

Online learning helps kids and parents

On the drive home from our family's weekend trip to Lake George, I realized I had not seen my 14-year-old son work on his math homework that weekend



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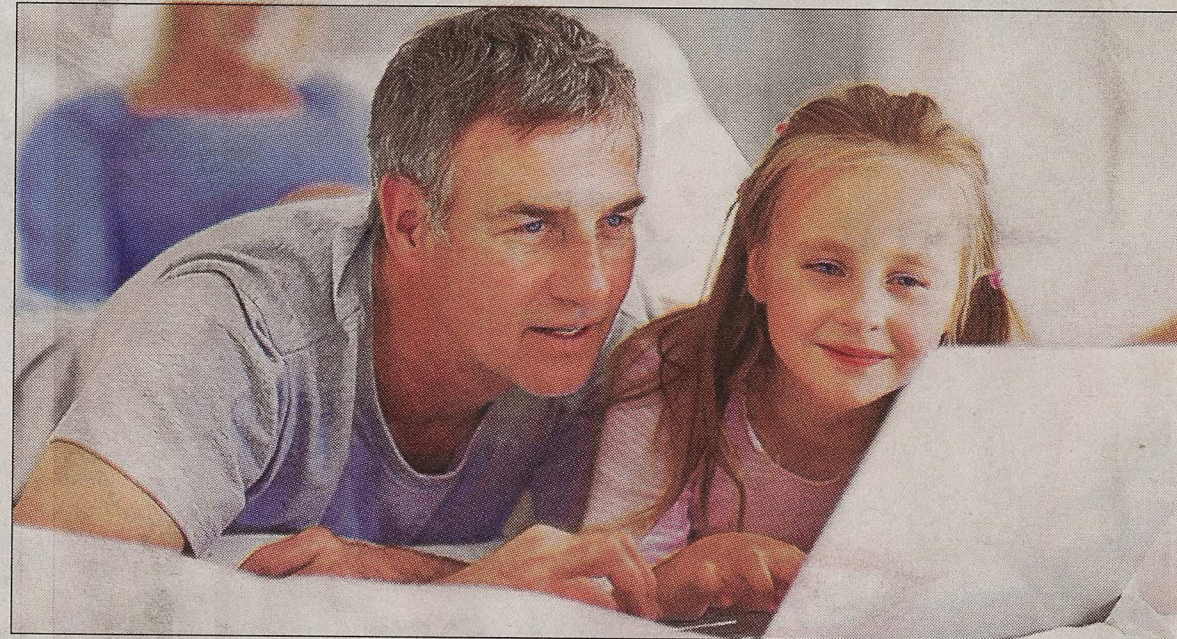
... hadn't even seen his math book.

He was in the back of the car listening to music when I asked him, "Have you done your math assignment?"

"I just finished doing it on the iPad, Dad," he said with a smile.

That was my first introduction to online learning as designed by Castle Software (www.castlelearning.com). The online or "cloud-based" software helps my son learn math, lets him practice it, have it corrected and do it online or using WiFi – all via a 3G connection, anywhere, anytime. He's even done his math homework on his Droid, with a scrap of scratch paper, on a bus while on his way back from a tennis match.

Meet Generation Text and the technology that understands it. Castle Learning not only built the technology for young people in schools but also as an aid for teachers to coordinate it with their classroom lessons. Castle's online learning programs



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Online learning provides opportunities for parents to learn right along with their children, which gives both one more thing in common and one more thing to talk about.

include all core subjects for grade school up to high school ... including English as a second language. The technology has saved so-called "failing schools" and won kudos from administrators for improving student test scores. It's deployed in more than 450 districts statewide.

Parallel learning

The company is inviting

parents to participate in their children's learning.

"You just can't leave it up solely to teachers, software or even tutors," said Scott Fischer, one of Castle Learning's top executives. "Parents need to participate as well and have skin in the game by becoming involved regularly."

Castle's concept of "Parental Parallel Learning" has parents

learn a subject right alongside their kids. I've signed up. Although I have an MBA, I am going back to school this summer. I am going to shadow study my son's toughest and most important target course, geometry. I am not doing it to do his work, but to be there to answer questions when I can and be current on it. I never loved geometry and welcome a second crack at

the discipline. I want my son to excel in math, and we are both getting a jump on it before his class begins in September. We decided to begin this summer to give my son a head start.

More and more people are doing home schooling, and a challenging economy has left more parents with extra time.

Make the commitment

Both my son and I have already begun reading a math book (the generic "Dummies Series" of books are great) and using Castle Learning Online for support. It gives us one more thing in common, one more thing to talk about.

Are you game? I am and your kids will be, too, especially when they know you care enough to learn alongside them. Don't forget to eat dinner with your family, shut off the TV and hide the smart phone until they do their homework!

Joseph Dans is the producer and host of WTBQ radio's "Creativity and Technology Solutions for Business and Life," which can be heard live at 1 p.m. Wednesdays at 99.1 FM, 1110 AM and www.wtbq.com. He heads up the RW Creative Group, a Warwick-based think tank. He can be reached at joe@rwcgroupinc.com.