designed by a home educated student who decided to find a way to offer college degrees in half the time costing half the money! Woody Robertson has been to Calgary to speak and offers a Memory Learning System designed to help students cover course material at a faster pace. The idea again is to forgo the grade 12 Diploma and begin earning College credits earlier. (<http://www.collegeplus.org/>) Each student works with a coach who is able to direct & design a customized program of study. Feedback from a family using this system indicates that students must be prepared to study and write exams at a fairly academic pace. There is also the difficulty of testing centers not being readily available in AB, so it requires travelling to Montana or BC. The philosophy is wonderful, but we may need to work on a Canadian equivalent!

Quest University is relatively new and offers an innovative approach to post secondary education. (<http://www.questu.ca/>) They claim to offer more individualized learning by offering one class at a time in a small setting. Check out their "Applying to Quest" page where they specifically state they are more interested in the individual and their interests/volunteer experiences/sports or music/travel than simply looking at grades. They have a specific admission policy for Home educated students!

Prepare & write the SAT Exam – This will add to any option that you are pursuing. The books are updated and readily available at most bookstores.

These are not all of the options/ideas that are being used by home educators. There may be some obstacles or roadblocks along the way, but it is a wise idea to remember that the most important things in life do involve some trials as part of our learning experience. Home education although growing, is still 'outside the box' and may challenge families to continue thinking 'outside that box' throughout the high school and college years.

If you are interested in sharing how your family has continued on through these years, please send your stories to us.

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