

INGE CANNON

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INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Inge Cannon, and I am delighted to welcome you to Transcript Bootcamp.

This is a special seminar made to help home educating parents like you through all the details of record keeping at the high school level in such a way that employers and college admission officers will be interested in the credentials that your children offer. We believe it is very important that you pattern learning upon scripture in every detail of your training program. Why is that? Because we know from God's word and his promises that scripture will not return to him empty. It will never fail to accomplish the purpose for which God has sent it. Scripture changes lives. And that's what our mission is: to help you work in such a way that you will see lifechanging results.

PART 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSCRIPTS

TRANSCRIPT QUALITIES

We'd like to begin with two very important quotes. The first one is by Edward Murrow. He was a reporter during World War II. In those days, television screens were probably about four inches square, and he would often call in from London and report on what happened in World War II that day. He said some important things about all reporting. He said that to be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful. Transcripts are much the same way. We want them to be believable, credible, truthful and accurate. However, the transcript is not a full disclosure document. In the transcript, there may be some things that are better left out. In this transcript bootcamp, I will explain several things that you should consider leaving out. I will

tell you why it is my personal preference to leave those things out, but of course, the decision is up to you as to what you actually want to do with those.

PART 2

COLLEGIATE RECOGNITION

RECORD KEEPING

The second quote is the Arabian proverb. Here we learn that four things do not come back. The sped arrow, the spoken word, time passed, and the neglected opportunity. Record keeping is the neglected opportunity. Isn't that such a nice way to say it? I mean, it's not like we were just sloppy and forgot to do our work. It's the neglected opportunity. But you can't afford to make those excuses. Let me tell you why it's easy to avoid record keeping. One reason is that it's easy to procrastinate. Another reason is that we're disorganized. Another reason is that there are far more things on our plates than we can possibly handle. And we don't particularly enjoy this job. So this job gets left to the tail end. And then finally, some of us are just perfectionists. And with that perfectionist mentality, until

we have enough time to do it all the way we would like to do it, we don't do any of it. And as a result, it does not get done. You can't afford any of those options. You need to provide your children with a transcript. Some people ask me, but Inge, if I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that my children are not going to go to college, do I still have to provide a transcript for them? My answer to that question is simply, how do you know? How do you know that somewhere in your children's future, there will not be the opportunity or the need for them to seek higher education? My own sister went back to nurses training because of financial needs in her family at 40 years of age. That was something that perhaps you don't foresee in the future, but it's a possibility, and it's something that you would need to produce a record for when that time comes. Let me share with you the most dramatic of a sad illustration that occurs far too often in our offices. Many years ago, I got a phone call from a lady who said this. My son is 28 years old. When he was in high school, we blended his high school training with apprenticeship training so seamlessly that we didn't even have a time of

graduation, let alone a diploma or a transcript. Well, he worked his way up in that company, literally from the mail room right up to the top. And what ended up happening is now at 28 years of age, some 10, 12 years later, the company has been bought out by another company and in the process of the merger, they have sat him down and said to him, we like your work. In fact, we like it so well that we would like to promote you to a higher level of management. But we can't do that without a transcript, without you going on to college. And then she said this: We can't get him in. Even though his company is willing to pay his tuition and pay his salary while he goes to school, we can't get him in because we didn't do a transcript. Now let me tell you something. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Everything we have ever experienced is up in our heads somewhere. But with the years, retrieval becomes a definite challenge. It's much easier to do a high school transcript while you are there than it is to do a high school transcript many, many years later. The bottom line is that the source of a homeschool high school diploma is the teaching parent. Think about it for a minute.

No matter where you go to school, whether it's public school, parochial school, private school, no matter where you go to school, who is it that gives you a transcript and a diploma? Is it not the people who taught you, the people who put the program together, the people who evaluated your work? So then in home education, where are you going to get a diploma? From the people who taught you, the people who put your program together, the people who evaluated your work. Are these not the home educating parents? That is your responsibility. There are actually very few legal restrictions. If you are college bound, it makes sense for you to figure out what one or two or three colleges you're interested in attending and check with the admissions officers of those schools to identify their requirements or guidelines. It is not necessary, though, to satisfy any college's admissions requirements in order to get a high school diploma. You may get a high school diploma for a trades-oriented curriculum, a fine arts curriculum, a vocational education curriculum. There are lots of possibilities. You don't have to do what many people call quad fours. Quad fours are doing four Englishes,

four sciences, four histories, four maths. Some children are just not designed for that combination of academic work. Other children need to avoid some of those things in order to concentrate on areas where they aren't talented and gifted. You have the right as a parent to put together your high school program and then simply with that diploma and that transcript, certify that your child has finished the requirements as you have laid them out. You want to summarize your record keeping with a carefully prepared transcript. Let me use a little bit of an IRS analogy here. What happens with your transcript is very similar to what happens when you turn in your IRS report, every April 15th or hopefully earlier than that if you're watching your deadlines. Uncle Sam doesn't want all of your receipts, all your canceled check stubs, all of your financial records, all of your mileage records. What does he want? He wants one statement, front and back of a piece of paper that summarizes all of your financial data. However, God forbid that you should be called for an audit. If you are called for an audit, then what should you have? Mileage records, receipts, canceled check stubs, all

of the financial data to back up what you have said. In a certain sense, your transcript is that backup. It's the backup to what you are doing. It lets the reader know that that diploma is more than just an empty piece of paper. It lets the reader know that that diploma has a certain backing and it describes what that backing is in terms of your transcript. That is why it is so important that you provide a transcript. You also want to plan a special event to honor this milestone graduation in your child's life. I mean, after all, it is a big benchmark to reach high school graduation and then be able to use that diploma as a key to unlock the door to all kinds of other opportunities. You can arrange this graduation with your local support group, in your local church, as an individual family, or at the state convention. There are all kinds of possibilities. You do what works the best for you. But now we come to a thorny issue. Will that parent-generated diploma be recognized everywhere? After all, you got it from your mommy and daddy. Who's going to pay any attention to what is on this diploma? Well, the good news is this: There are no legal requirements for any school to recog-

nize another school's credits or programs. What that actually means is that a Christian school can come along and deny a home educator's transcript. A home educator can deny a public school's transcript. A public school can deny anybody's transcript. Nobody is forced to recognize anybody else.

We do have a thing, however, called accrediting agencies. And with accrediting agencies, you have a situation where an outside agency comes in and evaluates the program of a student. In this evaluation, they will look at all of the program requirements, the resources available, the evaluation tools, and they will decide whether or not the program meets their standards. If it does, then the accrediting agency will say to that school, you are now a candidate for accreditation. After doing the self-study, submitting it, and being declared a candidate, the agency will normally send out a team of self-evaluators. They will come into your program with the self-study in hand. They will review your self-study and evaluate your program on-site to determine if you meet your stated objectives. And if your program meets their requirements, they will stamp you credible

or accredited. What most people don't know, however, is that most states, in fact, two thirds of them, don't have any agency or vehicle for accrediting high schools. Accreditation is primarily a college phenomenon. Most people also don't realize that while high schools across the country are registered with the Department of Secondary Education, registration is not the same as accreditation. And therefore, you don't want to just assume that everybody automatically has an accredited diploma. Not everybody automatically has one. Another factor in accreditation that's very important is to remember that a school cannot apply for accreditation until it is at least four years old. In other words, it has to be in existence long enough that it can put a student through freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior years in order to even do the self-study to apply for accreditation. So it is a very important thing to recognize that accreditation and home education are not a mix. You are not standardizing your program. In home education, what you're doing is teaching a tutorial method that does not stay the same from year to year to year. And in fact, you would have to be in exis-

tence for 13 years before you could even apply for accreditation if you wanted to standardize your work. So this is not an area that applies to our educational program as home educators. A college admissions officer looking at the program and trying to decide does your student have enough academic background to navigate college successfully. The 15 credit hours of college work is the equivalent of one semester. It is easy now to get that even in connection with a high school diploma through distance education programs and other opportunities that will put that together for you even over the internet, through correspondence schools, and lots of possibilities. In fact, if you are interested in distance learning, I highly recommend Bear's Guide to you. Bear's Guide is the flagship book about the topic of earning college degrees in a non-traditional way. Not necessarily that you would pursue your whole degree that way, but at least even some courses that you can take during the high school years alongside of the high school diploma and you can actually double dip that credit. You'll get credit on the college transcript and you'll get credit as well on your high

school diploma. I'll explain later how you put that together. So, what's the bottom line? It is that the thorough documentation of a student's academic record on a transcript is what makes your diploma meaningful. Without a transcript, nobody really knows what your diploma means. But with that transcript, we have a good description in summary form of how that diploma represents what your child has achieved.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

So, what is on a good transcript? The National Association of Secondary School Principals has produced a form about 30 years ago that outlines certain categories of information. In fact, those categories of information have remained stable for 30 years. This is not something that changes every other day. You can be very confident that these areas are the things that need to be reported. What is on a good transcript? A good transcript starts by identifying who the student is. What is good on a transcript? The student's full legal name and identification information. You want to designate any alternate surnames that

are used in the case of an adoption or a blended family situation. You also want to indicate the birth date.

The next thing you want to consider on a transcript is the name of your school. Now in home education, what we're really doing is a tutorial model of education. And therefore it is not necessary to name your school per se. If you have named your school, this information can provide an increased sense of officialness. However, if you have no title at all, we recommend to you that you use this title in that space, either "home education tutorial program" or "homeschool tutorial program". The key word there is tutorial. Let me explain to you why that word is so important. You want to put the word tutorial because if you list all the possibilities that I'm going to share with you in the next session in your course history section, you are very possibly going to be granting your student credit for 25 to 40 percent more courses than a typical public school or parochial school transcript will have. And that will raise questions. Admissions officers will look at you and say, why is it or how is it that you were able to accomplish so much more work

than the typical public school graduate does? Your answer to that question will be, “Ours was a tutorial education program and because of its tutorial nature, we were able to reduce the amount of time that we spend repeating what our children already know and we were able to concentrate on developing their talents and their interests and exploring new things.” Very important distinction. In fact, even if I did have a school name, like Cannon Classical Academy, I would put the word tutorial program, that phrase, behind that name in parentheses so that it’s very clear that this is going to be a non-traditional transcript in the sense of what was achieved academically. There is a time when it is very helpful for you to use a school name. And that is when you are ordering teachers’ materials, teachers’ answer keys, solution keys for math textbooks, test banks, any ancillary materials. Oftentimes these folks will set up a contract with a local school district. And in that contract, they will specify that no teacher’s materials be sold except to bona fide schools. Bona fide to them simply means ordered on school letterhead. And today, it’s very easy to create a school name, make a fancy

font, fix your letterhead, order the material, and that satisfies the contract for the publisher and everybody's happy. So if you ever run into trouble getting this kind of material, it may be that there is a contract existing with a school district, and the publisher simply needs that kind of documentation from you in order to make it work.

