

# **Report #1 - boy age 14**

## **1. What are your general impressions on the past year of home education?**

Our family had quite a tumultuous year moving from NSW to the outback in April and then from the outback to town in November. M was able to observe and critically analyse various lifestyles of station owners to Big Lap travellers to homesteaders and townsfolk. The historical places we lived in and visited have broadened his view on some topics and has helped him come out of his "shell" somewhat.

M has taken a keen interest in Minecraft and some other online gaming and has joined private servers where he has been able to chat and interact with other players. The boost that this has had on his social skills and confidence when meeting new friends in person has been amazing to observe.

His enthusiasm for constructing LEGO Technic kits and keen desire to build a computer will be the driving force and focus of his education in the coming months. We are aware of the Engineering influence and genes from both sides of the family and want to encourage him along those lines.

## **2. Did you achieve the goals outlined in your program?**

We achieved most of his short-term goals with his natural instinct to learn and his ability to seek out self-directed learning. He has built much resilience in engaging with day-to-day life with more outings and social meetups. His Maths skills have progressed somewhat and his English knowledge continues to improve. Hygiene and general healthy eating have been a large focus for our family this previous year.

His long-term goals continue with communication skills improved and encouraging more life skills. We have a great relationship with M and his capacity to talk through any difficulties that may arise and address his anxiety issues as they come up.

## **3. Did you make any changes to your program? Why/why not?**

We did adjust the Science and History/Geography plan as our move to the outback and consequent outings and museum visits offered a more hands on learning of the local area. All other subjects remained about the same and we continue to focus on relevance to his daily life in learning while using his strengths and interests.

## **4. What were the highlights or lowlights?**

Highlights - travelling around the Etheridge Shire and to the Atherton Tablelands, working through MANY books and audiobooks, being neighbours to 3 lively homeschooled girls, being allowed to get Minecraft and play during set hours, our dog having puppies, observing the various forms of transport in the outback, getting his new bicycle, moving to the town of Mareeba, and developing new friendships with other homeschooled boys in the area, visit to the Cairns Armour & Artillery museum on his birthday.

Lowlights - travelling 4 hours one-way to get groceries, being the only teen boy in our circle of friends in the outback, feeling displaced with all his personal belongings still in boxes in NSW, too much change for a boy who loves structure and clear plans, being bored and frustrated during summer school holiday in a new town where we didn't know anyone and no meetups were happening.

## **5. In what area did your child achieve the most success?**

M's biggest success has been his progress in managing anxiety and his social maturity and communication within his network of new friends and family. His enthusiasm for learning fuelled by his love of gaming and tutorials online and his spontaneous online conversations is a positive move forward.

M loves reading every night, and at times during the day, devours fiction books like The Chronicles of Narnia, The Ranger's Apprentice series, Star Wars and Asterisk comics, TinTin, etc. He has listened to various Jennifer A. Nielsen historical fiction stories as well from World War 2 era.

## “Work Samples”

### 1. *What approaches did you use to support your child?*

This year I supported M by ensuring he was provided ample opportunities for learning and life. I developed unique learning journals for him based on his interests and the most recent one, military tanks, he is about to get started on.

I provided him resources, opportunities for questioning and reflection of what he learned, encouraged him through his struggles, supported as needed. I modelled good communication skills and encouraged positive interaction with his 3 sisters. I have also arranged a weekly teens & tweens meetup in our town for him to meet other teen boys and that has been a success.

I am careful with pushing him too much in areas like handwriting and textbook-style learning as his anxiety rises fast and we get nowhere. I have adjusted how we approach topics outside of his general interests and skill level so that he can enjoy the process of learning new things while also expanding on his life skills and general abilities. His dislike of handwriting offers me opportunity to be creative with observations and activities for him.

He loves the weekly library visits and I have been teaching him how to find his own books on their online system and off their shelves using the cataloging system.

We also discovered that his social anxiety is greatly relieved if he has played an online game with the child he is about to meet.

