



# BCHLA NEWS

Spring 2006

Newsletter of the BC Home Learners' Association

Vol. 19 No. 3

**BCHLA**  
BC Home Learners'  
Association

**By Homeschoolers  
For Homeschoolers**



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#### Disclaimer:

The opinions and views expressed by the individuals in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by all BCHLA members.

The Editor is not responsible for the views and opinions expressed herein.



## President's Pen

Although many of you read an email update earlier this month, we didn't want anyone to miss the information so we thought it best to send it out again, with some changes.

After an informative conversation with Susan Penner, Inspector of Independent Schools, I felt it was important to update you on the changes concerning funding for Distributed Learning (DL) in British Columbia. I have also included some possible changes for *registered* home schoolers. Although BCHLA supports Sec. 12 *registered* home school families, we have many *enrolled* (DL) families in our membership and want to keep all families who have chosen to educate their children at home informed of the changes.

#### Registered Policies

The wording in the new funding policy (which is not available for public reading) is directed specifically to DL programs but some schools could make changes in how they reimburse their *registered* families. In some cases, no cheques will be issued to parents, but instead they will be utilizing Purchase Order Numbers (PO #). Others will continue to reimburse based on the receipts submitted. And some may offer a combination of both. Call your school in advance to confirm the method they will be using.

#### Enrolled (DL) Policies

Bill 33-2006 brought about some changes for DL students in Grades 10-12. These students can *enrol* in more than one school and may *enrol* any time during the 12-month period after September 1, 2006. They may also combine courses from several schools (DL or non-DL). Please contact your teacher/administrator to find out how to accomplish this.

As I said in my original e-mail, cheques will no longer be issued directly to parents. Many schools have already set up Purchase Order Numbers (PO #) for their families and have partnerships with many companies in Canada, as well as the U.S. These lists will continue to grow. I have been told by several administrators that if you want to purchase curriculum or attend classes outside the school and are not sure if there is a partnership set up, simply call the school and they will do what they can to accommodate you. All the public or independent schools I have spoken to are being flexible and creative within the boundaries laid out for them. If you have not heard from your school, please contact them for more details.

#### Closing Comments

I have spoken with many *enrolled* parents recently who are unhappy with the changes as they believe they are taking away their freedoms. As Susan Penner said in our recent conversation. "If you want your freedom, you'll be a home schooler". (aka - *registered*)

Dr. J. Wile was recently speaking on home schooling at the Kelowna Home School Conven-

(Continued on page 3)

### **Renew Membership Online**



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### **Renew Membership Online**

## *In This Issue*

MOE News.....	2
Legal Stuff .....	3
Graduation and Post Secondary .....	4
Homeschool Highschool.....	5
Burned Out or Boiled Down .....	8

What is a true Homeschooler?.....	10
Using Mind Maps.....	11
Adding from Left to Right.....	12
Favorite Websites.....	15



# From Ministry of Education

## INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
2006EDU0046-000498  
April 27, 2006

Ministry of Education

### CHANGES TO SCHOOL ACT OFFER STUDENTS MORE CHOICE

VICTORIA – The Province introduced legislation today to offer more choice to students who are taking courses online.

The Education (Learning Enhancement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2006 will amend the School Act by replacing the older term of “distance education” with the new concept of “distributed learning.” With the rapid expansion of technology, distance education has moved from paper-based correspondence to today’s concept of distributed learning where courses are delivered online or by video technology.

This legislation will help government meet its throne speech commitments to provide students with more choice and to make public education more relevant to students’ interests and goals. The changes will allow students on the graduation program in grades 10-12 to enroll in courses offered by more than one distributed learning program at the same time. Rural students who want to take a course that isn’t presently offered in their school district will be able to link by computer to another district that offers the course.

The legislation will require school boards to enter into an agreement with the ministry in order to offer distributed learning courses. This will ensure that school boards are delivering quality services and support to students.

Distributed learning is one of the fastest growing segments of British Columbia’s education system. Nine distance education schools, 32 school boards and 11 independent schools currently offer distributed learning instruction.

In 2005-06, approximately 27,000 public and Independent school students in B.C. are taking at least a part of their education by distributed learning.

In addition, included in this legislation is an amendment that will now enable the B.C. College of Teachers to collect statistical information relating to teacher competence and performance from school districts. This information will be included in the College’s annual report which is released publicly each May. This change enables the College to fulfill the requirements of Ministerial Order 381/04, the Annual Reports Order.

Media contact:

Public Affairs Bureau  
Ministry of Education  
250-356-5963

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province’s news feeds using RSS, visit the Province’s website at [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

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BCHLA, a non-profit organization, has been working to promote & protect the freedoms of homeschooling in B.C. for over 15 years.

Your membership continues to make this possible.