The third area that you need to consider on a transcript is the history of all the subjects studied. This is really the meat and bones and skeleton. This is where your transcript actually works. What you have to do here is list all of the subjects that your student has mastered. You want to use clearly understood titles. If your courses differ in any way from the standard offering, you want to provide a brief explanation. For example, I met a family several years ago in Iowa. They had a whole bevy of teenage boys who were all teenagers at the same time. It must have been quite an energetic household. They told us this when they met us at the seminar. They said, "This next year, as our boys are in junior and senior high, what we want to be doing with them is a special course in homemaking skills. We want to teach them

enough cooking that they won't poison themselves." And this was their way of saying in case God doesn't send them a wife right away. And then they wanted to teach their boys enough sewing so that they could keep the buttons on their shirts and keep their clothes mended, again, in case God doesn't send them a wife right away. And they had a whole list of different skills and activities that they were going to include in this basic living skills course. And then they said this, we wanna name our course, Single Survival, in case God doesn't send them a wife right away. It was wonderfully clever. And I would never tell them to omit that cleverness. Go ahead and use your creativity. If you have titles like World Geography and Geometry and British Literature and German One and other things like that, those you don't have to explain. Everybody knows what those mean. But if you have a title like Single Survival, you now have to create an addendum in the word processing program of your computer where you need to type out the course name and then a three to five-line description, much like a college catalog does, of what is in that course. In this case, I

would type out Single Survival, and then I would type a course in basic living skills. I would also simply list the units that are part of that course. You only have to do that for the subjects that are not commonly understood across the tenor of high school educators. The other thing that you need to remember is that any subject that is studied for more than one year needs to receive a level designation. In other words, it's going to get a German I, a German II, a British Lit Beginning, British Lit Advanced. It's going to get Latin I, II, III, IV. It's going to get early American history and modern American history. There are all kinds of possibilities for the labeling of designations. The most common one is to use Roman numerals to say one, two, three, or four. The Roman numerals indicate which year we are studying. First year, second year, third year, fourth year. When it comes to your English curriculum, you have a couple of options, in fact, really three. The first option is to call it English I, English II, English III, English IV. When you do that, what you actually have is first year English, second year English, third year English, and so on. You can, if you would like to,

call it English 9, English 10, English 11, and English 12. That means 9th grade English, 10th grade English, 11th grade English, and 12th grade English. If you're saying one, two, three, four, you need to use Roman numerals. If you're saying 9, 10, 11, 12, you need to use Arabic numbers. You may not use English Arabic number two, because if you do that, people will wonder why you're taking second grade English in high school. So it's Roman for the year or it is Arabic for the grade level. In English though, I told you you have a third option. That's my preferred option. That is where you actually take the English curriculum that you have and you earmark it in the subject name that you give the course. For example, you say Literary Genres, or American Literature, or British Literature, or World Literature, or you say Journalism, Creative Writing, Grammar and Composition. You actually name what your curriculum is. Now you can do it any one of those three ways. All of them are equally legitimate. There is no difficulty. You choose whatever you would like according to the listing that you have. Let's take a quick survey of the minimum graduation require-

ments as they are represented throughout the United States. In most of the states of our country, three to four units of English is considered a minimum credential for high school graduation. That would include some kind of an introduction to literature, a general survey, often called Literary Genres like American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, and Philosophy. Your electives in English may include Journalism, Creative Writing, or Literary Criticism. Grammar and Composition is usually studied every year in high school in connection to whatever the literature class is. A minimum of three units would be required for graduation. Two to three units of mathematics is what you're looking at. A minimum of two, preferably even up to four if you're going into nursing or medicine or some science-oriented field or engineering. Otherwise, you can concentrate on things like Consumer Math, two years of Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Calculus. You definitely want to make sure that you take the two years of Algebra before sitting for the SAT exam. It will make a difference in your SAT scores, and that is very important. You want to

be taking at least one, if not two units of science. And again, depending on what your prospective major is in college, you may want to take even more science. Biology is required for graduation in almost all of the states, though some of the states simply specify a laboratory science and leave it up to you which lab science you want. General Science is a possibility, Physics, and Chemistry are other possibilities. Advanced students can go on and add things like Anatomy, Microbiology, and detailed projects in Botany, Zoology, Astronomy, or Biochemistry. The state of Illinois specifies that on the transcript there should be a score for the Constitution exam. The other states specify that you should have at least a unit of study in the Constitution and that can be connected either to your U.S. History class or to a U.S. Government class. You may make the choice, but you need some training in good citizenship.

Two units of Physical Education are required nationwide. Generally speaking, these are earned at the rate of a half a unit per year. Now we're going to talk about the units of credit and how you achieve those in the next session. So don't worry about

that part of it. What you need to know here is that generally speaking, these are considered to be activity-oriented classes rather than academically instruction-focused classes, and therefore you spend the entire year getting a half unit of credit rather than a whole unit of credit. So you still have four years of PE, even though you are still reflecting two units of PE. Classroom work in Health Hygiene, Driver Education and Career Orientation are often included in the PE curriculum.

On the off-gymnasium days when you are in the classroom I recommend that you take at least one unit of fine arts, whether you make that Choir or a Band or Orchestra or Music Appreciation or Art Appreciation, or even a mixture of units in all of the arts that you would call Fine Arts Survey. You ought to do something along that line. Now, if it's Band and Choir, these are like PE classes, and they will go down for a half unit of credit per year because these are performance-oriented rather than instruction-oriented during the period of time that you're in the classroom. Most high schools will ask you for anywhere from three on up to however many you can fit into your schedule

units of electives. These possibilities include Foreign Language, Business Education, Computer Science, Vocational Courses, and Home Economics. Lots of possibilities. This is where you can focus on your child's talents, interests, special gifts that that child may have and put the program together in such a way that you reflect what that child needs to know for the specific direction that he or she is heading. In history, you want to look at two units of a minimum. That would be at least US History, and that is required in all 50 states of the United States. A World History class, a World Geography class, Government, Economics are your possibilities.

Please remember that colleges are very unique from one another. They all have slightly different admissions requirements. In fact, even within a university, it will make a difference if you're going to be a nursing or a medicine major, or if you're going to be a concert pianist. You're looking at a very different kind of credential that you need to present to go on those various tracks. Therefore, you should contact the college and prepare yourself accordingly. If you are running a Christian home ed-

ucation program, you want to do as Christian schools do, you want to include lessons in Bible or religious studies. Christian schools usually add a Bible requirement to the high school diploma that consists of one unit of credit per year of enrollment. The general sequence here is usually New Testament Survey followed by Old Testament Survey, followed by Bible Doctrines, and then concluding with a course in Discipleship where you have special applications that will lead you to lifestyle decisions, decision-making that will take you to career choices, and other such things to determine God's calling for your life. I have laid before you a series of typical high school graduation requirements as reflected by the 50 states in our country. However, you need to remember that when you are doing a home education tutorial program, you are not necessarily granting a state diploma. Therefore, you have the right as a parent to determine what your graduation requirements will be and to certify with your own diploma that your children have met those requirements. This is a very important philosophical issue. The United States Constitution guarantees the right of any parent to direct

the education of his or her own children. That means that you don't have to follow your state guidelines in order to have a "legitimate diploma." Your diploma can be perfectly legitimate as those prescribed by other school systems if you will simply plan what your requirements are and then certify that those requirements have indeed been met and provide the appropriate documentation to prove that that has been done. If you want to grant a diploma that is the duplicate of a state diploma, you can do that. That's a completely acceptable option. You can find out what your specific state diploma requirements are by contacting the Department of Secondary Education in your state by means of their website, and you can duplicate that in your program outline. If you don't want to do that, though, you have every right to not do that. That philosophical issue remains to be decided by you and your spouse as you plan your children's education together.

PART 3

COMPLIANCE & FLEXIBILITY

GRADING SYSTEMS

You have already learned how to identify the student on your transcript, how to identify your school, and how to list the history of all the subjects that your student has achieved. In today's session, we are going to consider the grading and the Carnegie units that you need to add to every subject that you have listed. First, let's look at grades. Grades are very interesting for parents because many parents get lost in the thread of what they need to put down and what they need to avoid. You need to assign a quality evaluation to every subject. Now in most situations, you're going to use the alphabetic scale of A, B, C, D, F. Everybody knows what these letters mean, and they expect them an A to be better than a C, a C to be of course better than an F. One of the things you need to be careful of on

the high school level is that percentage equivalence work very very well for things like mathematics and grammar, for things like true false questions, for things like short answer questions, where the answer is clearly right or clearly wrong, then it's easy to tally what percentage of the questions were successful and what percentage of the questions were not successful. In that case, percentages will work very well to tally an average. However, there's a great deal of work that is done on the high school level that is a bit more subjective. It's not as easy as quantifying percentages. For example, when you're looking at an A grade, you're looking at things that are exceptional, thorough, complete mastery, creative, things that really excel. Whereas when you're looking at a C performance, you're looking at what is ordinary or average or commonplace. It is sufficient, it is enough, but it's not outstanding. As opposed to an F grade, which is incomplete, which is the inability to master the subject, where the elements have not been learned, where the student has been too dependent upon the teacher during the learning process. And you have a number of other descriptions there. Now, when

would you use those descriptions? You would use them for an essay, for a discussion when you're discussing a novel or a chapter that you've read in a history book. When you are watching a speech or an oral performance where the inputs are a bit more subjective and what you want to do is from an anecdotal standpoint, you want to describe the performance as you see it and then back your way into the letter grade. The bottom line is to encourage you as a parent not to concentrate all of your efforts only on the objective measurement of percentages, but to include all of the other dimensions. Now, what struggles do parents experience in the process of grading? There are actually several of them, and believe it or not, you're not alone. Teachers experience those same kinds of struggles. So as we work our way through this list, just remember that even in the professional education community, people are struggling with the same kinds of content evaluation issues that you often struggle with even as a parent teaching at home. The first two of these are intimidation and comparison. Parents always ask me, but how do I know? How do I know that my grades are just like ev-

everybody else's grades? And I answer that question almost with a chuckle and a smile, and I will say, you know, I can answer that with complete confidence. You know beyond the shadow of any doubt that your grades are not like anybody else's grades. So don't worry about it. The important thing is that you make sure there is a degree of internal consistency within your own grading system. Don't worry about whether your grades stack up against someone else's, but that from day to day, from week to week, you are requiring the same level of performance from your children in order to give them whatever evaluation that you are giving them. Teachers vary a great deal in schools. You remember this from when you were in school as a kid. It was an interesting thing, was it not, to show up on the first day of school and meet the teacher who looked you square in the eye and said, "You know, I believe that A means perfect and nobody's perfect, so nobody's getting an A." Well, your hopes probably sank. And then you had other teachers where If you showed up every day and you were reasonably friendly and polite and occasionally you raised your hand and said something

intelligent, that was worth a B and you could climb from there. Even in those schools where the entire school was on the same percentage grading scale, you know like 90 to 100 is an A or 80 to 89 is a B or so on, even in those schools there was great variance in the grades. One teacher's tests would be so difficult that it would take you half the year to figure out what she was asking you, let alone what she wanted for an answer. And the other teacher would spend the whole class period before the test telling you exactly what was going to be on it. And if you would memorize those things, why it would be a piece of cake, so to speak. Yes, it's an interesting world out there in evaluation. And you know, the students who are out there are no different from your own students. They want to know what is expected of them, what is required of them, what you want from them in order to give them an A or give them a B, and then they will work toward that expectation. Another area where parents experience struggles in grading is with the matter of inflated grades or even deflated grades. And this sword does cut both ways. I have found that many parents think of schooling as a

mastery type of business. And as a result, and that is right in the early years of their educational process, as a result, when they present their lessons to the child, if the child does not understand, does not achieve what is necessary, the parent repeats the lesson until the child does understand. That is exactly what you want to be doing in the early grades. However, as you move on through the process, you're going to find that the evaluation is not that simple. You're going to find that what we're looking at is how much content you could master in terms of the deadline or in terms of the time where we appear with our lessons. So we go from inflation and deflation into the issue of mastery versus content exploration.

