

SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES IN THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF THOSE STUDENTS
WHO ARE HOME SCHOOLED VS. STUDENTS IN A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL SETTING

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Abstract

This document examines how homeschooling came about and the deep rooted concepts of education and homeschooling. Although the movement began in colonial times, major roots took hold in the United States in the 1970's. This study then describes the families who are most likely to choose homeschooling as an educational option and the level of success that these families experience as a result of this choice. Homeschooling has grown in popularity and effectiveness over the past several decades. Through an analysis of the research, this paper will explore the causes of the current trend in popularity.

There are distinct differences between children who are homeschooled versus those who are schooled in the public setting. This paper reveals that the level of success for homeschoolers is a good argument for this type of education. Through numerous research studies, this paper will address other commonly referred to topics regarding homeschooling, such as socialization and parental educational levels. Each of these topics are often arguments against homeschooling, but research indicates that homeschooling is a very viable form of education.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Parents have options when making decisions regarding their children's education. What parents require in order to make a virtuous educational decision is the facts surrounding the options they have, and knowledge of the outcomes or implications one decision may have over another. A review of the literature regarding these topics does not clearly identify which route is more beneficial to students. One argument for public schools is that parents benefit from the fruits of public schools every day (McGrath, 2000). While those who oppose homeschooling hold the belief that homeschooled children are socially backward and deprived. In contrast, research shows the opposite; that homeschooled children are actually better socialized (Taylor, 2001). It is obvious that there are positive views for each side of the equation.

Statement of Problem:

There is literature to validate both homeschooling and public schooling, however, it is also apparent that the number of parents deciding to home school their children is on the rise. "The number of home-educated students in America is estimated between 1.7 million and 2.3 million and over the last two decades, home education has grown consistently at a rate of 7 percent to 15 percent a year"; "Reasons to keep the kids home are as varied as the students themselves" (Long, 2012, p. 1). This study will seek to recognize if there are identifiable differences in the educational outcomes of those students who are homeschooled versus students educated through a traditional public school setting.

Research Question

The outcomes to be reviewed include social skills, educational attainment, standardized testing results, and a look to the future of both educational methods. Both groups of students will be considered to see the variations between the two.

The conclusion of reviewing the information leads to the question that will be answered: Are there identifiable differences in the educational outcomes of students who are homeschooled as compared to students who are educated in a traditional school setting?

A review of the literature reveals the varied opinions of the two types of education. It indicates that parents make decisions based on their individual circumstance and needs. The literature does not clearly identify set outcomes specific to each method of teaching. The literature also reveals the different state requirements to home school one's children and different ways of home schooling. The literature further explains reasons for sudden increases or decreases in the number of parents who decide to home school their children versus sending them to public school (Long, 2012).

Definition of Terms

Compulsory Education: Compulsory education laws require parents to send their children to a public or state accredited private or parochial school. Each state determines when this period starts and ends. Almost all states require a child to begin attending school at an age ranging from five to seven years old. The age when a child may stop going to school varies from sixteen to eighteen (Aasen, 2010).

FTE (Full - time student Equivalency): The amount of hours students attend classes per day.

Home Schooled: Taught at home by parents or other shared service. The parent is responsible for the education and resources (Bohon, 2012).

Schooled at Home: Being taught at home, but the education is provided by a public school system via the Internet or correspondence. Parents are strictly mentors. The actual instruction is performed by a certified teacher by use of a curriculum that is the same as students who attend public schools (Bohon, 2012).

Socialization: The process whereby people acquire the rules of behavior and systems of beliefs and attitudes that equips a person to function effectively as a member of a particular society (Chang, Gould & Meuse, 2011).

Chapter II: Review of Literature

History of Homeschooling

“Compulsory education could be found in A.D. 1500-1600 Aztec societies, where male students were required to be educated until age 16” (Davis, n.d., p. 29). This idea has evolved over the years to not only include male students, but all children under the age of 18. Since everyone must attend school, the delivery of their education comes under heavy scrutiny since everyone does not agree on what is best for our children. Diverse backgrounds and experiences determine what parents want in terms of education and how they accomplish the task of educating their children. The contemporary homeschooling movement began sometime around mid-century as a liberal, rather than a conservative, alternative to public education. There are many facets of homeschooling that people may not know. The motivations for homeschooling vary between individuals as to why they elect to homeschool. To explore homeschooling and its success, it is important to point out where homeschooling originated and reasons why parents choose homeschooling instead of public schooling. By acquiring facts from those who homeschool, it provides a better awareness and background to the purpose and function of homeschooling (Chang et al., 2011).