#### WE PROVIDE:

- Government Liaison
- Public Relations
- Legal Referrals
- Research
- Newsletters
- Consultation
- Support

Registered and enrolled homeschoolers join BCHLA to ensure their freedoms are represented to the Ministry of Education both now & in the future.

**JOIN NOW!**

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# Foundation Skills Assessment

(Continued from page 1)

tion and mentioned that studies in the U.S. show that the higher regulations for home schoolers, (Learning Outcomes that must be met) the lower the standardized test scores. From the study he was using this seemed to be consistent across the U.S. and Dr. Wile did not see why it would be any different in Canada. (Taken from his CD "Homeschooling: The Solution To Our Education Problem – Block B-2 – Available from GFC Communications Inc. 1-877-945-2922 [www.gfcvideo.ca](http://www.gfcvideo.ca))

We live in a province that allows us incredible educational freedoms. As a *registered* home schooler I am so grateful for the ability to teach my children in the way our family has chosen, without government interference.

You have choices. Choose what is best for your children.

## Bill 33

Full text of Bill 33, with explanatory notes  
[http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/1st\\_read/gov33-1.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/1st_read/gov33-1.htm)

Full text of Bill 33, passed  
[http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/3rd\\_read/gov33-3.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/3rd_read/gov33-3.htm)

Amendments  
<http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/38th2nd/amend/gov33-2.htm>

Current legislation for comparison  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/legislation/schoollaw/revisedstatutescontents.pdf>

DL Policy (under review)  
[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/distance\\_ed.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/distance_ed.htm)

## Know Your Rights

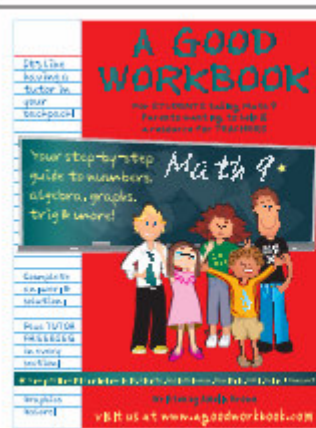
FSA Testing is **not mandatory** for registered home school children. Although it is suggested and may be required for enrolled grade 4 and 7 students, see the following links to read more:

BCTF Brochure/Professional Concerns (opt out)  
[www.bctf.ca/fsa/brochure/](http://www.bctf.ca/fsa/brochure/)

Student Assessment & Evaluation  
[www.bctf.ca/education/assessment/](http://www.bctf.ca/education/assessment/)  
[www.bctf.bc.ca/education/assessment/MoreInfo.html](http://www.bctf.bc.ca/education/assessment/MoreInfo.html)

Public Education see May 9, 2006  
<http://weblogs.elearning.ubc.ca/newproposals/>

BCCPAC  
[www.bccpac.bc.ca/Press\\_release/FSA\\_may06.htm](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/Press_release/FSA_may06.htm)



Amelia Brown's "A Good Workbook" provides an excellent and much-needed resource for students to improve their mathematical skills in the junior high school years. Students and parents will find the step-by-step approach easy to follow. Congratulations, Amy! Well done.

Barry Gruntman  
Mathematics Department Head  
Southern Okanagan Secondary School, School District #53

## BOOK ORDERS

1 – 10 workbooks - \$48.00 + GST + S&H

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Amelia & Dwight Brown

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Phone: 250-498-6367 Fax: 250-498-6327

Toll Free: 1-877-674-4626

Email: [amelia@mathbook.ca](mailto:amelia@mathbook.ca)

Website: [www.agoodworkbook.com](http://www.agoodworkbook.com)



## Graduation & Post-Secondary Options

As home school parents, we need to be pro-active in discovering creative ways of helping our children gain access to colleges and universities. Thankfully, there are those who have gone before us and the road to post-secondary education has gone from being a “bumpy logging road” to a “meandering country drive”. There are still some difficult hoops to jump through but you definitely do not have to obtain your Dogwood to further your education.

The Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents has done an incredible job of compiling information on post-secondary options. Their website, [www.ontariohomeschool.org/universityCanada.shtml](http://www.ontariohomeschool.org/universityCanada.shtml) has lists of colleges and universities across the country and their expectations of home school students. If you are interested in helping with this project, check out <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/oftpuniversityproject/>.

Traditional Learning Academy has a resource entitled “A Homeschool Guide To Post-Secondary Admissions”. [http://home-school.ca/curriculum-guide/homeschool\\_guide\\_to\\_post-secondary\\_admissions.htm](http://home-school.ca/curriculum-guide/homeschool_guide_to_post-secondary_admissions.htm) They believe that it is “not necessary for homeschoolers to com-

plete the requirements for a graduation certificate from the public school authorities”.