There are some schools where everybody's the valedictorian. Now, if you believe that, I'll sell you a piece of land in the middle of the Pacific Ocean at the end of this seminar. That doesn't work that way. Teachers say that grades are not enough. Even in the learning process, teachers get frustrated that there are so many things that students are achieving that a report card doesn't even cover. I like to use this analogy just to help you

understand. It's that who's going to accept a C-minus in potty training? I mean, that toddler needs to make an A-plus on that subject, or you're not going to leave those lessons until you are done. But now back to the mastery issue. High school is very different territory. In high school, what we have is the exploration of content against a schedule. We are using all of those skills that we learned in the early years. In fact, as an educator, I recommend not even worrying about report cards until about grade four or five, because in those early years, everything you're doing is mastery learning. It's an A or nothing. But after grade four or five, what you begin to do is use those skills, reading, writing, arithmetic, and penmanship. You're using those skills in order to explore all of the content that is available to you, as much of it as possible. So at the high school level, what we have are some character issues. We begin to evaluate based on factors like timeliness and thoroughness of completion. We consider levels of enthusiasm and interest in the work process. Character issues come to play in that evaluation.

I met a man several years ago who at the time was the Direc-

tor of Admissions at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Captain Mundy was a very interesting person. He was interesting not just because of his position as an Admissions Director at the Air Force Academy, but because he was also a home educating dad at the same time. So I found it very interesting to compare notes with him and discuss some of the issues that he had observed in cadets who had come from home education backgrounds into the world of the academy. One day in a February time frame, he called me in my office and he said this, “Inge, you would not believe this, but right now we have three cadets in the freshman class who are on the verge of flunking out.” I said, “Captain Mundy, how can that be?” He said, “They’re all homeschool graduates and every single one of them graduated, I mean, with top SAT scores, top recommendations, beautiful resumes, wonderful transcripts.” I said, “So what happened?” He said, “Well, let me talk to you like a homeschooling dad.” I said, “Please do.” Then he told me this. He said, “So often as home educating parents, we pride ourselves on preparing our children for the real world. But you

know, we don't do that good of a job of it." I said, "How so?" He said, "Well, we have a deadline. And that deadline is on Friday. You will take your final exam in this subject. But Friday rolls around and the student says, mom, I'm not really ready. And mom says, well, that's all right. Don't worry about it. You can take the exam on Monday or Tuesday. And then a term paper is due and we're not ready. And so mom says, oh, I know it's been such a zoo around here lately. Don't worry about it, just give it to me next week." He said "All three of those cadets are on the verge of flunking out because they cannot work on anyone else's schedule."

Parents, if you want to prepare your children for the military academies, for any college program, for any employer, you must teach them to honor deadlines. The high school evaluation is not what you could have learned if you could study infinitely. The high school evaluation comes down to what you know by the time the deadline arrives. Let me reinforce this whole matter of character issues with an illustration from my own life. When I was a student in high school in the 1960s, if I turned

in a term paper two days late, the highest possible grade I could get on that term paper was a C, because it was two days late. If it was one day late, I would get a B and that was only if it was an A paper. In fact, the teacher would even put the A up there, put a big X through it and then write the C so that I knew what the problem was in that evaluation. Many parents tell me, “I could never do that to my child. I could never give my child a bad grade.” By thinking this way, you are embracing erroneous educational philosophy. You are not giving your children grades. Your children are earning their grades. You are simply the agent who is recording the grade that they are earning. It’s very important that they understand what the word deadline really means: Cross the line and you are dead. It’s that simple. And they must learn it. The earlier they learn it, the better. This leads us directly to our correlation to objectives. Many parents struggle with the issue of grading because they really don’t know what they were aiming for. They have no clue what the goal was and therefore they have no clue whether or not their child has achieved the goal. Now you have to think

through your objectives ahead of time so that you know you have a yardstick for measuring how close your child came to achieving the goal. That way, you have some idea of what it was that you were trying to achieve in that learning exercise. Now, many parents say to me, but you know, we don't have enough time to teach, let alone to plan objectives. Well, planning objectives is very much like many other things in life. You can read all about it, but you will never know how to do it till you actually jump in and start working with it and do it. It's just like reading books about swimming. You will read all about it, but you'll never know how to swim till you jump in the water and start paddling your feet and moving your arms and experiencing what it means to swim. The same thing is true when you learn to drive a car. You go down the highway for the first time and you're 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock and your knuckles are white and you're scared to death of what might happen. And yet today you went to the grocery store, you weren't even thinking about it. You turned the radio on. I hope you weren't talking on your cell phone, but you went through the lights,

you don't even know it, they were green. Why? Because it has become so automatic to you. I would like to encourage you to take this whole process of educational objectives and make them become automatic to you. In the process of educational objectives, we're going to consider three different dimensions of how we learn. The first dimension is the cognitive dimension, where we learn things with the mind. We memorize, we analyze, we reason, we sequence, we synthesize, all those are exercises that we do with the thinking processes that we have in our minds. Any good educational exercise, however, is not going to be limited there. I often encourage parents to remember we're not just doing school at home. In other words, we're not just covering pages in a book. We're not just memorizing material in order to spit it back on the test. I call this the "regurgitation method of learning" where information is poured in, and the student's grade depends on how accurately they can repeat it back. There is more to learning than that. We need to know how to apply what we learn and that gets us to the other two dimensions. The second dimension is the affective dimen-

sion. You'll notice that the root word, affective, is the same root word that's in affection, meaning to love or to value. These are the educational objectives that deal with the heart, and we use the heart here to speak of wisdom and attitudes and choices and values, all of those things that are part of the immeasurable learning that takes place as we apply the facts to all of the exercises that we have. Then we don't want to stop with just memorizing and analyzing and reasoning and proper values. We want to actually do something with what we know. And this is where activity comes in, the psychomotor dimension, where we add with our bodies, our hands, our arms, our feet, our mouths, and our faces. We add the actions that will make it possible to implement the concepts that we have learned. Now let me give you an oversimplified example that will make this very clear to you. Suppose that we were going to have a cooking exercise. In the cognitive domain, what we would do is learn all about the stove and the ingredients and the implements and the dry measures and the liquid measures and all the different aspects of cooking whatever it is that we want to cook. We would learn

the facts; then in the affective domain, we would have a project. Let's say we're going to put together a dessert buffet. And we know that some of the people who are attending this event are allergic to chocolate and some of the other people are diabetic and therefore should avoid sugar. So we're going to make choices about what kinds of dessert items we would put on our buffet in order to take care of all of our guests and also provide some variety in the selections that are available to them. In the cycle motor domain, we get out the bowls and the mixers and the ingredients, and we actually mix up the batter. We make up the ingredients, we bake the cake, we frost it, we serve it, we create the display, and we have all of the objectives in play. Now parents, in direct proportion to the importance of the learning exercise is how much attention you're going to pay to these various areas of objectives. And again, if time is an issue, then I encourage you to use the teacher's editions of textbooks. Many of us try to avoid that because we think we're going to save money by just getting the student edition of the book. But really when we get the teacher edition of the book, those are

the things that provide the shortcuts for us, that tell us what the goals of the class were, what we're supposed to learn, and even what chapters might be optional in the textbook. It is very interesting how much time you can save just by perusing the teacher's edition of the book. You can also find out things like what balances different aspects of the work will take. For example, in a math book, you will find out that maybe one fourth of the grade is recommended to be homework or daily practice. One fourth of the grade is meant to be quizzes on the chapters. One fourth of the grade is meant to be chapter tests and one fourth of the grade is meant to be the midterm and final exam. Why reinvent the wheel? Why do it all over again when you can have all of these things in front of you and from that vantage point, be able to set out what you are doing.

CREDIT HOURS

Now, every subject that you list also has to have a credit designation. You will want to make sure that you designate the unit accumulation for every subject that you study. I'm going to

teach you a system today that is called Carnegie units. We do have a situation right now in our country where not everyone is using Carnegie units and I'll talk more about that a little bit later. But for right now, let me define the Carnegie unit. The Carnegie unit is tied time. It is the time equivalent of five 45 to 50 minute sessions per week for 36 weeks. That actually clocks out to be about 135 hours of instruction. It could be as high as 150 hours of instruction. School administrators assume that for every 135 hours of instruction that you do, you're going to have at least a half hour outside the classroom to an hour for every hour that you spent inside the classroom. So you have 135 hours in the classroom. You're going to generate a minimum of another 65 hours outside the classroom. Thus, a Carnegie unit actually is going to come to 197 and a half hours of work, but that's a terrible number to remember. So I'm going to encourage you to think of a Carnegie unit as 200 hours of work, a half a Carnegie unit as 100 hours of work; and that includes all of your practice, that includes your homework so to speak, that includes your study time, your reading

time, and all of such inputs that go into the academic process. Now every book you pick up on this topic is going to tell you a different number. That doesn't bother me. In fact, I really don't care which number you use. What I do care about is that you are consistent wherever you set this to be. Academic subjects such as English, Math, Science, and History, these we call the Quad Fours, are usually assigned a full Carnegie unit of credit per year's worth of work. Non-academic subjects, these are the ones that are activity oriented, often receive only a half a unit of credit per year. The reason for that is that these non-academic subjects are things like Band, Choir, and P.E. In these subjects, you have a minimum of formal instruction and a maximum of practice time. You remember when you went to the gym and the teacher taught you how to dribble a soccer ball? That took maybe five or 10 minutes, and the rest of the period, you waited your turn in line to dribble the ball around the bowling pin at the other end of the gymnasium. So that time doesn't count the same way that English, Math, History, and Science time counts. In those kinds of subjects, we take the 135 hours with-

out the outside prep hours, and we assign them a half a unit of credit. Not all schools do that, and not all states do that. So you may decide what you want to do in terms of your own transcript. Just be consistent with whatever you decide. Carnegie units are generally offered in halves or wholes. They are not offered in thirds or fourths. So when you have a number of hours in one thing and a number of hours in another thing, and maybe it's not enough to make, you know, a quarter of a credit in either one. For example, supposing unit studies, I had 50 hours of chemistry and 50 hours of physics units. Well, neither one of them is enough to get a credit because I'm not going to list a quarter of a unit of credit in chemistry or a quarter of a unit of credit in physics. So in that case, I would use a zoom lens on a camera. I would simply zoom it out a little more broadly, I would get a broader title and I would combine the 50 hours of chemistry with the 50 hours of physics and I would make 100 hours which now is a unit of credit in a Carnegie unit and that would be in advanced sciences. You have all kinds of possibilities along this line. You can zoom it in as tightly or broadly

as you want. For example, you could have an entire credit in Reformation History, and still have a unit of credit in Ancient World History and Modern World History. You could have an entire credit in the Civil War or an entire credit in World War I or World War II if your child is above in one of these areas. So you can follow the talents, follow the gifts, follow the interests, and recognize the areas of achievement in an appropriate manner. But now we have a problem.