### 2. *What progress did you observe?*

M's progress and development in skills, independence, attitude, and achievement with social and technical skills has been phenomenal. We have been homeschooling for 5 years now and his growth has been strongly evident in these areas. A few months back he was playing online games by himself, and now he is actively involved in group servers and strategies for expanding them.

**English:** Focusing on gaming, he covers English in various and increasing ways with reading game instructions and blogs, communicating with online friends (both verbal and typed), and there has been a lot of negotiation and team work in that area as well. He searches and analyses YouTube tutorials and library books, usually on the subject of Coding, game strategy and making and selling “skins”. We guide him through social conversations and possible conflict with other server members and enjoy observing the way he leads some of these conversations. A few months back when we requested feedback of the day's activities he used to respond with “I don't know”, now he is able to give detailed observations and opinions on the various conversations and activities which often include a new tutorial or project that has expanded his skills. He checks with us about spelling words, teaches us about terms and gaming lingo, and is able to describe in full detail how to create something that he has mastered.

**Maths:** Minecraft has offered opportunities for working with physics, map work, dimensions, calculations of space, distance, time management, etc. Previously he would be overwhelmed with measurements, for instance in the kitchen, and needed guidance and much explanations, but is now able to identify what he needs and adjusts his measurements accordingly, without help. He has enjoyed creating “skins” for trading and selling bringing in aspects of finance and cost calculations. Some of his online peers live overseas and thus he has had to work out timezones and adjust playing time accordingly. While he does complete pages of a Math workbook we have not seen evidence that he applies those abstract skills to everyday life like Minecraft has.

**Digital Technology:** Gaming has opened a broad understanding and growth in skills of Digital Technology. He would previously type with one finger when sending messages on the computer but now his ability to type has advanced significantly. He researches the use of tech equipment, he's been learning coding, and discovering more about online safety. His his knowledge and skills in this area have all grown in the past few months. His ability to build and scale designs from books or from his own imagination has hugely increased as well. He has also had exposure and input with spreadsheets and data recording through his online investments managed by his father.

# Home Education Program for M - age 14

## Lesson Plan 2023/24 – Year 8/9

M is a structured person and appreciates routine and clear expectations. He learns well through videos, excursions and activities using his hands. He is suspected dysgraphic and reluctant to participate in typical English tasks like writing paragraphs and longer stories.

### Goals:

- improve his spelling
- Improve general handwriting neatness and writing construction skills
- Expand on general life skills and conflict management

**Math** - M will continue completing *Excel Basic Skills Maths* workbook - year 6 level, as well as learning more about geometry, life-based financial and kitchen math, investing and gaming-based math.

**English** - Units of study include military tanks, wars and weapons, encouraging creative writing, spelling, grammar and analysing various forms of text types. His love of reading adventure stories and comics will also continue.

**Science** - The Physics of weapons, minerals and their uses, kitchen science, electrical circuits. He will watch tutorials and documentaries, analyse outcomes of experiments and make modifications where necessary.

**Technology** - Build and use a desktop computer. Design and construct projects in Minecraft and real life as opportunities come up. Fix the various items in our home that break or require assembly.

**History/Geography** - Units of study on military tanks & weapons through the World Wars and other wars through history. Increase world geography knowledge through country studies and Google Earth. Human rights, Indigenous culture, ethics and identity will be explored through these topics. He will visit museums and watch documentaries, critically analyse aspects of history and past choices, and make suggestions for future improvement.

**Health and Physical Education** - attend weekly homeschool activity group for building social skills, strength and teamwork. Ride his bike daily, cook healthy meals, set personal goals and join family discussions on mental health and social skills. Complete the Human Body learning journal.

**Resources** - Including but not limited to: Math Excel workbooks, Khan Academy, unit study learning journals from Learning & Journaling, dictionary, YouTube and Curiosity Stream tutorials and documentaries, homeschool meetups and excursions, the local public library, and other resources as needed.

**Assessment** - I will collect work samples, take photos, provide verbal feedback, and undertake a reflection exercise each term to ensure effective learning is happening.