Leo Gaumont of Education Unlimited (<http://www.educationunlimited.ca/pslink.php>) in Saskatchewan, in cooperation with HSLDA ([www.hslda.ca](http://www.hslda.ca)), conducted a survey between October 2000 and February 2001 to measure the collective attitudes of Canadian post-secondary institutions towards home-educated students. Education Unlimited is a school board in Alberta but you may find some helpful information on this site.

Also, see page seven for a helpful flowchart.

You may have other sources of information regarding home schooling and post-secondary education. Please pass it on to us so we can include it in future newsletters or on our website. We often have requests for this type of information.

***"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." --Mark Twain***

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# Homeschool High School the Third Time Around

**T**he baby I carried on my hip while I homeschooled my first two children is now 14. It's time for me to think about how I homeschooled her older siblings when they were teens, and how I want to homeschool her now that she's reached high school age.

In reviewing what I did with my older two, my goal is to avoid what didn't work and to repeat what did. In that vein, here are a few things I've decided.

This time around in our homeschool high school, I will not:

1) Use a correspondence curriculum with prescribed course requirements and graded-by-computer tests. I did that with my older children, and consequently they learned to memorize facts long enough to ace the test, and then forget them. That's what I did in high school, and I certainly wanted better than that for my own children. But I was afraid to tackle my older children's home education without the guidance of a formal curriculum, nor did I have the time to design each one's ideal program because I had two younger children (including one with disabilities) who needed me. But this time around, my youngest is 12, and while he will always have developmental delays, he's much easier to care for. So I am now free to design and implement a high school curriculum tailored to my daughter's interests and future plans.

2) Use the local school district's driver education course. Both of my older children took driver's ed at the local high school, and we all agree it was a total waste of time. Since then, the school board has voted to raise the fee from \$50 to \$300, which makes this decision even easier, since private driving school costs about \$350.

3) Cut our teenager slack on household chores because she may have a part-time job, rigorous school work, or both. We

did that with the older two, and found it difficult to ever get them back in the groove of helping out at home. That's why our home-for-the-summer college student son is very little help around here.

There are also some things I did with the older two that I definitely want to do with our third-born. This time around, I will:

"Making these plans is kind of bittersweet, because this is my last opportunity to do our "traditional" version of high school"

1) Regularly update her high school transcript on my computer, adding every bit of volunteer work, every job, every online course, her driver's ed class, and every bit of "school work" she does that can be listed on a transcript. I will do this promptly, so I don't have to rely on my not-very-good-these-days memory. This way, each time I need a copy of her transcript for future col-

lege applications, I can just print out an up-to-date copy from my computer.

2) Sign her up to take the ACT each year of high school, so that by junior year, she's very comfortable with it. Doing this with my older children was part of the reason they both scored very well. I already knew that high scores make teens very attractive to colleges; what I learned was


*(Continued on page 6)*



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# Homeschool High School (con't...)

(Continued from page 5)

that they directly lead to scholarship money.

3) Continue to encourage her to learn to use the computer (she bought a laptop with babysitting money) because she will need that skill in the future, whether she goes to college, works, starts her own business, and/or runs a household.

4) Use community and local colleges to augment her studies, as they'll provide her with classroom experience in areas I don't want to teach (#1: Chemistry!) as well as college credit.

5) Give her increasing responsibility for deciding when to do her assignments, to the point that by senior year, my involvement in her schoolwork will center on a once-a-week meeting with her to review her assignments.

6) Do Life Prep for Homeschooled Teenagers with her during her junior and senior years of high school, because it worked so well with the older two, and because I'd like to add some resources and books to it that will be chosen just for her.

Also, as I did with her older sister, I will:

7) Give her increasing experience in cooking, cleaning and other household chores. That, combined with the babysitting she already does in our neighborhood, will help train her for that most important of all jobs, being a homemaker for the family she hopes to have someday.

8) Continue to garden and sew with her, because it gives me great joy to share such pleasurable activities with her, and because I want the time with her. I learned from the last two to treasure such times because the days pass so quickly.

Finally, in addition to the all of the above, there's one more thing I will do with her that I was not able to do with her older sister:

9) I will continue to do the Mother/Daughter study of "Women of the Bible" that we began a year ago, because it's so nice to study the Bible together, and we have had such great discussions!

These are the basics of my plan. Making these plans is kind of bittersweet, because this is my last opportunity to do our "traditional" version of high school. (My son's high school will be much different because of his delays, but will surely bring its own joys, as teaching him thus far has done.) This time around, I

have a much better idea of how well homeschool high school can be done; I saw it with my older children. Thus I have a lot more confidence this time around.

If you're going to homeschool your children during their high school years, I hope these tips help you. Just remember the most important thing: enjoy these years, because they will be over before you know it.