This problem is very well highlighted by a study that was done by Richard Ross Miller in 1982. In 1982, Ross Miller was commissioned by the National Association of Secondary School Principals to do a study of what he called time on task. The study was published in 1983 and in the process Ross Miller identified much wasted time in the course of the school day. Now it's not wasted time because school administrators want to waste time. It was just wasted time because there are logistics involved in moving great numbers of children through the process. Here's what Ross Miller found out. He was looking at time allocated for schooling. The average school year in terms

of gross hours is 1080. That's pretty much the same even 20 years later. 10% of the time the principal said that the students were not there, they were absent. 108 hours gone there. 5% of the time was general loss. This was for things like teacher strikes and water main breaks and snow days and air conditioning failures on 98 degree days and teacher in service days, other such things where there is not instructional time, the teachers are there, but the kids are not. So 54 more hours are gone that way. Our net instructional time then is 918 hours. Now Ross Miller found out something very interesting from the principals. He didn't even pass judgment on this comment, he simply added all the numbers and divided in order to come up with the averages. And he figured out that out of every school day, 40% of the activity was devoted to non-instructional activities. Logistics, going to the lunchroom, going to homeroom to take attendance, going to your locker to get books. And as a result, we lose another 360 hours. Now we're at a point where the gross time allocated for instruction is 551 hours. Now you're extremely smart as home educators, so I'm going to ask you a

math question. Against our original 1,080 hours, what is the rough proportion of 551 instructional hours? Is it not about half? We're at half of our time, and we haven't even begun to start teaching yet. And then Ross Miller found out yet another statistic. He sent a follow-up questionnaire to all of the teachers from those schools with the principals that answered him. And the teachers gave him another astounding number. They told him that 12% of every class period on average is also non-instructional. Another 66 hours gone for things like, teacher, what page are we on? Or discipline matters, or passing back papers, or collecting papers. So now we have a net instructional time of 485 hours. Then Ross Miller asked the teachers a very important question. During that 485 hours, when you are teaching, what is the response of the student? Is the student what we call on task? Such a beautiful politically correct term for is the student paying attention and learning anything new? The teachers told Ross Miller that 25% of the time, the students were off task, meaning that their bodies were there, but their brains were somewhere else. So now we are down to

364 hours on task for the average student. Have you ever heard it said that in two hours of tutorial teaching time you can actually accomplish the same thing that the system does in six hours? Well here's your documentation of that fact. But wait a minute, that's not just two hours of anything. That is two hours of the teacher engaged. Two hours of the student right here engaged, paying attention. That two hours doesn't have to be in one sitting. It can be 10 minutes here and five minutes there. It can be an explanation that is just enough to allow the student to go on to the next assignment. A lot of things can happen in the tutorial process. It is not always necessary to repeat and repeat and repeat. But you say the repetition is built into the textbooks. Do you know why? The reason why is because the average classroom has 25 to 30 students in it. And teachers know that whenever they teach something to a group that large, about half of the group is gonna get it the first time through. So curriculum is arranged in a spiral manner, going around that same circle every time, year after year after year, getting a little more complicated each time so that by the time

we finish that spiral, we make sure that half of the remaining half and half of the remaining half get it, to the point where eventually 95% of the students know the material. There is a great deal of wasted time. A tutor has the responsibility and the option to say, I don't have to repeat what my child already knows. A wise teacher is always willing to repeat what is necessary. But if your student already knows it, it is not necessary to go through it again and again and again. One of the things that can be difficult for many children, for example, are the Saxon math books. Saxon builds a lot of repetition in to make sure that everyone gets it. But most students in a home education tutorial environment don't need that much repetition. Therefore, it is not necessary to do all of those problems and never skip an exercise. I know that the author tells you that you ought never to skip anything, but believe me, he will never know if you skip something because your students already know that material. You can move on, do the odd problems, do the even problems. If your children get a 95% success or higher, then move on to the next thing and capitalize on your time. Do you

know the available body of knowledge now doubles every three to five years? Think about what that means. That means that if you could, if it were possible, and it's not, but if it were possible to teach your children everything there is to know, three to five years from now, you will have only taught them half of what's out there. I always ask the question, aren't you encouraged? You should be, because it's right to make choices. It's right to capitalize on your children's needs, abilities, talents, gifts, on the future that you see ahead for them. But now back to our problem. Transcripts are tied to time. Home educators don't teach in the same way that classroom teachers do. They teach in a tutorial kind of fashion. And so what do we do with that? Do we come out and say, you know, I read Ross Miller's study and I know now how much time you all waste. Therefore, my Carnegie unit is going to be 66 hours instead of 200 hours. Wait a minute. Is that going to be believable, credible, truthful, persuasive? You're going to have difficulty with that. And so we need some kind of a balance point, some way that we can figure out when we need to keep hours and when we don't need to

keep hours. And that leads us into the responsibility of logging educational time, but doing so only when we absolutely have no other way to keep our records.

You can identify just how many credits you want to give to a specific subject. Don't automatically assume that it's going to be one per. Sometimes you will want to do more than one in an area. In fact, one of the things I like to encourage parents to remember is that junior high is often the most wasted period of a child's education, particularly in a tutorial educational framework. What happens in junior high in school is that in math and in reading and in language, we remediate. We make sure that everyone's on the same page so that they're all ready to leave primary school and start secondary school with their skills intact. In the areas of science and social studies, what we end up doing oftentimes is giving our junior highers a watered down version of what they're going to study just two years later or three years later in their high school curriculum. Sometimes I call that the inoculation version. It's just enough that the student is forever allergic to learning. You don't want to do it that

way. If your children are ready to read and write on a high school level, then skip the junior high version of US History and go straight to the high school version, or the junior high version of World History and go straight to the high school version. Now you have time on your side. Now you can take the high school textbook and you can divide it in half and do a whole year of Ancient World History and a whole year on Modern World History. Now why would you want to do that? Have you ever thought about how many times in school you took US History or World History? US History, second grade, fifth grade, 11th grade, eighth grade, college. How many times did you do it? And how many times did you ever get past World War I? Why was that? Because the year had a way of running out before the textbook did. Now wise teachers are throwing away chapters here and there all the way through in order to get to the end. Some teachers crammed the whole 20th century into the last two weeks of the school year. Other teachers just chop it off and there's not enough time. This way, you can use your textbook as the skeleton or the road map, or I call it the

interstate highway, and you have time to take the scenic route here and there through real books, through journals and biographies and real source documents that will flesh out that history. You can do the same thing in Biology. Instead of doing life science and then two years later doing biology, just do biology and split that great big book in half and do half of it as plant biology and half of it as animal biology, or beginning-advanced, however you want to title it according to the content that you are putting in that course. There are lots of possibilities. So you project the number of credits. Then in the next three columns that you have, you are asked to decide. If you are earning the credit by time log, if you are earning it by textbook equivalency, or the middle column between them, if you are earning it by a combination. You say what in the world is textbook equivalency? Basically, any time that I'm using a high school level textbook or beyond, whether that be a junior college book or an adult textbook in a topic. But if it's at least a minimum of a high school level textbook, I can check textbook equivalency and not log time. I can decide that I'm covering the same

amount of material that they do in a traditional school course by the use of that textbook, so that if it takes me two months or two years, it doesn't matter. It is still Algebra 1. It is still that body of content that is covered in the classroom situation under normal teaching circumstances. Now, I would like to explain to you the 85% rule. You don't have to use 100% of the textbook in order to get that Carnegie unit of credit. If the textbook is designed for an entire year's work in a traditional classroom, and you cover 85% of it, you may consider that to be the equivalent of a Carnegie unit of credit in terms of achievement. You say, why 85%? Remember World War I? It's the typical sequence of what happens in classrooms everywhere. Now, if the textbook is designed for a semester study, then 85% of it would give you half a Carnegie unit, which is the equivalent of a semester's work. If the textbook is designed for an entire year and you only want a semester's worth of credit, then you cover 45% of the textbook in order to earn that half a unit of credit. Everything else is going to require you to keep a time log. You want to keep a time log with an index card type of

system. I have found that index cards are the most flexible, and I realize we live in the computer age. We live in a time when we can record things in all manner of ways. But the cutting and pasting of computer records is not that easy when it comes to keeping a time log for your students' transcripts. On the front of the card, you would be listing the subject, the student's name, and the basic project description, the objectives that you have in that learning activity. You're also going to list any textbook resource or any other materials, anything that you need to remember. And all of that fits right on your card. Then you give the card to the student. The student fills in the backside. Whenever he works on that particular project, he logs time. He tells the date and the hours and the minutes that he spends. So for example, if I were doing a project on reading Charles Dickens' novel, *Tale of Two Cities*. I would write out *Tale of Two Cities*, read *Tale of Two Cities* as one of my objectives, and then I would list two or three or four objectives of what I wanted my student to understand by reading that book. One of my objectives should identify how my student is going to demonstrate

that understanding. Is it going to be an oral discussion? Is it going to be with a book report, a paper? How is it going to be done? And I'm going to specify all those objectives. That's really like writing a contract with the student so the student knows exactly what is expected of him or her. Then every time the student sits down to read, the student logs in and keeps time. Keeping time is a very important adult skill in your life. You see, you have to keep billable hours, whether you're an attorney or a car mechanic, you have to know how to bill the client for the work time that you put into his project. And so keeping billable hours keeps your children responsible for their work. Now, young people, I'm going to tell you this: in the middle of your reading session, if you get hungry and want a peanut butter sandwich and a glass of milk, you have to clock out and go get your snack, finish it, and then clock back in. We don't do snacking on our educational time. Parents, I encourage you too, that if your children don't keep their time, you don't fill it in for them. Time that is not recorded is time lost. We learn character qualities sometimes by reaping the results of our lack

of character. That's painful, but it is an important way to learn. Let me give you some examples of how these time logs can actually work. Suppose we have a hypothetical student named Stuart. Stuart is 16 years old, and during this junior year of high school, what we want him to do is commit to working for that year in Sunday school. We want him to participate with the teachers, arrive 30 minutes early every Sunday to greet the children, play appropriate games with them, participate in the activities, and assist with the cleanup. Now we have a couple of choices here. We can consider that to be an extracurricular activity, community service oriented, or we can turn that activity into a course. The way that we would do it is to fill out cards for every project that relates to that activity. When we do that, now every hour that Stuart spends in Sunday school becomes a laboratory hour for our course. And these are the other exercises that he will have to do in connection with his course. We're going to ask Stuart to learn how toddlers and preschoolers develop, outline the content as he listens, add to the outline examples that he has seen at work in Sunday school. Choose one

principal to document what's happening in the Sunday school lab, and to implement what he's learning, and then write a summary report of the results. We're also going to have Stuart research at least six indoor games that are appropriate for children that are four and five years old. He's going to teach the games to the children during the opening time before Sunday school actually begins and evaluate the effectiveness of each activity. Was it too noisy? Was it too exciting? Was it too quiet? Did it work well? Did the children learn it well? Then he's going to learn how to sing at least 12 different Sunday school songs with all the motions that he can teach to this age group. He's going to teach them in the course of that year in Sunday school. He's going to go to the Bible bookstore and purchase a flannelgraph story, cut out all the figures. He's going to practice telling the story by putting the figures on the background and then actually tell it on site in Sunday school. And finally, we're going to have Stuart read *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Ted Tripp. In connection with this, we're going to have him fill out the questions that go with the study guide. We're going to have

him write a two to three page report that documents how he is applying those principles to one of the children in that Sunday School lab. We're going to get evaluation forms from the Sunday School superintendent and the Sunday School teacher and keep those in Stuart's portfolio. Do you see how quickly all of those hours would add up to make a credit in child development or even Bible pedagogy? Pedagogy is a neat word. It means teaching methods. You could have Science Pedagogy, Violin Pedagogy, Guitar Pedagogy, Soccer Pedagogy, Phonics Pedagogy. You could be teaching your high school students many different skills by allowing them to teach what they know to younger students and providing them with appropriate reading materials to flesh out their course. Another benefit of this card system is that it allows you to do what school teachers wish they could, but can't. Their schedules are confined to short periods between the ringing of bells, making everything compartmentalized. Therefore, in English class, we concentrate on our grammar and proper expression and proper communication. But when we get the History class, we're not paying as much

