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From the Heart—Learning from an Educational Buffet

When ready to order teaching materials, many parents ask for an academic menu, and order the customary grade-level entrees, with or without a side of teacher's books. This is the initiation to a regimen in which the student is compelled to consume every scholastic morsel sandwiched between the crusts of a textbook. These parents seldom realize there is so much more available than what is found on the menu in their mind.

They are tempted to chase the pied piper of educational phariseeism as he plays a hypnotic melody of educational pretense and façade. The words may be different, but tune of his song is ever the same: he tells exactly what must be learned, the students parrot it on the exam, and *Voilà!* everyone is supposed to be convinced that the children are educated. His students pass spelling tests but remain unable to spell. The ones who aced math find practical application and word problems perplexing. Two years of foreign-language study leave his students incapable of communication. The test "proves" that the teacher taught and the students learned, but is this reality?

For home education, I suggest an educational buffet, more choices than your mind can imagine: delightful servings of biographies and eyewitness accounts, field guides and books of science experiments, educational games and puzzles, newsletters and magazines, audiotapes and CDs, internet websites and computer programs, encyclopedias and dictionaries. Curiosity and interest invite the student to unlimited return visits at this smorgasbord. Cultivate or resuscitate an educational hunger that leads to learning which satisfies. Have you noticed how small children incessantly ask questions? They seem to have an insatiable appetite for learning. The results are phenomenal. Make your studies practical, real, relevant, interesting and useful. As has been said, education is not the filling of a bucket, but the kindling of a fire. Try education by the appetite mentality. If at first you're not satisfied, come back for seconds.

Hungering for the Truth,

Greg Stablein