*Printed with permission:*

*Barbara Frank is the mother of four homeschooled-from-birth children ages 13-22, a freelance writer/editor, and the author of "Life Prep for Homeschooled Teenagers" and the new eBook, "The Imperfect Homeschoolers".  
[www.cardamompublishers.com](http://www.cardamompublishers.com)*

*"An educational system isn't worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn't teach them how to make a life." --Author unknown*

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## Equivalency VS Dogwood Certificates For Homeschool Children

	Equivalency	Dogwood
Have a minimum of 80 credits	yes	yes
Do Planning 10 including graduation course outline	yes (unit one of planning 10 is optional)	yes
Do a portfolio presentation at the end of grade 12	yes	yes
Use curriculum that follows PLO's	no	yes
Use curriculum regularly recognized as high school curriculum but does not need to follow PLO's	yes	no
Write provincial exams in grade 10, 11 and 12	* No but optional	yes
Grade 11 Social Studies must cover Canadian history, Geography and Government	yes	yes
Have a teacher track PLO's	no	yes
Work authenticated by an HCOS teacher	yes	no
Portfolio of work sent in regularly	Once a year preferably spring	3 times a year
Fee	yes - \$50 per year	no
Funds available to help with curriculum costs	\$150	\$1000
Registered vs. enrolled	Registered as a homeschooler	Enrolled as a DL student
Transcript of marks	Yes from HCOS stating did not write provincial exams	Yes from both HCOS and the Ministry of Education
Graduation certificate	Yes from HCOS	Yes from HCOS and the Ministry of Education
Recognized by colleges and universities	By colleges	By all post-secondary schools
Bursaries and scholarships	May be some bursaries	Can apply for scholarships
Write college or university entrance exams	yes	no if apply within 2 years after that yes
Apprenticeship program	yes but may not receive the \$1000 upon completion	Yes
Graduation ceremony	yes	yes

\* DL enrolled students may chose not to write the provincial exams and receive an equivalency certificate. This option is more for students who can not write the exams for various reasons, such as special needs and on an IEP.

HCOS is Heritage Christian Online School in Kelowna  
Contact Janet Rainbow 1 877 288 3649 jrainbow@onlineschool.ca



## Burned Out Or Boiled Down

Written & submitted by Eleanor Deckert

### **B**OILED DOWN: YES BURNED OUT: NO

So. What can I tell you about Homeschooling?

I have so many stories to tell from 15 years experience with our 4 children. We have traveled, stayed home, used government, purchased and borrowed curriculum. Some years we explored possibilities by making-it-up-as-we-went-along.

I could tell you stories about our wilderness lifestyle: the snowy owl, the coyote and the bear. Shall I tell you about the seasons: mud pies in the garden, wading from the sand bars, the cellar full of canning and the woodshed stacked from our working together, the snow forts and skating on the pond?

Shall I describe doubting neighbours and generous grandparents, newborn babies and graduations? Would you like to hear about the variations I have observed as I travel and visit homeschooling families in Florida, Ontario, on an island near Seattle, deep in New York City and high in the Rockies?

Perhaps it would be most helpful for me to list tips and explain games, to give instructions for a history time-line or a script for a biographical skit or share addresses for suppliers or book titles.

I would love to tell you how I link science-to-art and geography-to-music and math-to- gardening-to-history and literature-to-holidays.

While these topics would be entertaining and perhaps useful to some of you out there in "Homeschooling Land"... I think I can go deeper. I would like to share what can be "Boiled Down" and distilled from all of this experience and observation.

I would like to show you how I think.

Because our family began homeschooling in the early 1980's (before there were books or conventions) and because we have been isolated from other homeschoolers (we live in a town of less than 80 people an hours drive from a store), I have had to think through things without the benefit of a support group, friends, church or family. Although it has been painful and lonely sometimes, it has also been an amazing opportunity to examine my own thoughts and ideas and clarify what is really happening inside as I learn how to teach.

So, as summer approaches and we clean up and celebrate the year past and gear up and prepare for the year ahead I ask you to look at how you are thinking... which is really the foundation of your own homeschool. When you see it and understand it, you can strengthen it to endure without strain.

And in doing this, I hope to give you something that will last much longer than a funny story, a morning's project, a season's theme or a year's study. By "Boiling Down" what I have learned and asking you to examine your own thinking, you just might be able to prevent the enemy we all try to avoid: Homeschooling "Burnout"...that dreaded exhaustion and frustration so familiar to veteran homeschoolers.

### TENDING THE FIRE . . . TENDING THE LEARNER

Every family builds their home education in much the same way a person builds a fire.

A fire needs three things to burn: fuel, heat and air.