attention to those aspects. This is not good. In home education, in that tutorial environment, you can take one project and make it count for several different aspects of classes. And you also do that with the card system. For example, let's consider our hypothetical student, Angela. Let's say that Angela is in her senior year and we want her to do a major research paper in order to prepare for the responsibilities of college and higher education. So what we're going to do is we're going to outline all of our objectives for this paper, every facet of them on a different index card. This way, Angela's going to have the opportunity to log her time whenever she's working on the specific facet. Let me show you how that works. First of all, we're going to define what the paper is about. It's a World History paper, so by way of objectives, we want Angela to choose a specific period of history for intensive research. We want her to examine the unique characteristics of that period and analyze the contributing factors. Then we want her to identify the key people in that period of time and summarize the impact of that period of time on successive generations in history. We also want to

have Angela draw a map of the world, the way it looks at the time that she has selected. That's a World Geography assignment. So she's going to draw her map, color it, she's going to identify strategic points of tension and explain how those influence the history of that time period. This is after all an English paper because we are writing it. And so we are going to write a card that earmarks our English objectives. Write several theses sentences for your paper. Choose the one you like best. Organize your ideas in outline form. Prepare a rough draft. Edit your work to produce a final copy. Prepare a detailed bibliography in Chicago style, MLA, or APA format document all quoted and parent-raised material so that you know how to do footnotes. And then of course we want this paper typed. So we're going to fill out a card that's going to tell Angela word processing. Type your outline, type your rough draft, format your paper, edit it appropriately, and prepare an appropriate cover for submission. Now this project could stop right there, or it could get even more complicated depending on what we wanted to do. We could assign it a music dimension, and say, all right,

choose a composer from this period of time, and explain why his work fits the time or rebels against the time. Read his biography, listen to a few of his works and include that observation in your History paper. We can do the same thing with an artist from the period of time. This would be an author and we would say, read one of his works, study his biography, identify how it reflects the times and so on. You will find that this is the most flexible system you can use because what Angela is going to do is take those cards from you and every time she does History research, she's going to log time on the back of her History card. Every time she's typing away, she's going to log time on her Word Processing card. Every time she is working on the rough draft or the outline or the footnotes or the formatting, she's going to log time on her English card. When she is attending the opera or reading the novel, she'll log time on the appropriate appreciation card. So at the end of her project. She brings you a finished paper and she hands you all of her cards with the time totaled on the bottom of each and transferred to the front of the card where it says total time. Now, Mom, Dad, you have

the responsibility to go through that paper several times, each time evaluating it from a different perspective. First from a History perspective, then from a Geography perspective, then from an English perspective. Were you ever frustrated in school that you wrote a History paper and the teacher just circled all of your typos and your grammar errors, and you wondered, am I getting a History grade or am I getting a Grammar grade? What am I getting here? This way you can grade every facet of it and proportion out the hours appropriately. When you are all finished, you're going to take the finished cards as they are filled out, and you're going to file them behind the appropriate tab in the file box. Then once or twice a year, you sit down with that student and a calculator, and you pull out all the cards that are behind a certain tab, and you simply tabulate the hours that are involved in that subject matter area. If you have a minimum of a hundred hours, and you decide that you want to stop there, you can get a half a Carnegie unit of credit, rubber band that together and take them out of the box. You would not put them back in the box if you allocate them to a credit. Once you

spend them, it's like spending money. You can't spend it twice. So, if you decide that you want to go on for a full Carnegie unit of credit, then you can put them back in the box and accumulate more cards for the next review time. Suppose you get all the way to the end of high school and at the end of high school, you find that you have cards left over. Everything's been allocated and you have 400 hours of speech and drama. Well, every speech is about something. And so you could take the overage. Suppose you only wanted one credit in intro to Public Speaking and one credit in Advanced Public Speaking. And so now you have two credits, but you have 200 hours left. Well, take those other ones and assign them to whatever topic they're related to to fill in the holes where maybe you don't have quite enough hours. And so you have the possibility of moving these cards around. Now I have found that students find that this is a fun way to keep their record. In fact, young people enjoy watching their bio grow. It's a very visual kind of an exercise. And you want your young people to take ownership of their own records as soon as possible, to recognize that this is the key

that will unlock the door to their future. So you want them to take ownership of their records and take responsibility for what they're doing. And they enjoy doing that. Let them decorate their card box their own way and own that box and then help them to summarize what they have, move things around and practice that incredible flexibility. Now you will find that that's especially helpful for you that are doing unit studies. Just take every project that you have and outline what you're doing in your unit studies so that you don't lose these projects. The cards are easy to carry in your pocket or in your purse, you can have them with you at all times so that if you're reading at the doctor's office or whatever you're doing while you're waiting for an appointment, it's easy to keep your time and not lose it. And then having recorded it, you don't have to worry about transferring it to something else, about copying it over, about losing it because it just gets filed in the box and it's there until that day that you allocate it to a credit situation.

There is one situation where you will neither count time nor textbook equivalency. And so in that regard, you are looking

for performance. A clear example of that would be Keyboarding or Typing. I don't care how long you spend or how many textbooks you work through. If you can't type, what good is it? And so in this area, I encourage you to concentrate on the performance goals. The performance goal for typing one is going to be the ability to type 45 words a minute on a five-minute timed writing with an error limit of three. What that means is that you are going to set up a speed drill. You'll set the timer, your student will type away. When the timer goes off at the five minute mark, you'll hit the print button and print out what was typed. Then you'll circle error number one, circle error number two, circle error number three and draw two slash lines right before error number four. You're only allowed three errors. So if you make your fourth error, at the 21st word. That means that you only have 20 words in five minutes that you can count, even though the whole page is full of typing. Divide 20 words by five minutes, and you're typing four words a minute. So what we care about is a performance level, and when you get it to that point, you can give your young people a credit

in Typing One. Now why do I explain that? Because in my day, we took typing in high school. Nowadays, young people write an email to grandma when they're seven, six, or even five years of age, as soon as they can spell words and find keys. What you don't want them to do is learn to get really good with two fingers. You don't want them doing a hunting and pecking keys because the world of academia and the marketplace of work is going to demand more speed from them than that. You want them to learn not from screen, you want them to learn to type from text because when you type from text, that's a different kinesthetic skill than typing from screen. I highly recommend not using software to teach your children to type. Software is effective for teaching them where the keys are and for orienting them to quickly find what letter is where. But it will not build sustained speed and accuracy to the level that you need for the world of academia and the world of work. My favorite typing program is called Computer Typing. It is published by a little company in Texas. It was designed for junior high kids, but it's very effective all the way down to seven years of age, as soon as

your children can make the stretches appropriately. The practice sentences are all scripture. And that's a wonderful thing that your children have to practice. If you want a credit in Typing Two, that today is normally called Word Processing; and to get it, you would increase your speed to 60 words a minute on a 10 minute timed writing with an error limit of five, which means you're going to draw your slash lines, right before the sixth error in order to count up what you have, and then divide that by the ten minutes. You're going to add to that class whatever your word processing manual says about formatting various kinds of documents and that would be your credit in Typing Two or Word Processing, whichever you would prefer to call it. There's one situation where you can actually do textbook equivalency without using a textbook. Would you like to know how that works? Suppose that you wanted to teach a class in Consumer Mathematics, and you decided that you really didn't like any of the high school textbooks that are available in that subject. You wanted to do your own coursework with adult materials. What you could do is go to the library and pick up a high school

textbook in that subject and photocopy the table of contents of that book. And then you could follow the outline that's in that table of contents, 85% of it, if it's designed for a year's worth of work. And you can flesh it out with Larry Burkett materials, Ron Blum materials, with a real estate investor in your church, or any manner of unit studies that you wanted to add to it. As you covered the material, you would simply write the date and the evaluation by that chapter name on that table of contents. And when you've completed 45 percent of it, you would have the equivalent of a half a Carnegie unit. And when you've completed 85 percent of it, you would have the equivalent of a whole Carnegie unit. That's a very handy tool for unit study books as well. If you have a basic library of History textbooks, English textbooks, Literature books, and Science books, then as you cover various topics related to your units of study, you keep a photocopy of the table of contents for all of those books in your child's permanent record folder. And whenever you do a given section of that book, you pull out that table of contents, write the date and write an evaluation, an A, B, C,

D, or F. When you're all finished, you average all your evaluations, you consider it a Carnegie unit or a half Carnegie unit of credit based on the textbook equivalency without having to log the time. When you do have to log the time, use the index card system. When you don't have to log the time, use the textbook equivalency. You will notice even on the index card that you have the opportunity to list the textbook that you are using or the textbook equivalency. So that if you're not going to keep any cards behind it, you can keep that right on your tab card and everything can be in one place in your box. It is a very handy tool. It's a very neat system in that you don't have loose ends that you're needing to tie up in every corner and you don't have the possibility now of losing that material as you work. Delegate as much of it as possible to your young people and supervise their work. Parents, remember you get what you inspect, not what you expect.

There are some states that do not use the Carnegie Unit System for their public schools. At the moment, there are four of these. I don't know how many others might be considering departing

from the Carnegie Unit System, and I don't really know what their motivation is. I suspect it might be to try to motivate the students in a given state to stay in that state in order to go to college. That's not really a problem, however, because even in the states that are not using the Carnegie Unit system, those colleges and universities located there accept students from all over the country and indeed from all over the world. So the Admissions Directors in each place know how to read Carnegie Units. At the moment, I can tell you that California does not use the Carnegie Unit system. They have a system where they take a year's worth of academic work and assign it 10 units of credit. These are not Carnegie units, these are California units. Therefore, a semester would get five units of credit. Indiana and Minnesota are operating on a system that is tied to one unit of credit per semester rather than one unit of credit per year. Indiana calls theirs Core 40, and you can tell how the name grows right out of the Carnegie Unit system for the simple reason that it usually takes about 20 Carnegie units to graduate and now it takes 40 core units to graduate. Georgia is experimenting with

some adjustments to the system and as I said I don't know what other states might be doing that as well. What should you do if you live in one of those states? My bottom line is that it doesn't really matter. You are not running a public school, and therefore you are not responsible to have to do your transcript in the same credit system that the public schools do it. If you decide to do it in the Carnegie Unit system, every college admissions officer in the country will know how to read it. The other thing you want to remember to put on transcripts is that there are lots of non-learning activities that should be included on your transcript. You want to remember to include Career Training, Basic Living Skills, Tech Prep, and Vocational Ed. Let's take these one at a time and consider what your opportunities are within each one.

In the matter of Career Training, the high school years are a very important time for settling the matter of which direction your student should be headed for his life's work. In fact, high school is a very good time to focus on getting a sense of God's calling. In connection with that, I encourage you to do some

career preparation work. My favorite way to do this is with the Larry Burkett materials. They are called Career Direct. You can access their materials by searching online for the Crown Financial Ministries website and navigating to Career Direct. They do a number of other very helpful things such as helping you to select your major in college in correlation with that career pursuit and to help you know what God says about work and teaching you how to satisfy God's will for your life by working. Work is one of those things that was given to Adam before the fall in the garden. The fact that work is hard is a result of his fall and a part of the curse, but work was not the curse. Work is something that provides a young person and an adult with the opportunity to experience satisfaction and fulfillment and personal growth in his or her own life. My favorite way to do the Larry Burkett program, is with the textbook, *Your Career in Changing Times*, and the workbook, *Finding the Career that fits you*. Both of these books cost about \$45 combined. The reason I like that so well is not just because of its cost, but because it forces you to be involved in thinking through the

process.