# **Report #2 - girl age 15**

## **1. *What are your general impressions on the past year of home education?***

Our family had quite a tumultuous year moving from NSW to the outback in April and then from the outback to town in November. S was able to observe and critically analyse various lifestyles of station owners to Big Lap travellers to homesteaders and townfolk. The historical places we lived in and visited have broadened her view on some topics and has helped her understand more of other people's choices in life.

S continues her editing journey with her first novel. She has grown in her understanding of Math, which as an undiagnosed but highly suspected issue of dyscalculia, is a big step for her.

She loves to mentor other young writers and runs her own Facebook group where people can share their story ideas and get feedback. She has entered a few writing competitions the last few months and has furthered her repertoire of learning journals that she sells on my website to earn herself an income.

S has grown a lovely circle of friends around her including penpals in overseas countries. She is a confident and grounded girl and knows where she is heading in life.

## **2. *Did you achieve the goals outlined in your program?***

We achieved most of her short-term goals with her natural instinct to learn and her ability to seek out self-directed learning. She has built much resilience in engaging with day-to-day life with more outings and social meetups. Her Math skills have progressed somewhat and her French knowledge continues to improve. Hygiene and general healthy eating have been a large focus for our family this previous year.

Her long-term goals continue with conflict management improved and we have encouraged more life skills. We have a great relationship with S and her capacity to talk through any difficulties that may arise and address her insecurities as they come up.

## **3. *Did you make any changes to your program? Why/why not?***

We did adjust the Science and History/Geography plan as our move to the outback and consequent outings and museum visits offered a more hands on learning of the local area. All other subjects remained about the same and we continue to focus on relevance to her daily life in learning while using her strengths and interests.

## **4. *What were the highlights or lowlights?***

Highlights - travelling around the Etheridge Shire and to the Atherton Tablelands, working through MANY books and audiobooks, being neighbours to 3 lively homeschooled girls, building up her interest in art and graphic design, our dog having puppies, observing the various forms of transport in the outback, getting her new bicycle, moving to the town of Mareeba, and developing new friendships with other homeschoolers in the area, having her book edited and commented on by a published author.

Lowlights - travelling 4 hours one-way to get groceries, being the only teen girl in our circle of friends in the new town, feeling displaced with all her personal belongings still in boxes in NSW, being bored and frustrated during summer school holiday in a new town where we didn't know anyone and no meetups were happening.

## **5. *In what area did your child achieve the most success?***

S's biggest success has been her progress in creating a product for sale and calculating a budget for it and working on marketing angles. Her love of independence and freedom to create her own work has helped her confidence and maturity. She knows her identity - strengths and weaknesses - and is a beautiful, grounded girl.

## “Work samples”

### 1. *What approaches did you use to support your child?*

I provided her resources, opportunities for questioning and reflection of what she learned, encouraged her through her struggles, supported as needed. I modelled good communication skills and encouraged positive interaction with her 3 siblings. I have also arranged a weekly teens & tweens meetup in our town for her to meet other teens and that is growing. We have been active homeschoolers for over 5 years so are aware of social needs for our children.

For S, English comes naturally to her. She is constantly studying spelling and grammar, using it to edit her creative writing and various novels that she is working on. I give feedback on her storylines and editing process as well as connect her with a published author in the genre of her choice - teen superhero novels.

For Math I understand the challenges she has with numbers and have encouraged her to enjoy the other aspects of Math outside of sums and numbers. She has a lower grade workbook that she uses for sums and calculations, however we are focusing on preparing her to be able to live in the real world and thus focus on how to apply the Math she learns to real life, e.g. kitchen measuring, financial calculations, dress measurements, room measurements, how to use a calculator to come to the solution, etc.

For French she is completely self-directed in her learning. We have a paid subscription to the DuoLingo app and she loves the challenges they offer and is often in the top 3 of the worldwide challenge group. We encourage exposure to French-speaking people and subtitled movies.

### 2. *What progress did you observe?*

S's progress and development in skills, independence, attitude, and achievement with learning has been phenomenal.