If the fire is not catching on, the person must stop and notice if the fuel is small, dry and near enough to the heat. The heat source must be steady and provide enough heat for long enough for the fuel to catch. The airflow might not be enough or it might be too much causing the fire to fade away or blow out.

To teach / learn, a parent / student need the same three things as the fire.

First: Supplies and materials must be **available** (like fuel) to feed the eager, searching mind.

Second: The parent communicates a **belief** system to the student, encouraging the child with his or her own enthusiasm (like heat) until the student catches on.

Third: **Curiosity** must be allowed (like air) to open up and flit between the solid facts bringing interest and life to the studies.

### PREVENT BURNOUT WITH THESE A B C's

Availability. Belief. Curiosity

### AVAILABILITY

So much of the work of homeschooling is really the gathering, managing and distribution of resources. What a search we go on! Catalogues, on-line, used bookstores, craft supplies; the list goes on and on. Resources also include people

Eleanor Deckert

*Seven predictable patterns* tm

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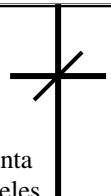
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## Burned Out Or Boiled Down (con't...)

we know who will share their expertise and skills with our children. Time, space, and money are other important resources with limitations and possibilities unique to each family.

Once we have made the decision about curriculum and gathered supplies there is still the question of availability within the home for each student.

On a scale from chaos to immaculate, we have to look at the physical features of our home, patterns of the day, responsibility of each child and personal tolerance to determine how much we, the adults, control the resources, and how much we allow the children to help themselves.

Think of the fire.

Without fuel available, it will soon die away. With too much too soon it will smother.

### BELIEF

Behind, underneath, silently, weaving it all together is our belief system.

Which of each pair makes you feel warmer or cooler?

Is the world a safe and pleasant place to explore and discover? Is the world dangerous and we must move with warnings and alert caution?

Is the child an empty slate and we, the adults, must provide authoritative instruction? Or is the child an opening, eager "Someone" and our role is more a guide, pausing to wonder at what is of interest?

Is the finished product what is important? Or is the process equally or even more valuable?

Again, we can see our own beliefs on a scale. We will each be "somewhere in the middle." But it is useful to stop and take an inventory of your thoughts and beliefs. Surely, you are conveying a message daily to your children. What is it that underlies your homeschool?

How is the "heat" of your belief system held close to your children? And how will you notice that they are "catching on" and strengthening their own belief system?

### CURIOSITY

As you prepare for the summer's activities, the year ahead, a day or a lesson... think of building a fire and the importance of allowing the air to flow. If the stove is closed down, the fire will not light. If the wind is howling, the fire will not light.

When you prepare your materials, take a moment to imagine curiosity as the airflow between you and your child and the lesson.

Again, on a scale from wandering aimlessly to rigid control... how can you allow curiosity to raise your child's interest and ignite the eager searching and self-motivated learning we so hopefully wait to see.

### FIRE: MAN'S BEST FRIEND AND MAN'S WORST ENEMY

We live in the mountains and have had close calls with forest fires twice. We also heat our home with a wood-stove.

What is the difference?

The fire in the furnace, in the engine of your car and in your cooking stove is harnessed for a useful purpose.

Sometimes homeschooling can look or feel like a run-away fire, drawing all resources (materials, time, money, space, people) until everyone is exhausted, dazed and confused. This is "Burnout." It is no fun and makes everyone want to quit.

Stop. Rest. "Boil it Down." Distil the whole thing down into its smallest, clearest parts.

Sometimes "less is more."

Look for the A B C's.

Make materials **available**.

**Believe** that the child will search for what interests them.

What they learn from a sense of **curiosity** will all fit together in the student's mind.

Comparing learning and teaching to tending a fire is the 4th of the Seven Predictable Patterns TM.

*Eleanor Deckert and her husband, Kevin, live in North Thompson. Their four children (each homeschooled for about 6 years) have grown and moved on to further studies. Eleanor travels to deliver seminars she has developed. Her seminars have been presented to parents, educators, professionals, clergy and volunteers in private homes, schools, homeschool support groups, churches, conferences and non-profit societies since 1994 in the USA and Canada.*



**School Success**  
Grades: 7 - 12th  
<http://www.school-success.net>  
Mike Swords, homeschool dad and college history instructor, is offering discounts for early enrollment in his online courses.

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VISIT  
<http://www.school-success.net>



## What Is a True Homeschooler?

**W**hat is a true homeschooler and what does it matter?  
Written by Lindy Templeman 2002

Recently I was at the beach with some fellow homeschoolers and a one of my friends mentioned that they met a woman who had just signed up with SIDES. She had gone to a homeschoolers picnic and was very hurt to find that she was not accepted as a "true" homeschooler. Why not? Well this debate of who gets to walk around with their heads held high legitimately claiming official "homeschooling" status, has been in the air, well for a very long time - too long.