Society has frowned upon homeschooling for decades (Hines, 1996). Until recently, it was common for professionals to believe that students could not possibly receive the necessary education at home. Conversely, parents believe their student cannot possibly receive the appropriate level or adequate education in a public school setting. The coming of age for homeschooling can be contributed to the overwhelming congregation of families in support of

their Constitutional right to educate their own children. The path to acceptance of such practices within communities, school districts and states has evolved over the years.

Perception of Homeschooling

In the annual Phi Delta Kappan Gallup survey, results confirmed that Americans have become more receptive to the idea of homeschooling. Although this study does not specify the group used during this study, it did reaffirm that homeschooling has become a more socially acceptable alternative to public schools. Respondents of this survey were asked if homeschooling was an acceptable means of education. In 1985, only 16 percent of those who took the survey thought homeschooling was a viable alternative to public schooling. By 1988, within the same poll, 28 percent indicated homeschooling was acceptable. In 1988 the poll also questioned if parents should have the legal right to homeschool their children. Fifty three percent believed it should be legal and 39 percent thought homeschooling should be illegal (Hines, 1996).

Although the results of this study seemed promising as a way to track progress, 1988 was the last year this poll addressed the issue. One would have to rely on new study data to help determine the community's perception on homeschooling.

The number of children being homeschooled in North America is growing at an unprecedented rate (Chang et al., 2011). In 2008 it was estimated that over 1.5 million children were homeschooled in the United States (NCES, 2008). With the prominence of homeschooling in the United States it is not surprising that it has become more popular over the years. With the numbers growing at a rapid rate, it is estimated as of 2010 there are over 2 million children who are homeschooled (Chang et al., 2011). Although some reports may vary, it is evident that the number is growing.

One of the primary arguments in support of homeschooling is that homeschooled students receive a better education than public school counterparts which leads to higher student achievement levels. A comparison of the academic achievement of homeschooled children with children attending traditional public schools was performed. The intent was to evaluate the efficacy of the home-based education. In addition, using ACT scores and standardized state test result, it was revealed that homeschooled children fair better academically than those who attend public school (Chang et al., 2011).

Although the percentage of children being homeschooled continues to grow, many question the quality of education that parents can provide to their children with limited resources. Educators are concerned as to whether or not parents are as qualified as the certified professional teachers in the field of education. Latham (1998) conducted a lengthy study to evaluate homeschooled children on a variety of levels and compare these results to those students that are receiving a typical public school education. Although the study concluded that homeschooled children do not lack academically or socially, it has not been determined if the test subjects would excel regardless if they are homeschooled or provided a public educated. This test group does not represent students from across the country, but is limited to Washington State (Lathem, 1998).

Another area which is often part of the conversations regarding homeschooling focuses on the positive aspect of incorporating religion into their homeschool curriculum. Parents tend to shy away from the public school due to their personal religious beliefs (Cai, Reeve & Robinson, 2002). These parents who embrace the religious aspect of homeschooling tended to use a more controlling style of teaching then the public school teachers (Cai et al., 2002). This study also considered students coming from socioeconomically disadvantage, advantaged homes, two

parent homes, and high parental education levels (Cai et al., 2002). The Bible and its values, teachings, and doctrine were taught in the home (Cai et al., 2002). In support of the impact of religion, it was found that 75% of the students who were homeschooled came from homes in which religion was very important (Kunsman, 2009).

In support of this same idea, it was stated in an article by Kunsman, “There is no such thing as a typical homeschooler” (Kunsman, 2009, p. 313). The homeschoolers come from a host of different backgrounds, as do their parents. To regulate something that does not have a lot of common themes would be difficult. Since the reasons for choosing to homeschool are different among homeschoolers, the regulations on them would have to consider the differences such as religious based or pedagogically based. In a 2007 National Center for Education Statistic survey, 88 percent of homeschooler parents stated they were concerned about the environment at public schools. This was a major factor in them deciding to homeschool their children (Kunsman, 2009). In addition, the study showed that socioeconomic status was not a factor.

