



Homeschooling during a family world journey

Description

More thoughts about homeschooling.

Who would have thought we would write this kind of post?

When we went on the journey I mostly counted on The One and his famous patience for the math studies of The Natives. English, we assumed, they will learn one way or another even if we do nothing about it.

And language studies? Well, we took with us some learning and reading books and tablets and kindle and mostly I relied on them being the bright kids that they are. It does help after all. And also that language is my personal favorite and when we love something we can pass on this love, at least to some extent.

We left home at the following status:

The Eldest in seventh grade, gifted enthusiastic book worm. With him we had no questions about language studies. We will just let him read as much as he likes. He studied math in school at eighth grade level and we planned to continue with this. He had very good English that allowed him to make a reasonable conversation with people, while he still preferred making his conversations with computers. Our central in fifth grade, a stubborn and persistent student of the course known as "the solar course" (you live from the sun energy and never get into class), a famous opposer to reading, masters the ABC and perhaps a bit more, but generally we can say that his English level was what you can call politely "not even a word".

Little One in second grade, excellent level of reading and writing for her age, very good in math and basic knowledge of the ABC.

The beginning was a bit halting. We have settled for a month in Koh Tao, Thailand. The One was busy with his divemaster. I was still working like mad. We were all learning and adapting to the studying process of all of us together, who does what, how much time each one can sit down on his bottom and study without going nuts and how to survive breakdowns of each one of us and live to tell.

Next, we started developing different kinds of routines. Routine of travel days, routine of trip days, routine of no move days.

No move days are days in which we haven't spent traveling from one place to another. We haven't made any tours or any other special activities. Actually most of the studies have been done during these kinds of days.

Their formal school material was covered within a weekly average of 4 hours, but this estimate is quite rough because there were weeks when they studied every day and weeks in which they haven't touched the formal school material at all.

I will start quoting here all the clichés you can read anywhere on the internet about homeschooling, about how real learning happens on every moment, spontaneous learning etc. I will mention few of the things that happened to us and try to keep the theories out of this text.

Just like everyone always says, our kids speak English today.

Being more specific, our Eldest speaks amazingly and reached a level that many adults, who are non native English speakers, don't hold and expect for few grammatical corrections here and there we are so delighted with him and we just try to stay out of the way. Along our journey he even read some adults English books, when the going got tough. The Central speaks rather good English, definitely comparing to his age mates. He is now able to make a fluent conversation with people in all ages (what can I do that he is being hit on by twenty year old girls). His reading and writing are quite good as well and with every day that passes he learns more and more. Little One doesn't speak too much, in any language, but we can see how she advances with her English up and across in both reading, writing and translation from one language to another.

The three of them finished their school material for this year and now have the time to take year end exams.

For that purpose The One downloaded some examples of the national exams from the internet and set together with them a series of tests. First, each one has to decide when he or she is ready to be tested. All the tests are without any time limitations.

The first test is a rehearsal over the last year's materials. It means that we do it together.

The second test is a simulation. It means that each one has to do it on his/her own without help.

The third is a "real" test with a grade.

Eventually The Natives insisted on receiving grades for all the tests they have done. So far nobody received a grade which is less than 96.

Little One finished her language materials long ago and now she has some reading books we borrowed from school's library. We found one of the books a little too difficult. Today I offered her that I will read to her from the book and if she'd like to she can join and share the reading. We started reading. Indeed a challenging book. The language is rich and full of phrases embedded in the flow of the story. So it turned that I was reading most of the time and we conversed about what we've been reading. We googled a lot of words and learned what ivy is, what is lace, what is colonial building (and added a discussion about Cambodia and Vietnam as French colonies in oppose to India as a British colony and Philippines as a Spanish colony. Little One easily pointed the characteristics that remained in each one of these countries from that era, like the baguette in Vietnam and the use of Spanish words in the local language in the Philippines), what is an African mask, what is philosophy, we learnt about the famous "The Thinker" sculpture and that the artist who created it is Auguste Rodin. Not bad for 30 minutes of reading.

The Central refuses to read. That's why on top of the language classes with me we found another way to progress his language skills. He writes a diary.

From the beginning of our journey his writing and self expression skills dramatically improved and he creates a lovely souvenir of the entire journey, including some nice little items he glues inside like tickets of attractions we've been at, local currency bills, receipts and other interesting cards he has found along the way. I've got a feeling that not only he will be happy in the future with this souvenir. All of us will.

And one last thought for now.

After The Natives proved how aces they were in the national exams and The One and I were very excited and proud there was more. It made it clear for us that homeschooling is simply a great option for the children. We have made a great choice and it feels wonderful.
I think I will not be exaggerating saying that homeschool is one of the best and most satisfying things weâ€™ve done this year.

Category

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