There are lots of other possibilities, but I think you'll find that the biblical perspective of the Larry Burkett program will be most helpful to you. Some parents have asked me, "But what about younger children? You know, junior highers. Should we do career preparation activities with them?" And the answer is yes, but do be careful what you do. The junior high years are a very good time to survey all the people in your church family. Figure out what they do for a living, interview them, even visit them on the job. I am amazed at the number of high school young people who don't have a clue of what job opportunities are out there. However, you need to be careful, because there are assessment programs available that tend to be youth group oriented and remove the responsibility from the parent to direct the education of their own children. Another problem that you can have with junior highers is that they can get so focused on their own talents that they consider tasks like taking out the garbage to be beneath them. Young people need to learn what all of us need to learn. And that is that the heart of a servant is

necessary in any kind of spiritual maturity. If you want to have any kind of ministry at all, Jesus said, he who would be the greatest among you must be the servant of all. I tell young people all the time when I do seminars for them that the mark of readiness for any of the big C's, college, career, courtship, any of them, the mark of preparation is a servant's heart. And the true test of a servant's heart is whether students can serve their own siblings without reward, without being asked, without being recognized. If they can, then they are well on their way to being ready for some of these other responsibilities in life. The other thing you want to be careful of in career orientation is if you do it too soon, there's the possibility that young people get the idea that nothing else in life matters more than their talents. And that's another area you want to be careful of because the Bible tells us that God's strength is not made perfect in our talents or in our gifts. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. And sometimes God chooses to use us in ministry in the very areas where we are the weakest. Never forget a biblical perspective in any of your career training.

The second thing you want to keep on your transcript is basic living skills. Plan what you want this child's academic and spiritual and discipleship and etiquette and ethics program to look like before you allow them to leave home. Now, many of the things on that list are going to be the academic skills that will be on the transcript. However, you need to be careful not to be so transcript minded that you're of no discipleship good. That doesn't help anybody. And so you want to remember that your young people need to complete the entire list of discipleship skills, of etiquette training, of ethics training, of character development, alongside of these academic responsibilities that you have laid in front of them. Do not let your children leave home for any reason, college, career, courtship, you name it, until the list is fulfilled. Now granted, not everything on this list is going to be finished by the time they leave home, but at least everything on this list needs to be operative, showing itself in that student's life by way of habit formation. The third area that you want to include on the transcript is Tech Prep or Vocational Education. In this area, you want to be mindful of the fact

that public schools have programs whereby young people can earn a full Carnegie unit of credit every year for what they do in the marketplace and work. It goes like this. You have a class in the morning at school that is like your work seminar class. It might meet every day, it might only meet two days a week. Whatever works for you is fine. In that class, you'll learn how to fill out job applications. You learn how to read your check stub to know what payroll deductions are all about. You'll learn how to interact with a boss on the job, how to conduct yourself at an annual or semi-annual review, all different kinds of workplace related skills. And after lunch every day, you will go to work either in a factory, at a trade, in a shop, or in an office. And in connection with that, your work supervisor will send back to the teacher a review, a quarterly evaluation that gets put in your portfolio and for that entire experience, you get a full Carnegie unit of credit on your transcript for whatever work it is. Electricity, shop, woodworking, home economics, office skills, all different kinds of possibilities.

The final area you want to consider are double headers. This is

the one place where you are able to actually double dip on your credit. There's no other place that you can actually do that. That is when you are taking a college level course during the high school years. You are actually going to get credit on a college transcript, and you're going to be putting that same course in the history of subjects studied on your high school transcript and indicating that it is a college level course. We're going to discuss more about those procedures when we get to the topic of weighted grades. So sit tight and we'll give you all of those instructions at that point. I mean, after all, you underline the noun once, you underline the verb twice, you do it from second grade on all the way through 10th grade, and many children still can't write a good paragraph. Why is that? Because they've gotten very good at sentence analysis, but they have not practiced developing their thoughts and putting them on paper in a well-written paragraph. Therefore, I would encourage you in the spirit of tutorial education to do a grammar workbook every other year. A workbook that focuses on the mechanics of grammar, the analysis of parts of speech, the proper usage

of those things, punctuation, details like that that are in the mechanical side of our language usage. Then in the alternate years, pick up a writing course that will help you to put that grammar to work. Something along the lines of Journalism or Creative Writing or Persuasive Writing or Debate. Any of these would be possibilities for you to use your language skills, to use your editorial skills, and to apply the grammar that you've learned within the actual writing and communication that you are doing. When it comes to literature, I highly encourage you to be very careful of the heavy emphasis in the home education movement right now in classical education. There are many aspects of classical education that are quite good, but there are some of them that are downright dangerous. The dangerous aspect is when you give young people classics in literature to read before they have the biblical underpinnings in place to make a proper biblical interpretation or analysis of what they've indeed read. Let me give you a simple example of this so that you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. Many of us would pride ourselves on the ability of a junior high student to read

Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer. And we would say, “Wow, look at this kid doing so well.” But we often don’t stop to realize what Mark Twain’s real message was. Mark Twain was an author who hated Christianity with every fiber of his being. In fact, he wrote those books not to chronicle the adventures of two mischievous river boys. He wrote those books in order to let you know what he thinks of trying to live life by any kind of rules. He wants you to know that it’s ridiculous to have scruples of any kind. And that’s the philosophy behind what your junior high student is reading in Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Now, how many junior high kids do you know that if you explain that to them, would be able to discern that in the reading? How many parents do you know that know enough about Mark Twain that they would even be able to explain that to their young people? So in that regard, I highly recommend to you for American literature and British literature, the teacher’s editions in the Bob Jones University Press Literature Series. You can do no better than these materials to get a worldview perspective of what these authors are actually saying and then

some excellent thumbnail sketches from their works that will allow you to know what those things are. Now you want to develop your literature classes into honors courses, what you would do is once a month, you would have your student read a complete work from this section that is represented in the anthology, and that would be enough additional work to make that into an honors course.

PART 4

CURRICULAR GUIDANCE

We're going to go section by section explaining to you various academic opportunities that are available within each subject.

ENGLISH & LOGIC

Let's begin with English. In the English area, I'm going to give you about four or five different curriculum tips. The first one is I want you to be mindful of the fact that at the high school level, it is usually counterproductive and repetitive beyond what you need, to do a grammar workbook every year of your life. I recommend that you have a logic class of some kind where you are teaching your children how to think and how to apply the rules that govern syllogisms and assumptions and propaganda and various other forms of communication. The best book I

have seen on that topic, again, comes from Bob Jones University Press. It is a book entitled *Better Reasoning and Thinking*. It's a very practical little book. It's a little brown book that will allow you to not only learn the basics of logic, but it will allow you at the end of every chapter to apply those to several different areas of life to give you practical application. I also recommend a little workbook called *Wisdom Analogies*, whereby you can identify relationships through analogy questions like, "David is to Goliath as Moses is to ____." These are all based on biblical concepts or biblical incidents. And so you would have to have a fair amount of biblical knowledge to navigate them successfully. But there are 16 different types of analogies and your young person would do well to master all of them before they leave the high school years. My final suggestion is to make sure your high school student writes a 50-minute essay every week. I mean, actually set the timer for 50 minutes and have them either select from two or three topics or give them a topic maybe related to a novel that they're reading or something in their history lessons. Select something and write for 50 min-

utes. Now their first attempts are going to be downright horrible, but they will get much better at this. And that is a valuable skill that you can have for standardized testing and college work where you have to write a synthesis of the information that you've taken in and express it in well-formed paragraphs in short periods of time.

MATH

Let's look at mathematics and give you some tips there. Be careful that you don't make the mistake of thinking that just because your students are college bound, they don't need consumer mathematics. It is very important for every young person to have a detailed understanding of what the scripture teaches about wise stewardship. You want to make sure that your children do understand what Proverbs says, what God's word says about using our resources in a way that will invest them for eternity. You also want them to be responsible citizens in terms of handling debt, in terms of handling the responsibilities of providing for a family. These are all aspects that need to be taught

and need to be mastered during the high school years. Students who are college bound need to focus some attention on the higher mathematics. Do not take the SAT test until you have completed algebra one and algebra two. You also want to be conscious of the fact that if you're using a program like Saxon, you will not have a separate geometry program in that course. Advanced Mathematics, Trigonometry, and Geometry will all be rolled in together. In that case, it is very important that you split out the proportions and actually list your Geometry on your transcript. Many colleges require credit in Euclidean Geometry to show on the transcript as an admissions requirement. One final tip in mathematics is this, if you are intimidated about teaching these higher mathematics courses, recognize that many times the junior college version of these courses is identical to the high school version. And that's one of those areas where if you take it in a college format, you can double dip credit. You will get credit from the college and you can actually list the course on the high school transcript as something that has been completed in the sense even of an advanced placement

type of course. More about that with weighted grades. If you're intimidated about teaching higher math and you don't want to send your children to a local junior college, then consider the Video Text Algebra Program available from Video Text, which is the name of the company. They're located in Indianapolis. You'll be able to find them readily in any directory. They lay out their lessons in 20-minute modules that are easy to repeat, to watch on video, and the video will become the teacher for your children in that regard.

SCIENCE

In the science area, you want to consider programs that will help your children to master laboratory skills and content exploration sufficient to whatever they're going to study in college. My favorite program here is Apologia written by Dr. J. Wile. It's written for the tutorial environment of home education. Therefore, it's written directly to the student. Instead of being a science ed textbook that a science ed major needs to teach, it is a book that is written for the parent who has completely

forgotten these subject matter areas or taken them so long ago that they're irrelevant or never taken them at all to study right along with the student. Remember, most states require at least one laboratory science to be on the transcript. And even if the state doesn't require it, colleges will look for at least one lab science to be on that transcript as you move into the college years.

HISTORY

For Heritage Studies, I recommend my favorite publisher, Bob Jones University Press. You will find that the American History Book and the World History Book are books that blend very well, the history of the church, the history of Christianity, with the history of everything that's happening in the secular world. Most other books will separate these two as if they are completely separate worlds. And that's not really true. History is his story. It's the story of how God works through the nations and therefore what is happening in Christianity is a very important thread in what is happening in the society at large. You will get that kind of help from the BJU textbooks. I also recommend

that you flesh out those textbooks with biographies, real source documents, journals, other such matter that will make those stories live for you. And the publishers that I most recommend in that regard would be the Elijah Company, Greenleaf Press, and Lifetime Books and Gifts. These people have an extensive catalog that does not involve revisionist history or reconstructed grammar or English or deconstructed English, however you want to put it. And so you can trust the recommendations that are there. And there are multiplied pages of history, heritage study resources in these books.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In Physical Education and Health, the most important thing for you to remember is not to neglect your credits in PE. There are some colleges that are actually making students make up their deficiencies in PE if they come into college without an appropriate credential in these areas. Now the good thing about PE though is that you don't have to identify what the PE was. I mean, you don't have to say that we did a year of basketball or a

year of volleyball or a year of whatever else. You can simply say it was Physical Education and maybe you had a couple weeks of basketball and you had a soccer season in there and maybe you even raked the widow's leaves for a little bit. And the other important dimension is that there are some academic things. In fact, in the freshman year, oftentimes it's health and personal hygiene, communicable diseases, things like that can be considered a part of PE. In the sophomore year, usually you're doing Driver's Education, your rules of the road training before you get behind the wheel. In the junior year, you're doing a Career Orientation where you're surveying different job possibilities and what's out there available to do. And then in the senior year, you're often doing things like family living or courtship or dating or social relationships. There are lots of possibilities.