It is legal for parent to homeschool their children in all 50 states (Davis, 2010). However, each state may mandate guidelines for homeschooling. For instance, Indiana mandates the same guidelines for homeschooling as for private schooled children. Some states require attendance records, approval of curriculum, demonstrate teacher qualifications, regular and unannounced visits from the Department of Education and or professional standardized testing (Davis, 2010).

Review of the literature reveals the varied opinions of the two types of education. It indicates that parents make decisions based on their individual circumstance and needs. The literature does not clearly identify outcomes specific to each method of teaching. The literature also reveals the different state requirements to home school one’s children and different ways of home schooling

The literature further explains reasons for sudden increases or decreases in the number of parents who decide to home school their children or send them to public school (Long, 2012).

Educational Resources for Homeschooling

Additional research by Bohon (2010) examined the many types of educational tools used for homeschooled children such as online classes and canned course to find out what methods are commonly used to homeschool. There are several curriculums available to homeschoolers to choose from. One in particular mentioned is *The Freedom Project Education*. The method of delivery is online. The curriculum seeks to use basic education to “empower students to understand, enjoy, and preserve the freedom and moral responsibility embodied in America’s founding principles” (Bohon, 2012, p. 24). With more and more students being homeschooled there is no doubt that we will see many more programs like *Freedom Project Education*.

Since homeschoolers have a choice of the method they want to use to provide their child with the education and curriculum that is right for them, this makes the child’s education customized to each child. Homeschooling is parent driven with the curriculum chosen, purchased, and instructed by the parent. Many public schools across the nation are adding to the homeschooling experience for parents. They can choose to be schooled at home or homeschooled or a combination of both. Schooled at home is a means of getting an education from home while also being enrolled in a public school. The school would provide the curriculum and means (computer) to take classes at home. The parent in this situation would serve as the mentor rather than the teacher. The public school would then collect the full time equivalency (FTE) for the child who is homeschooled. Parents may choose to homeschool, but bring their child in for one or two classes a day at the public school. They may want to have them take physical education or art classes.

Advantages of Homeschooling

“Describing the typical homeschool family is not unlike describing the typical public school family- the range of demographics, philosophies and practices make such a generalization practically impossible” (Kunsman, 2009, p. 313). As the author describes the various situations that he observed during his study it becomes apparent that families, like teachers, have their own ideas and ways they think best benefit their students.

Stanford Achievement Test of homeschooled students were compared to those of public school students. The test scores were from Washington State for the years of 1986, 1987, and 1988. Homeschooled students scored comparably or above the median in the tested areas of math, science, and verbal skills. The purpose was to identify how home-schooled students rate amongst public school students academically and socially (Romanowski, 2001).

The students were also compared on the Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale and homeschooled students scored significantly higher, indicating that homeschooled students do not struggle with socialization skills, as typically classified as students with social deprivation (Davis, n.d.). Although the studies conclude that homeschooled children do not lack academically or socially, it has not been determined how the test subjects would excel if exposed to public education. The test group does not represent students from across the country, but is limited to Washington State. The participants were student’s homeschooled in Washington State 1986, 1987, and 1988 among other homeschooled students (Davis, n.d.).

The main question of interest in this study of 5,402 homeschool students and 1,657 families was to find out the effectiveness of homeschooling. It was found that “homeschoolers,

on average, achieved higher scores than their public school counterparts by 30 – 37% in all subject areas” (Davis, n.d., p. 32). This was a significant finding to the effectiveness of homeschooling. It is interesting to note that data on test scores showed that it did not matter the race or background of the homeschool student.

Other important issues were mentioned in this study. The homeschooled students had higher success rates but the method used by parents varies among parents. Many parents opt for a blended approach and use a number of sources included individual specialists, online learning, retail book stores, public library, and more (Davis, n.d).