Well let's investigate this issue that burns inside so many. What is a true homeschooler? Many believe that you cannot legitimately call yourself a homeschooler if you are in any way affiliated with the ministry. I think that this difference of opinion is simply due to the misinterpretation of the "home" in homeschooling. Homeschooling you would think by definition would refer to anyone schooling at home, "true" homeschoolers; I believe, define it like this: they believe (I think) that the word "home" refers to the location one obtains their resources. For instance, one who is dissatisfied with the school their child is in but not necessarily dissatisfied with the curriculum and BC guidelines, may choose to enroll in a distant education, or e-bus program. One who chooses this route adheres to the ministry guidelines and accepts the ministry resource choices. (Note: any student enrolled in any ministry-affiliated program is in the eyes of the ministry a BC schools student and is NOT registered as a homeschooler). "True" homeschoolers also believe (once again I think) that these students are in fact just doing all their ministry influenced schoolwork at home; not children doing home influenced work at home; thus the difference in definition of the "home" in the word homeschooling.

With that said let's move onto another issue "true" homeschoolers have. Why do some "true" homeschoolers choose (unfortunately too many times thoughtlessly) to voice their opinion on "true" homeschooling. Fear. Unfortunately (I believe) a valid fear. With the recent "candy" the government has used to entice "true" homeschoolers to "fit" into their system we may very well be putting our freedoms of education at risk. If too many homeschoolers give in, it destined to backfire against us. Give an inch they take mile. This statement hasn't lived through the ages for nothing.

How can it backfire? Well the more homeschoolers who become BC school students the less our voice can be heard. It is very interesting that these programs have so prevalently cropped up simultaneously with the rise of successful homeschooling. I am sure the government will have no trouble attributing the success of "homeschoolers" to their program that so successfully combined the needs of the student (in this case; best learning environment for the child) with the BC guidelines. Since it has worked so well, don't you think

we should all be involved? I am sure the government will think so.

Now with all that said I sit in a very awkwardly humbling seat. I am a "true" homeschooler who has been bought out. I have always maintained that I am not concerned with the politics of the system only that I get the choice to do what I want in terms of education. I am not a homeschooling advocate. So the government wants me to show some "evidence" of learning. Who cares. As long as the government leaves me enough alone and sends me the cheque it doesn't matter. Well... as I have always known it does. The bottom line is that if everyone has my attitude, it really won't matter anymore, we will lose the choice and we all be forced to become part of the system; at which point most of us will agree that no amount of money was worth the risk.

Final words...

\* As different as everyone who educates in the home is, we all have a common bond, the desire to do the best for our children.

\* Remembering modeling is the best tool you can use, and if used unwisely it can also be the worst.

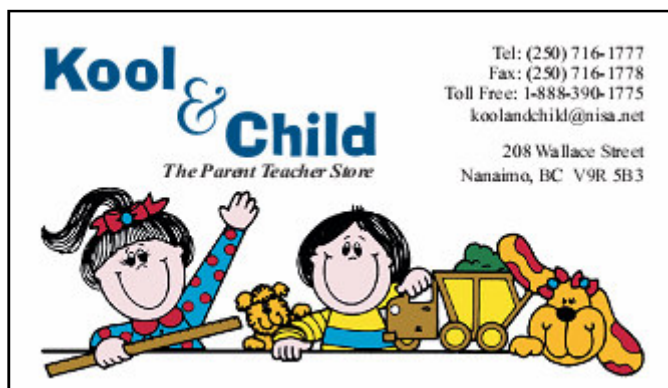
\* Choose your words wisely and virtuously and try to leave the judgment of others to God.

\* Do not neglect your inner voice; it always knows what is the "right" thing to do.

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*Lyndy Templeman lives in Victoria where she has been homeschooling her four not-been-to-school children for 12 years. She started a website Victoria Homeschool [www.victoriahomeschool.com](http://www.victoriahomeschool.com) to help make a connection that everyone could use. She loves homeschooling and could not imagine doing it any other way!*





# Use Mind Maps to Improve Your Learning

By Royane Real

**A**re you still taking notes to organize your information the old fashioned way? Try the technique of making mind maps, and see whether this method of organizing your thoughts works better for you.

When you need to organize your thoughts, you probably write out all your thoughts the old fashioned way.

However, there is a technique called mind mapping which can help you organize your thoughts and help you understand the relationship of all the components. Try it and see.

Many students find that the use of mindmaps helps them take notes more effectively and remember better when they study for exams.

The main problem with taking notes the traditional way is that this is a very passive process. Simply taking notes does not get the brain very involved in interacting with the information. If you can get your brain to get more actively involved in organizing the new material you will remember it better.

