

Another Perspective

Written by Lori Pankonin
Tuesday, 06 December 2011 16:47 -

Kids' vocabulary can prove entertaining

Grandpa (my husband) took our 8-year-old grandson, Austin, on a nighttime shopping excursion when we were in Lincoln, Neb. recently. They hit the jackpot by finding a birthday present Austin was excited about, then stopped for an ice cream cone at a drive-through window.

Austin was surprised they were still open, and Grandpa told him they never close. They're open 24/7. Austin's response: The employees have to be nocturnal.

Upon hearing that story, I asked Austin how he knows about the word "nocturnal." He looked at me with great puzzlement. "First grade. Duh."

Well duh is right. How in the world would this grandma not realize first-graders learn about nocturnal and that my own grandson was well aware of that term LAST year? Duh.

Okay, Mrs. Brill. Did you fail me or do I just forget we also studied the nocturnal word when I was in first grade? It's just been awhile.

As it turns out, Austin has a classmate whose Dad works nights as a policeman. He takes a nap prior to going to work and has to be nocturnal, just like the owls and other animals they study. I guess I don't know why Austin's comment surprised me, especially from other conversations coming from him and his siblings.

Makes me think of the time Tayvin, age 4, found a sticky piece of candy shaped like a ring in the trash. "Who threw this away?" she exclaimed. "That was NOT appropriate!" (Don't tell, but I was the guilty party.)

Or the time Austin was a toddler and was tossed to the floor when leaning up against a swivel

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chair at my Mom's. She thought he might come up crying, but instead, he looked up and said, "Smooth move, ex-lax."

Youngsters today are exposed to words that certainly weren't common in my early years . . . e-mail, AIDS, digital image, cell phone, laptop.

I learned to type as a freshman in high school. Today, kids are exposed to keyboard use in early elementary. It's essential.

When I lost my cell phone and upgraded to a newer style, I struggled to get the feel of swiping the screen to make things happen. Yet Preslin, my 1-year-old granddaughter, picked up my phone and unlocked it with a simple swipe and ended up calling her dad.

Now calling her dad may not have been her mission as she was just tapping icons. Or?? Maybe she did know. They seem to just get it. And they definitely aren't afraid to experiment.

I recall a trip to Disneyland before my fifth-grade year. There was a picture display of a phone of the future where you could see the people you talked to on the other end. No way! Obviously, we have seen that become a reality. Even more unfathomable is you can carry that phone in your pocket.

My grandpa was born in 1891. Having lived to age 98, he commented he saw more change in his generation than any other generation could witness. From the advent of the television, telephone, refrigerator, computer, etc., he had first-hand stories to tell. I bought into his philosophy.

Well surprise, Grandpa. Technology probably advances more in five years today than it did in your entire lifetime. It doesn't take long after you buy a new computer or phone that it's already outdated.

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I'd better get some rest so I can keep up with my grandson's vocabulary. No nocturnal life for me!

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