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Working with Delight-Directed Passions in Your Homeschooled Student by Charles Royce

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In a recent US News and World Report article, the author talked about how important it is to colleges that applicants show some kind of passion in their activities or interests--this passion is what sets successful students apart. What colleges call passion is often referred to by homeschoolers as delight-directed learning or specialization. Parents may often feel like these activities are frustrating, boring, or annoying (would you PLEASE stop playing that piano!!!), but clearly colleges value such activities. Why?!! Delight-directed learning involves nurturing the love of learning thatâ€™s important for children, so that they become lifelong learners who are able to adapt to any situation. The more the world changes, the more we need lifelong learners to make sense of it all.

If youâ€™re a parent who finds the delight-directed learning of your child kind of frustrating, take heart! Although at times it may feel like your student is not doing any â€˜realâ€™ school at all, often when you pu their transcript together youâ€™ll realize that not only did they cover their core classes, but also three other classes in music alone because of their delight-directed learning. Delight certainly can be annoying--but the good news is that the annoyance you feel can be a way to identify delight-directed learning in your children. If youâ€™re struggling to see where their passion and interest is, ask yourself what your children are doing that annoys you. What is it they do every day when they should be doing school? Usually, it is that very thing that annoys you that is also your childâ€™s delight-directed learning. Capitalize on it!

Delight-directed learning can give you inspiration for your core classes, and can help you fill your studentâ€™s high school transcript with some electives. It gives colleges exactly what they want, the passion they want to see from teenagers. Passion means their interest lasts for years--preferably all four years of high school or at least a couple of years.

Delight-directed learning has lots of side benefits: it can improve cooperation with your teenagers, so youâ€™re not always trying to force them to study things theyâ€™re not interested in. It can reduce burnout if your student is more involved in what they do--if theyâ€™re more tuned in to what it is theyâ€™r learning, then they become less burned out and they need fewer breaks. It can also make that learning more meaningful to them, because learning seems to make more sense when you apply it to something that you actually care about. Work with it, and youâ€™ll wind up with an interesting student that colleges will pay to have attended their school!

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