ART

We want to make sure that we have fine arts on the transcript. It is very easy to think of fine arts as just piano lessons or guitar lessons and forget that we need all of these other things. Like

we need some choir experience. If we play an instrument, it'd be good to play in a band, but we also need Music Appreciation, Art Appreciation, some Speech and some Drama. Now for some of you, a whole credit in each of those would be completely appropriate. For some of you, that would be overkill. And for you, I would recommend at least having one credit on the transcript in what we call Fine Arts Survey, where you could take some units of Music Appreciation, some units of Art Appreciation, some units of Speech and Drama and roll them all together in one or two credits that are called Fine Arts Survey. I do know that many people are uncomfortable teaching the arts, sometimes because they have had no experience of their own in these areas, and therefore they shy away from what they don't know. But that's a sure way to make your children equally ignorant as you are. You don't want to be in that position. You'd rather learn with them and have your children be well prepared in all of these areas. Another reason for discomfort in the arts is that many times art textbooks, particularly and occasionally music textbooks will feature paintings that have nude figures in

them; and Christian parents are rightfully conscientious about not wanting their children to see such things. And so again, I highly recommend to you the materials that are available from Bob Jones University Press. The new appreciating music designed for anyone in junior high level on up, but appropriate for a high school credit. Our Christian Heritage and Art, excellent combination of hands-on art with art history that will not violate you in any of the areas where you would have concern, and yet give you a very thorough training in these kinds of areas. The speech materials again, are also excellent and there's lots of video material to back them up so that you can actually see a Shakespearean play and watch other dramatic things and experience things that your little town might not offer. The final remark that I'd like to make in the area of fine arts is that during the high school years you can and should count the work that you are doing in piano lessons, in organ lessons, in guitar, in ballet, in any of these other areas. The rule of thumb, however, is that music and athletic things are not carried over from the younger years. If we do some of these other activities

during the younger years, and they are clearly high school level work, we count them on the high school transcript. But when it comes to actual music lessons or athletic pursuits, we only count them during the period that we deem to be high school.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

When it comes to foreign language, the thing that you need to know is that most colleges today are pretty flexible about the requirement to make you study a foreign language before college. Now, in one way that's good, but in another way that's not so good. The best time to learn a foreign language is before 12 years of age. And ironically enough, in American curriculum sequence, we usually reserve foreign language for the high school years. So we are already out of that most efficient window, let alone waiting till college. Now, many colleges will allow you to take your language in college if it is a requirement for that particular degree program. However, here's what I recommend. Start doing your language early. I mean, even if it takes you two or three years to do the equivalent of Spanish I

or German I. Do it with little children because they pick up languages very quickly. And then whatever language program you use, make sure that it's a program that is focused on speaking it first and then on reading and writing and understanding the grammar. That's the way you learned your mother tongue. Most of you took language in high school. Why is it that you can only say hello, goodbye, and count to 10 today? Because they set a textbook in front of you and they never did teach you to speak the language first. They were concentrating on reading and writing and all the other dimensions of it. So you will concentrate on speaking the language even for three or four or five years with your young people and then move on. You will find that it is possible to document their achievement by use of the CLEP test later on and show that they have the equivalent of Spanish I and II, though it was learned earlier, and then having documented it with the CLEP test or an Advanced Placement test you are able to put it on the high school transcript as high school material that has been mastered.

ELECTIVES

Home Economics is the first of our practical arts areas. In this connection, you will do things like cooking, sewing, childcare, nutrition, care of the home, care of the lawn, even some small machinery, lawn care, all of that, anything that involves the maintenance and the operation of a home and a family. In this connection, I would encourage you to remember that you can be as simple or as complicated as you want to be. You can do things as simple as Single Survival, where you just have a little bit of a survey of each of these areas, just enough that you can maintain your own lifestyle. Or, you can go to great detail and become quite an expert in some of these fields. You can begin, for example, in cooking with Introduction to Cooking, Beginning Cooking, Intermediate Cooking, Advanced Cooking, Nutrition, Menu Planning, Cake Decorating, and you can specialize in lots of special areas. So there are lots of possibilities. Sewing is the same way. You could have intro and beginning, intermediate, advanced, Clothing, Tailoring, Construction, Clothing Design, Fashion Design, or Fashion History. The

possibilities are endless. Now when it comes to finding text material for these kinds of courses, I recommend that you go to your local junior college. Many of them teach classes in these courses and they have an extended bibliography of materials available in their libraries and in their bookstores that would take you to the point of being able to teach these subjects. But don't neglect general bookstores or your general library or a search engine on your computer where you can find cookbooks and sewing books and materials that would help you that way. But do be careful. I would not recommend secular textbooks to teach subjects like childcare or family living or marriage and the family. You want to teach these from a biblical vantage point. Instead, I would encourage you to look at authors like Ted Tripp, Paul Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Shepherd Press, Lou Priolo, Martha Peace, and authors that will ground what they say in scripture and give you a biblical vantage point of family life.

When it comes to business education, you will be considering classes like Computer Typing, Keyboarding, and we've already

discussed how to approach that. And you'll add classes like Shorthand, Bookkeeping, Accounting, Filing Practices, and Office Procedures, even details like how to answer the telephone. Whatever you do, don't neglect your business etiquette. Ron and I are astounded at the fact, no matter where we go in this country, we meet people who tell us things like this, "I am the CEO of my company and every year, I pay thousands of dollars to hire an etiquette consultant to come into my firm to teach my MBA graduates how to eat lunch." And we look at them and say, "what?" "MBA graduates," he says, "yes, they don't know the basics of etiquette to the point where they alienate the very people with whom they're carrying on contract negotiations. And therefore they are not successful in the marketplace." The best little book I've seen is a little book called *The Etiquette Advantage*. I strongly advise against sending your children away from home until they have fully mastered this book. It is written by a Christian author and published by a Christian publisher. It looks like it's only about business etiquette, but it is so basic that even at the end of the book, there's a short little

appendix that alphabetizes all the foods that you can possibly think of and tells you how to eat them. Did you know that asparagus was a finger food and that French fries are a fork food? That is in a formal lunch situation. And I know there are people out there who say, well, “Who made Miss Manners the boss anyway?” But that’s not the point. The point is that if you are with someone who expects you to know these things and you demonstrate that you don’t know these things, then your integrity is on the line. Your credibility is on the line and your ability to move forward, whether it’s in ministry, in witness, or even in employment is hampered by that lack of knowledge on your part.

Vocational education is our second category of practical arts. This is where you do things like Shop Training or Electricity or Heating and Plumbing, Air Conditioning, Construction, and Small Engine Repair. There are lots of possibilities in this area. In fact, your possibilities are limited only by the number of trades that are out there. Again, your local junior college would be one of your best sources of books, textbook material

in this area. I have also found several good resources available from Mennonite type publishers who emphasize this type of training for their young people. They have produced some excellent materials that will not violate you in a moral sense, but give you the practical training that you need. Don't forget that in the area of vocational training, you can get a Carnegie unit of credit for every year's experience on the job and list those apprenticeship reports in your portfolio.

Finally, we move to Bible. In this area, I highly encourage you that if you are operating a Christian home education program, that you include a Bible requirement in your credits for graduation. Ron and I, again, are appalled at the number of families that we meet who become so worried about a transcript that they really are of no discipleship good. They forget all about the Bible aspects of it because they are concerned that we won't have enough time to do the academic aspects. What you want to do is make sure that your children are well grounded in scripture before they leave your home, even if it means leaving out some of the academic pursuits. There is a lifetime for academic

pursuits. There is not a lifetime for establishing a firm biblical foundation and those habits of life that put spiritual things first. Now it's not easy to find good Bible curriculum. In fact, again, Ron and I are appalled at the wimpy Bible studies that are out in the marketplace today. Workbooks that ask a teenager simply to fill in the missing word from the verse. Teenagers are capable of much more than that. We would recommend to you, Kay Arthur's inductive Bible study method. In fact, when your children reach junior high, consider buying them the hardback version of the inductive study Bible with the wide margins and all of the instructions on how to mark up each book of the Bible so that the Bible becomes its own interpreter. The Bible is, after all, the best commentary on itself. If you don't want to purchase another Bible, you can get that method outlined for you in a little paperback book called *How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur. Another practical responsibility that you have with high school students is to teach them Bible doctrines. Many of your students are not going to go to Christian colleges or universities. So your young people ought to have a

firm grounding in Bible doctrines before they leave your home. There is no excuse for the graduate of a Christian home education program not to know what he believes, why he believes it, and be able to articulate his beliefs in an intelligent way. The best book we have seen on that topic is a book entitled, Major Bible Themes by Louis Sperry Chafer. Dr. Chafer was the founder of the Dallas Theological Seminary. This book is very helpful because the chapters are concise. And at the end of each four or five page chapter, you have a list of 20 to 25 questions to help you articulate that particular doctrine. And the list is completely cross-referenced in scripture. Use that material in family devotions or use it as a Bible credit for a Bible course in the junior or senior year. It is important. Don't neglect that area of preparation with your young people. If you do, what good is it if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul? Keep your values in line with God's values.

GPA CALCULATION

As you prepare your young people spiritually, it's crucial to also ensure that their academic achievements are accurately reflected. One essential aspect of this is the GPA calculation. Accuracy and consistency are paramount when calculating GPA. To simplify this process, you can use a free and automatic GPA calculator provided by Homeschool Transcripts, which is available at <https://www.fasttranscripts.com/gpa.php>. This tool helps ensure that your calculations are precise and consistent, making it easier to present a clear and accurate transcript. In case you'd like to calculate your children's GPA manually, we will teach you how to do it on your own. Here's how: You are going to need a piece of lined paper, notebook paper, graph paper, doesn't really matter as long as it has the lines that are necessary to keep you from mixing up the items. The first item that you will need to put in is a grid for the information that includes all of the subjects, grades, and credits. That is simply a listing of everything that your student has accomplished from this point on. The next responsibility that you have is to decide

which numerical scale you want to use. Let me give you a little bit of a history lesson here. Back in the 70s or at least up until the 70s, most colleges and universities used a three point grading scale. That was an A being three, a B being two, a C being one, a D being zero, and an F actually being a penalty point against you. Now think for a moment, look at that scale. What is really the lowest passing grade on that scale? Is it not a C? Because, you are getting no credit recognition for a D, no points at all. So colleges became concerned around about the early 80s that that might be a little bit too demanding for students. And in the process, they swung their pendulum to the other side. Often happens when you want to make a course correction and they move to a five point scale. In that five-point scale, they recognized an A as five, a B as four, a C as three, and a D as two, and an F as one. Now, it became obvious and ridiculous that F was now the lowest passing grade, so around about the middle 80s, most colleges and universities shifted to the four-point scale. Now, the A was four points, the B was three points, the C was two points, the D was one point, and the F

was zero. That has remained the standard ever since the middle 80s or so. Different colleges would adopt it at different times, but today that is the recognized grade point scale. Now I would encourage that you do the four point scale, unless you have very, very good reasons for choosing something other than the four point scale. If you do want to use the three-point scale just to be a little more demanding on your children, then figure out a way to wire your transcript with a battery and flashing lights so that nobody mistakes what it is that you're trying to say. College admissions officers are so used to reading a four-point scale that they will make an error if you shift it to something else. So let's use the standard one and return to our grid and see what we need to do next. We have marked the A for Literary Genres with four grade points. We have marked the B for Biology with three grade points. We have continued that all the way through, just taking all the A's and marking them four, all the B's and marking them three. And then if there were a C, we would have marked it two. If there were a D, we would have marked it one, and so on. That is simply a matter of copying