Parents of homeschooled students were surveyed to find out what type of curriculum they used for homeschooling their children. The result was that most of the parents used a curriculum they purchased through a homeschooling catalog, other retailers, and the public library. Approximately half of homeschooled students used curriculum or books from homeschooling organizations. Other sources were obtained from a church, synagogue or other religious institution or a public school (Princiotta, Beilic, & Champion, 2006).

Research seems to indicate more often than not that high school students score higher when homeschooled. Given the statements in this article in regards to the different resources home school parents use, one could argue that it is not what you teach, but rather how you teach. With all of the varied instruction such as online, it is important to note that this one on one experience has similar outcomes. Although there are a tremendous amount of positive aspects in regards to homeschool, there are exceptions. For instance, the parent who pulls their child out of a public school for reasons outside of religion; greater academic choices and control, or lack of trust in the public school system may not be as successful. A concern is that the parents who

choose to homeschool out of anger may not be making a choice that is truly in the best interest of the child.

Reasons for Homeschooling

Since there are different sides to the issue of home schooling along with different reasons why parents decide to home school, there was a study conducted and backed by the Home School Legal Defense Association to determine academic success in home schooled children (Academic Stats, 2010). The method used to collect data was through testing the students. Over 2,000 students were tested. The result was that the home schooled children were functioning at a higher level than traditionally schooled children in every grade. The areas tested included, reading, language arts, math, social studies, sciences and information services (Chang et al., 2011).

In a time when many of us talk about the importance of parents spending time with their children, scholars, educators, researchers, as well as parents themselves can make a good argument for parents who choose to homeschool. A study surrounding parental involvement reflects on the positive outcomes of parental involvement on the frontline versus as a secondary person to the public educational system. Since it is one of the common goals of parents to strengthen their relationship with their child while being homeschooled, it would be hard to argue the communication, emotional intimacy, and close family life is not a driving force in choosing homeschooling over public school education (Romanowski, 2001).

Factors That Impact Homeschooling

There is a distinction between home-education and school at home. The difference is that learning does not have to include formal sit down instruction. The learning can take place every minute of every day if that is how parents choose to homeschool. The lessons learned can

continue and do not need to stop at the ring of the bell. For instance, a science lesson on types of trees can continue while driving down the road without stopping at the ring of the bell. It may be informal instruction but it is instruction. An advantage of home schooling versus schooling at home is that it does not matter when or where it takes place. Using a home school format, education can take place every hour of the day.

Several articles indicate homeschooled students score higher or equal to non-homeschooled students on state assessments and college entrance exams. Therefore, knowing the types of motivating styles used by homeschooling parents is important to be able to compare with those of public school teachers.

Information from a study conducted by Cai, Reeves & Robinson included data obtained through surveys from 584 teachers that included 176 home school teachers, 204 public school teachers, and 204 education students enrolled in a university. The study found that being a home school teacher, being male, and in frequent church attendance all individually and uniquely predicted a controlling motivation styles parents use to homeschool (Cai, Reeve, & Robinson, 2002). During this study it was also found that 'culture' plays a role in the motivation for homeschooling their children.

Another area of impact on homeschooled children pertains to medical assessments or lack thereof performed on homeschoolers by pediatricians. Since many preventative medical assessments are performed at schools this study surveys pediatricians to find out if they rely on the schools to conduct the routine assessments. The study was conducted with pediatricians from Maryland and Wisconsin. They were surveyed regarding their opinion of homeschooling, self-assess information regarding anticipatory guidance, and their opinions of successful social development and preventative measures (Klugewicz & Carraccio, 1999).

We know that academic success can also be related to medical issues that can be as simple or difficult as vision issues. Physicals for the purpose of sports eligibility, hearing, immunization, and vision screening are prominent in schools, but not necessarily at home. Pediatricians were surveyed and asked about performing the above types of screenings when treating homeschooled children. The pediatricians reported that they did not typically monitor immunization, or do hearing and vision screening (Klugewicz & Carraccio, 1999).

In addition to the information gathered regarding medical services the study also collected information regarding the attitudes of the pediatricians towards homeschooling. The study found that pediatricians had a negative opinion toward homeschooling and felt that children who were homeschooled were academically disadvantaged. This is the direct opposite of studies conducted by educational professionals (Klugewicz & Carraccio, 1999).