The following technique for note-taking is particularly effective for people who are highly visual. This method of making notes is sometimes called “mind-mapping” or making a “learning map”.

Although it takes some practice to use mind-mapping effectively, most people who use it find they can retain and remember far more information with a lot less work.

The essence of the learning-map (also known as “memory-map”, or “mind-map”) technique is quite simple. You will need a blank piece of paper, the larger the better. You will need at least one pen, more if you want to use a variety of colors.

You will be trying to fill the entire page with your notes, so it is important to keep the size of your writing quite small. With practice you should be better able to judge what size of writing will work effectively.

As you listen to the lecturer, or read the article you are studying, decide what you think the central theme is. For example, you might be listening to a lecture where you decide the central theme seems to be, “Conditions in Europe on the eve of World War 2”

Or you might be listening to a talk that has a central theme of “Strategies that plants use to survive winter”

Once you have decided what the central theme is, jot down the words in the center of the page, and draw a circle around the main theme. Don’t try to write down a sentence

*(Continued on page 14)*

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# Adding From Left to Right

## A Better Way to Add

By Peter Waycik

More than likely, when you learned how to add, you started on the right and moved to the left. If you were adding whole numbers, you added the ones, "carried" if necessary, and repeated for the tens, hundreds and so on. This works well on paper, and it is the most efficient paper and pencil method; however, adding in the other direction has several desirable advantages: the left to right method promotes a better understanding of place value, it can be done mentally with much greater ease, and it does not require that numbers be lined up in a column.

Article: More than likely, when you learned how to add, you started on the right and moved to the left. If you were adding whole numbers, you added the ones, "carried" if necessary, and repeated for the tens, hundreds and so on. This works well on paper, and it is the most efficient paper and pencil method; however, adding in the other direction has several desirable advantages: the left to right method promotes a better understanding of place value, it can be done mentally with much greater ease, and it does not require that numbers be lined up in a column. Students can learn left to right addition, so they have another method to choose from when presented with addition problems.

Left to right addition involves adding the largest place values first. As you move from left to right, you keep a cumulative total, so it is simply a number of smaller addition problems. To give you an idea of how it works and what it sounds like, consider the example,  $677 + 938$ .

Begin by adding the left most place values. In the example this is 600 plus 900 equals 1500. Add the values in the next place, one at a time, to the previous sum, and keep track of the new sum each time. In the example,  $1500 + 70$  is 1570,  $1570 + 30$  is 1600. For students who are more proficient at this algorithm, they don't necessarily think "plus 70" or "add 30." Their thought process, if said out loud might sound like, "600, 1500, 1570, 1600, . . ." Continue adding the values in each subsequent place until finished. The final steps in the example are  $1600 + 7$  is 1607, 1607 plus 8 is 1615. The sum is 1615.

As you can imagine, students need to be proficient at single digit addition and have an understanding of place value before attempting left to right addition. When they are first learning it, they might try repeating sums as they go along (e.g. 1500, 1570, 1570, 1570, 1600, . . .) to help them retain the newest sums. They might also cross out digits as they are adding. There is no rule about having to add in this way mentally. Students could write down the sums as they proceed.

Left to right addition promotes a better understanding of place value than right to left addition. In right to left addition, single digits are carried or regrouped with little emphasis placed on what the value of those carried digits are. In the example,  $1246 + 586$ , students add  $6 + 6$  to get 12; they write down the 2 and carry the 1 when they should be carrying the ten. In the next step, they add  $8 + 4 + 1$  to get 13; they write down the 3 and carry the 1 when they should be adding  $80 + 40 + 10$ , writing the 3 in the tens place (i.e. 30) and carrying the hundred. Essentially, right to left addition excludes vocabulary related to place value. Left to right addition, on the other hand, promotes an understanding of place value as each digit is given its correct value. In the example, the one in the thousands place is one thousand, the two in the hundreds place is two hundred, and so on.

Left to right addition is well-suited to mental addition since the sum is cumulative with no steps in between; in other words, there is nothing for the student to keep in mind except for the cumulative sum. In right to left addition, several numbers must be remembered as the student proceeds. To illustrate this, consider the simple example,  $64 + 88$ . In left to right addition, the sum is simple to find: 60, 140, 144, 152. Only one number had to be remembered at any point. In right to left addition,  $4 + 8$  is 12, so there are already two numbers to remember: the two in the ones place and the regrouped ten.

(Continued on page 13)

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Colfax brothers (1980's)  
Agatha Christie (1890-1976) author of mysteries  
Erik Demaine assistant professor  
Thomas Edison (1847-1931) inventor  
Paul Erdos Hungarian mathematician  
Benjamin Franklin printer, inventor, statesman & more  
C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) author of Narnia  
Abraham Lincoln 16th Pres. Of U.S.  
Todd Lodwick Nordic skier World Cup & Olympics  
Benoit Mandelbrot Harvard mathematician  
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## Adding (con't...)