down the information so that you can prepare now for the calculation. A few arithmetic steps will get you where you need to be on your grade point average. First, you're going to compute extensions. The way you do that is take the number of credits that you have and multiply it by those grade points in order to get a figure that will weigh all of your courses the same. Then you're going to add the number of credits. You're going to add the extensions. And finally, you will divide the extension total by the credit total. Let's return to the grid again and see how that actually worked. On line number one, Literary Genres, we took one credit, we multiplied it by four grade points, and we got an extension figure of four. We have a half a credit for Tennis. We multiply that by three grade points and that gives us an extension of 1.5. You just do that line by line all the way down your subject listing. When you are finally ready, you come to the bottom of that chart and you will add up the number of grade points. We have added up the number of extensions and our final step is to divide that 24.5 by the number of credits 7.0 and that will give us the grade point average of 3.5. Now there

are a couple of things you should never ever ever do. Don't ever take your GPAs for a single year, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, add the four together and divide by four. If you do that, you'll run the risk of not weighing every course the same. Because some years you may earn seven credits, other years you may earn nine credits, some years you may earn as few as five credits. To make sure that you count every course the same, you want to always start with a fresh, clean list and work your way down item by item the way that we have shown you on that grid. The other thing that you need to consider is that you don't worry about decimals for plus and minus grades. It is not necessary to interpolate numbers that will give you shades of meaning for the plus or the minuses that you may have given. A little bit of a history lesson is in order again here. Do you realize that pluses and minuses were really developed as a midterm courtesy to students? It was to let the student know at midterm time that they had a B plus, and if they work a little bit harder, put some more elbow grease to it, some mental muscle, they could drag that B plus across the A minus line; and an A is an A

when it comes to your grade point average. It was also to warn the student who had the C minus at mid-term time that you have one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel. And if you don't watch it, you're going to be in D or even F country come final grading time. Now, if you would like to, you can put those pluses and minuses on your child's transcript. But when it comes to making the calculation for the GPA, just use the whole numbers. You will find that it's every bit as effective as anything else that you might try. Notice that this is cumulative information. You have the freshman GPA, a sophomore GPA, but that's not for the sophomore year. You have a cumulative GPA that is actually at the end of the sophomore year reflecting everything that's been done up to that point. That is why the senior GPA and the final GPA are exactly the same.

We need to talk about one other aspect of your GPA. Many schools across the country actually weight grades. In other words, they actually assign a value to grades that might be more than the traditional A equals four, B equals three, and so on. When do colleges do that kind of thing? They do it for special-

ized courses that are academically more demanding than the rest of high school curriculum. And the way they do it is to add one grade point for these special scenarios. The first of them is advanced placement. Advanced placement is for those students who actually take an advanced placement course or an advanced placement test. You may sit for an advanced placement test without actually taking the advanced placement course. If you get a score that is high enough on the advanced placement test, then you may add an extra grade point to all of the subjects that have that mark of success. In that case, you would take the title of the subject, British Literature, for example, and you would simply write on your transcript, AP: British Literature. That indicates that you are giving the advanced placement credit. What other scenarios can you use weighted grades? Whenever you take a college course during the high school years. You will remember that I told you earlier in the seminar that this is the one place where you can actually double dip credits. You may take the credit that the college gives you on a college transcript and actually report it again on your high school transcript. You

list the subject on the front of the transcript as though it were taken at your high school. You put the grade, and the beauty of this is that for one semester of college work done during the high school years, you actually earn a full Carnegie unit of credit. So not only are you able to double dip your credit, you're able to get a lot of credit, plus an extra grade point on the grade point average if you choose to weight the grades in this fashion. It is important to notice that whenever you weight grades, you need to have outside corroboration. You cannot just decide that your student has done a lot more work and their work should receive more recognition. You may well be right. No one is arguing with your judgment. However, you have to have a way to prove that there was more behind it than just your opinion. In the case of the AP score, you have the AP report from the test. In the case of the college course, you have the transcript from the college that shows the success in that area. However, there's another way to demonstrate the equivalent of college training. That is with the CLEP credits. CLEP stands for College Level Examination Program. This is a battery of tests. There are

30 of them to be exact, where you can sit for examinations in specific subject areas. And you can submit those scores to over 5,000 colleges and universities in our country. And they will give you college credit if your CUT score is high enough. Now, every college runs their operation with their own rules. And so they all have different CUT scores. But if you meet the CUT score of one of those colleges and universities, you can request credit from them and you can show that on this high school transcript the same way that you would a college course. Now, when you are listing a college course on the high school transcript, you want to build the word college into your title or put the word college in parentheses behind your title. For example, you could say Introduction to College Algebra. Or you could say Introduction to Algebra, parentheses, college, Introduction to College Chemistry, Introduction to Chemistry, parentheses, college. Whichever way you want to do it, but build the word college somewhere into that title so that everyone knows exactly what you're doing. Don't even think about taking a CLEP exam without practicing. The art of test taking is as important

as the content on which you are being tested. And so I highly recommend that you look at the various publishers that are out there: Arco, Petersons, Barons, the College Board, the Princeton Review, And Kaplan. There are all manner of such, and you can find them in general bookstores or with a website search. Get practice material and give yourself enough time to practice. That would hold true for the SAT, the ACT, the PSAT, as well as these CLEP tests. Now, be aware too, that the time to take a CLEP test is at the end of the course. You finish Biology at the end of your sophomore year, sit for a CLEP test. Finish British Literature at the end of your junior year, sit for a CLEP test. Just consider it to be another step in your final exam. The CLEP people will actually keep on file all of your scores until you send for them at the college where you plan to enroll. I know many students who have actually CLEPed out of their whole freshman year. Other students have CLEPed out of their freshman and sophomore years. That's a tremendous saving of room, board, tuition, to say nothing of study time. And so this is a highly worthwhile system. But the time to take those

tests again is at the end of the course when the information is still fresh in your mind. The final category that you might want to consider for special recognition is honors classes. An honors class is where you are doing all of the high school work, but you're adding just enough academic dimension to it that it should be recognized as above and beyond the call of duty. This would be, for example, in an American Literature class where we are working our way through the anthology in the course of the year, and every month we are selecting one of the authors that we are studying and reading that author's entire work. This would be considered an honors course. Honors courses should be designated right before the title. For example, "Honors: Latin." Now, generally speaking, honors courses don't get an extra grade point. So you may decide if you want to recognize them that way and work it that way. Let me summarize the whole area of weighted grades by reminding you that you must have outside cooperation, either in the form of a test score, a college transcript, a report from the advanced placement people, or your actual course of study for your honors class before you

consider making that course a weighted grade point average course. Let me also tell you that colleges and universities are very individual in their requirements along this line. Some colleges will actually ask you for an unweighted GPA for admissions purpose and a weighted GPA for scholarship purposes. So you may have to calculate it both ways in order to satisfy the admissions requirements. Other colleges will ask you to categorize your courses in regular, college prep, and honors. And they will make their own calculation according to how that is weighted out. Just remember to contact the colleges that you are interested in applying to and finding out what they want you to do in each of these areas. And also remember that it is important for you to keep excellent documentation if you're going to make the decision to weight your grade point average.

PART 5

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Let's consider all the elements that must appear on the backside of the transcript. You need to remember that the transcript is a summary document. Therefore, all the information that you need to report must fit on the back and front of one piece of paper. If you don't want to print it front and back, you may print it in two pages. But two pages is your absolute maximum for a transcript. When you go beyond two pages, you are really starting into portfolio territory. And that's a completely separate consideration.

DOCUMENTATION METHOD

First we will consider the identification of all your extracurricular activities. These are the special features of the student's educational program. Here, you want to consolidate all your

entries into one-liners. Include all community service, consider cottage industries, cite honors and awards, and evaluate your volunteer projects. If there is no instructional component separate from the experience, list it as extracurricular. If you do have an instructional component and the time input is appropriate, call it a course and assign a credit with a grade. You will see that we have several different kinds of activities listed. Notice how we have consolidated them to save space. For example, list music activities like youth symphony as “three years,” or use the designation MOS in parentheses for months and indicate the number that you’re dealing with. You can use the designation YRS for years, anything to keep it to one line at a time. If you want to describe your extracurricular activities, do that on an addendum sheet titled “Extracurricular Activity Descriptions.” You can then list them with an entire paragraph about each one to tell what the experiences were and what your children learned. Extracurricular activities are very important on a transcript. In your zeal, don’t try to turn everything into a course. Leave some things as community service, volunteer activities,

or extracurricular. Don't neglect the things your children do in the church. For example, if your children sing in the church choir or are officers in the church youth group, include those on the transcript. The extracurricular section of your transcript is also used to document special awards and recognitions, such as a chess championship, spelling bee championship, geography bee, etc. This section is a catchall for all the things that have rounded out your child's education, ideally having no more than 3 single-line entries.

FINALIZING THE TRANSCRIPT

STANDARDIZED TEST & ASSESSMENT SCORES

We must also deal with standardized assessment scores. Include scores received only during the high school years, no junior high. Examples include Stanford achievement test, Iowa test of basic skills, California achievement tests, and Metropolitan achievement tests. Public high schools rarely give these tests after grade nine because they are expensive and not curriculum-specific. Many states require home educators to use these assessments to demonstrate what they are doing in their home education programs. Report the scores on language, math, and reading composites only. Do not use grade equivalent scores. Instead, use percentile ranking and Stanine scores. Some home educators like to practice taking the actual test. However, some test publishers average all of your tries together and report the

average. Others report your highest score but tell how many times you took the test to get that score. To qualify as a National Merit Scholar, take the PSAT in the fall of your junior year. Your score is automatically sent to the National Merit Qualifying Board.

Consider any special diagnostic material to be private. This includes learning disabilities diagnostics, dyslexia assessments, speech therapy, and hearing therapy. These records are confidential, just like medical records.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special features of a student's program might include unusual achievements or activities. For example, a violin pedagogy apprenticeship under the direction of a violin teacher would be a special feature worth highlighting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Prepare a bibliography of all text resources used during the high school years. This includes textbooks, laboratory manuals, and videos watched. This bibliography demonstrates the depth and breadth of the educational program.

TRANSFER CREDITS

Include the dates for tenure that specify location for any other secondary schools your student has attended. This refers to high school level only, no junior high. Include a semester's worth of attendance or more, along with report cards or transcripts from those schools.

FINAL STEPS

Every transcript must be signed. Indicate degrees or titles for all the signatures if such data is available. The person who did the bulk of the teaching should sign the transcript. Ensure you have a graduation date on the transcript. This appears on the front side of the transcript with the academic summary.

CONCLUSION

A high school transcript is an essential tool in documenting and showcasing a student's educational journey. It requires careful preparation and organization to present the student in the best possible light, whether for college admissions or future employment opportunities. Be thorough, take your time and remember to honor and glorify the ord in all that you do.

Thank you for completing Transcript Bootcamp. Originally a seminar, this book has been transformed into a comprehensive guide designed specifically for home educators.

With your newfound knowledge, you now have the tools to meticulously manage high school record-keeping, ensuring your children's credentials impress both employers and college admissions officers.

Grounded in a strong scriptural foundation, Transcript Bootcamp has emphasized the transformative power of God's word in education, teaching you the importance of crafting transcripts that are persuasive, believable, credible, and truthful.

You have discovered how to balance academic rigor with essential life skills, integrating discipleship, etiquette, ethics, and character development into your educational program. With practical advice on navigating the complexities of career orientation, vocation, and the effective use of extracurricular activities, you are now equipped to create a transcript that highlights your student's strengths and accomplishments.

Thank you for your dedication to honoring and glorifying the Lord through diligent and thoughtful educational practices.