



Authentic Education

For many years now I have been giving advice to parents in terms of educating their children for real life and specifically the 21st century. I believe the best true training for this happens in the family.

I asked the Home educating Lues family of 10 to be present at a talk at a Home education Expo in the Cape to prove to people that authentic education is simple and possible if parents are committed to it. I met this family 12 years ago when they started their journey as home-educators. The oldest boy then was 6 years old and they were only three children. I had the privilege to present to the audience the whole family; CJ (18), Heidi-Mari (15), Josua (12), Danika (9), Andrew (7), David (5), Daniel (4), Michael (2), with parents Linnie and Christo. Non of their children had ever been in a school.

Authentic education is something that is real. True, Reliable, Dependable, Faithful, Trustworthy, Accurate, Genuine, Realistic, Real, Valid and Original. The opposite is false.

Within any given time of education we are suppose to prepare the learner for real life in which they are going to operate. A decade or so ago the educational system prepared people to be reliable people, hard workers with secure outcomes, with maybe one good skill. Individuals did not have to have a high level of efficiency as there would always be a manager to check on them.

Now that we are educating for the knowledge age, nothing is static and individuals must have a high level of efficiency with a new mix of skills. Speed is needed to change fast as technology is fast and complexity in communication is required. The uncertainty is a factor that educators must keep in mind. (www.21stcenturyskills.org) We basically need to train our children for chaos!

We are currently preparing students for jobs that doesn't exist...using technologies that haven't yet been invented ... in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet." Richard Riley, Secretary of Education under Clinton 21st century skills require people to read, write and do maths much faster and more efficient (3 Rs's skills of 21st century: Reading, 'Riting (writing), 'Rithmetic (Arithmetic) (Maths)

7 C's skills of 21st century education are

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Creativity and innovation
- Collaboration and teamwork; leadership from young and responsibility, accountability and ownership.
- Cross-cultural skills and social understanding
- Communication, information, and media literacy
- Computing and ICT literacy
- Career and learning self-reliance, self-direction

I have been advocating that parents should make sure their children are self workers(independent workers) by the age of 14. That they should be educated in accountability and ownership from a young age. When we do that, we are shaping the tool (child) for any situation in any era they will be working in, and they will also have the character, apart from various skills. How do we do it?

"Creativity and innovation can be nurtured by learning environments that foster questioning, patience, openness to fresh ideas, high levels of trust, and learning from mistakes and failures. This can be developed, like many others skills, through practice over and over. "

There is no better place than the family for this to take place. The parents can do this in a very simple way by embracing the hand, head and heart principle. This is a way to develop the whole person. This is a very interesting concept that I happened to discover in one of Dr Raymond Moores books. This Lues family has also implemented this in their home education with their children. The basic principle is that you dedicate a balance of time to each area:

Head = Academic

Hand = work for money

Heart = Service – no money

The tendency is always to focus on the academic or **Head** side of homeschooling, the when and how of it all. In this knowledge era *"Learning is becoming an anytime, anyplace activity, woven into all the parts of everyday life centers in communities"* so even academic learning is not stagnant and bound to a schoolroom. It happens all the time. Academic work is balanced by the same amount of work with the child's hands and in the child's heart.

**After breakfast they clean the kitchen,
another child cleans the fireplace,
emptying the dustbin and helping
with the little ones. Later on in the
day it is setting the table again,
closing the curtains, putting the
toys away, preparing the main meal,
reading to little ones and washing
up after the meal.**

Hand means that children work constructively and creatively, but with increased responsibility as they mature. Even if they are only six you make them the officer of their family "corporation." It's finding the right home industry for them to do, taking into account their passion.

Work with the hand is something that both the older children of the Lues family excelled in. It is not the core part, it is just a part. CJ, now 18, did horse riding from young, then started to do stunts and eventually played in movies where he could earn a good income from this. He also does graphic and web design and video editing for his dad's business. (<http://backtoancientways.blogspot.com/2011/03/lights-camera-action.html>) Heidi-Marie makes beautiful cards and did a number of Lindt Chocolate making courses and sells her chocolate. (<http://heidiscrafts.blogspot.com>) She is a totally effective home executive in the way she is already managing the home.

Heart means that each child has a chore. Most families have it in different categories, like morning chores and the rest of the day chores. The Lues family has designated chores to each family member and then an older child assisting the younger one in their chores. Mom and the older ones prepare a good breakfast every morning after each child has done their tidying up chores. After breakfast they clean the kitchen, another child cleans the fireplace, emptying the dustbin and helping with the little ones. Later on in the day it is setting the table again, closing the curtains, putting the toys away, preparing the main meal, reading to little ones and washing up after the meal.

Children do not get paid for these chores. It is important for a child to master a skill before moving into the next. It also stops them from bickering about who's job is it when they know that they will move on only when they have good character (heart) about the matter and the skill is mastered.

The fact that children work by doing household chores cause them to perceive themselves as needed and valuable within their family and develop healthy self-esteem. They see that they can work as a team. One might think that it negates the authority of the parent in the family hierarchy but children actually see themselves falling into a valuable and appreciated place in the family machine.

"Revolution does not happen when society adopts new technology, it happens when society adopts new behaviour".

Visit the blog of Linnie Lues(<http://backtoancientways.blogspot.com>) to see the extent of their influence to other families and feel free to ask Christo how he manage to be responsible for his family <http://www.eirenehealthshop.co.za> and <http://www.naturalmedicinetalk.blogspot.com>

Dynamis is operated from Clarens and is a nation-wide ministry to equip families and home educators. Dynamis does family consultations to determine what curriculum will work best for the whole family. Dynamis has an extensive knowledge of all the different curricula available to home educators.



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