**English:** Her interest in spies, detectives and superheroes have lead her into writing her own novel. She started this project 3 years ago but is currently rewriting the story and doing research into various high-level creative writing skills. Her progress in her creative writing has advanced considerably the last few months, from overusing the word “suddenly” to now expanding to more interesting descriptions based on her discoveries in the Emotion Thesaurus. She is able to explain the structure of stories to us, picks out the various roles and nuances in every movie and novel she consumes, and loves teaching other young writers to expand on their skills as well. Information learned from documentaries and library books are her favourite thing to share with others.

She uses her love of novels - reading and writing - to lead her into topics of historical interest, geographic research, and social interaction so has developed a well-rounded world view through this hobby.

**Math:** S has enjoyed working through lessons on Khan Academy in fractions and place values. She is coming to understand analog time more. She loves the challenge of calculating finances when she has some money to spend. Previously she needed us to sit with her and explain everything and now she is able to calculate it all herself. Her understanding of Math outside of memorised sums and typical calculations is strong. She has grown in her use of patterns and sequences in her art and design, and particularly enjoys creating and using codes. She has been enjoying Minecraft for creating settings for her novels but has discovered her visual-spatial awareness is challenged on the platform compared to real life. She is creating her own card game and is exercising much trial and error in measurements, budgeting and other business-based calculations. She has also had exposure and input with spreadsheets and data recording through her online investments managed by her father.

**French:** S's grasp of the language has grown considerably in the past year. Previously her pronunciation was challenged but has increased greatly in recent weeks. She has discovered patterns in the grammar and enjoys explaining it to anyone willing to listen. She has actively searched for penpals in France or French-speaking countries to be able to write and communicate with them. She is able to hold conversations in French and proudly researches and experiences the culture through food creation (many turning into interesting Science experiments) and other French-inspired activities.

# Home Education Program for S - age 15

## Lesson Plan 2023 – Year 10

S is a bright and beautiful soul. She is a genius with words and has her first novel in the editing process. She loves to mentor other young writers and runs her own Facebook group where people can share their story ideas and get feedback.

She is undiagnosed but highly suspected of having dyscalculia so her Maths skills are focused on life skills.

S loves crafts, interior decorating, French, photography, and history - especially for use in her stories.

### Goals:

- Expand on general life skills as she prepares to enter adulthood
- improve her Math skills
- Develop a good work ethic for tasks outside of her interests

**Math** - S loves certain aspects of Maths like patterns and all things visual-spatial, and struggles intensely with sums and even time-telling. I am seeing that as her brain develops using her natural skills in other areas, and a low pressure environment but with daily exposure to some form of Maths that her life skills in this area is improving. She is currently working through a number of Khan Academy lessons and finding success with them.

**English** - Units of study include Spies and Textiles & Design. Our goal for English this year is to increase S's appreciation of parts of speech and grammar and to expose her to a wide variety of media texts including newspapers, film and digital texts, poetry, non-fiction and dramatic performances.

**Science** - The Physics of cooking, minerals and their uses from Minecraft, psychology, chemistry in art and textiles. She will watch tutorials and documentaries, analyse outcomes of experiments and make modifications where necessary.

**History/Geography** - Units of study on the World Wars and other wars through history. Increase world geography knowledge through country studies and Google Earth. Human rights, Women leaders in history, Indigenous culture, ethics and identity will be explored through these topics. He will visit museums and watch documentaries, critically analyse aspects of history and past choices, and make suggestions for future improvement.

**Health and Physical Education** - attend weekly homeschool activity group for building social skills, strength and teamwork. Ride her bike daily, cook healthy meals, set personal goals and join family discussions on mental health and social skills. Complete the Human Body learning journal.

**Language: French** - S has taken this subject deep and expanded her learning to conversational level. Her interest has branched into French architecture and cuisine. She uses DuoLingo, French movies and language learning journals for this subject.

**Resources** - Including but not limited to: Math workbooks, Khan Academy, unit study learning journals from Learning & Journaling, dictionary, YouTube and Curiosity Stream tutorials and documentaries, homeschool meetups and excursions, the local public library, and other resources as needed.

**Assessment** - I will collect work samples, take photos, provide verbal feedback, and undertake a reflection exercise each term to ensure effective learning is happening.