*(Continued from page 12)*

The next step is to add  $60 + 80 + 10$  to get 150. At this point, the two must be recalled and added to the 150 to get 152. Although this sounds simple, it becomes more complicated with more digits.

Right to left addition does not require numbers to be lined up in a column, but it is often taught that way because the method tends to ignore place value and relies on a student's ability to line up the place values to compensate. Many errors that students make in right to left addition occur because they don't have a strong knowledge of place value, and they forget or don't realize that like place values need to be lined up. They might, for instance, add a digit in the tens place to a digit in the hundreds place. Another scenario is a sloppy recording of numbers where a digit is mistakenly added to the wrong column. In left to right addition, the emphasis is on finding a certain place value in each number rather than relying on the place values being aligned. Students, of course, need to be able to recognize place value before they can be successful at this method. For instance, they should be able to recognize that the ones in the numbers: 514, 1499, and 321 are in the tens, thousands, and ones places respectively. If they can't, further teaching on place value is required before addition can be taught effectively.

Although left to right addition has several advantages, it isn't suggested that you scrap everything else. Learning a wide variety of addition methods allows you latitude in problem solving situations. By teaching students this method, you give them another option when they are tackling addition questions.

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*Peter Waycik is an elementary teacher and the creator of thousands of free math worksheets that can be found at his website: <http://www.math-drills.com>.*

***"What is most important and valuable about the home as a base for children's growth into the world is not that it is a better school than the schools, but that it isn't a school at all." --John Holt***

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# Mind Maps (con't...)

(Continued from page 11)

or a paragraph--just get down enough of the key words that will bring the ideas back into you mind.

Keep listening or reading, watching for the first main sub-theme.

When you come across the first major sub-theme, pick a spot on the page to jot down a few key words that sum up the sub-theme. Draw a circle around the sub-theme words, and then join your sub-theme circle to the main theme circle with a line.

Each time you come across a new major sub-theme, write down a few key words to summarize the new idea, and draw a circle around those words. Then draw a line to join the sub-theme circle to the main idea circle in the center of the page. Eventually you will have a circle in the center with several spokes radiating from it.

The lines or spokes don't have to be straight, and they can be of any length required. The "circles" don't have to be circles; they can be squares, triangles, or oval squiggles if you prefer. You can use different colors to help you organize the ideas better.

As the speaker or writer continues to present his ideas, you will find that some of the ideas being presented are additional supporting details that clarify or illustrate one of the sub-themes you have already identified. In this case you will write these "sub-sub-themes" down using just a few words, enclose them in a circle or squiggle, and link them to their sub-theme with a line.

Eventually your sub-theme circles may have many spokes radiating from them as the author or lecturer continues to present his ideas. At a glance you will be able to take in the dominant themes of the talk and the underlying organizational structure of the ideas.

If you happen to have any ideas of your own while you are reading or listening to the lecture, jot them down as well. This shows you have your brain actively interacting with the material.

When you make a mind map or a learning map of all your notes, you create a very visual document that differs a lot from traditional methods of making notes for class.

People who learn very well visually will particularly benefit from the way that learning maps clearly show the relationships between main themes, sub-themes and supporting facts and ideas.

Try this method and see if this is the note-taking technique that works best for you!

Written by learning expert Royane Real. If you want to improve your learning, get her new short report "Your Quick Guide to Improving Your Learning Ability" at [www.royanereal.com](http://www.royanereal.com).

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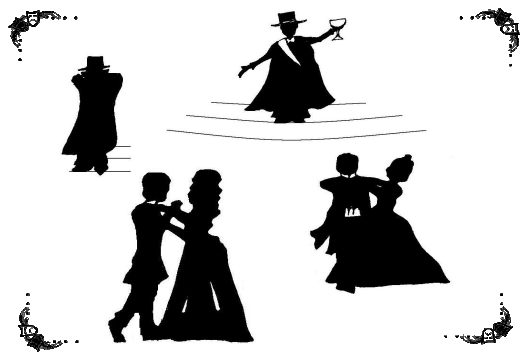
*"If the schools were perfect, I would still homeschool my children--because it isn't about school. It's about families taking their children back and educating them as they see best. It's about giving birth to a child and loving that child enough to want to nurture him and be a part of his life until he no longer needs you. It is the natural thing to do. School is only a substitute for the real thing." --Kathleen McCurdy*

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<http://www.4edu.ca/tors/RBC2/>

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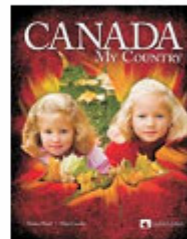
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