As acknowledged and reported by the pediatricians, the rate of medical preventions for homeschooled children was very low in both states. A low 18% of the pediatricians stated that they actually routinely do vision screening, 83% do not screen for hearing and 71% do not track immunization (Klugewicz & Carraccio, 1999).

Rothermel looked at younger children who are homeschooled. While there is a great deal of information pertaining to the success of secondary education of homeschooled students, there does not seem to be an abundance of information on young children who have not attended public school. This research does concentrate on younger children (Rothermel, 2004). The study was conducted with 35 homeschooled children who were four and five years old. These students were tested using a standardized test called the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools. Just as in the case of older homeschooled students, the four and five year old students scored higher than the public school children the same age (Rothermel, 2004).

Socialization of Homeschooled Students

Although academics in homeschooling are important, other areas of concern affect student achievement. For instance, socialization is a concern. Like many other studies a study conducted by Rothermel (2004), looked at the socialization factor of homeschoolers. Since there are a myriad of methods of homeschooling, the experience is different from student to student. Depending on the child, isolation does not necessarily have to be a negative topic. It is not part of this study, but rather mentioned as an argument against homeschooling.

Two major issues were of significance in the study. First homeschooled students from lower socio-economic groups outperformed the middle class students (Rothermel, 2004) Second was that the first year at school has been described as a predictor of future development and that it has a powerful influence on the children (Rothermel, 2004). This study also included information on ‘socialization’ of homeschoolers. This question seems to surface on a regular basis when talking about homeschooled students. Since homeschoolers are active members of clubs, churches, and other social networks and activities, this is not typically a problem. A study found that homeschooled students were more socially mature than the public schooled students (Chang et al., 2011).

In addition to socialization, Lathem (1998) studied homeschooler’s self-esteem. The Piers-Harris Children’s Self Concept Scale was used. The results were as follows, homeschooled students scored comparable, or higher than those of public school in areas of math, science, verbal skills and are not socially deprived. Although the results of the study are promising, the students surveyed could easily have achieved these same results, or even better than students in the public school setting. Homeschooled students with parents that have time, knowledge and

resources can be just as successful or more successful as those students in public schools (Latham, 1998, p. 85).

Academic Success of Homeschoolers

The decision to home school is correlated to the woman in the household's level of education. In addition, greater heterogeneity of income increased home school enrollment (Houston & Toma, 2003). It is noteworthy to mention that out of ten states, Wisconsin has the second lowest public school enrollment at 84.6% when compared to Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Washington (Houston & Toma, 2003). This means that fewer students are homeschooled in Wisconsin.

Although several studies have been conducted to measure the instructional success within schools, little data exists in measuring the academic level of students with learning disabilities. This exploratory study measured both student and instructor aptitudes in each respective environment (Duvall, Ward, Delquadri, & Greenwood, 1997). The purpose of having both instructor and student subjects was to derive the most accurate data.

The subjects included six elementary and two junior high students. All students were observed in their learning environments for a period of six months on several sessions. Using group comparisons and matched pairs, the data measured time engaged in; 1) behaviors 2) task management 3) academic responding. The research was designed to measure the two groups using Ecobehavioral Assessment Systems Software (EBASS) codes, WJ-R scores, Kaufman Tests of Educational Achievement, and consumer-satisfaction questionnaires. All subjects were from the Kansas City, Kansas area (Duvall et al., 1997).

The percentage of timed responses in homeschooled environments in the areas of writing, silent reading, reading aloud, talk academic, and task management far exceeded those of the

traditional school environment. Furthermore, the academic engagement time (AET) was significantly less in public school compared to the homeschooled environments. In analysis of teacher behavior, instructors in the homeschool setting talked, whether academically or otherwise, considerably more than those in the traditional environment. The student to teacher ratio may have affected these results.

The results are based on a true evaluation of the instructor of the class. Generally, homeschooled students with learning disabilities have an advantage over special education programs in a public setting. The results conclude that those in the homeschooled environment get more direct instruction than those in public schools.

This study contains information on why families home school and takes a look at the strengths and limitations of homeschooling. Homeschooling is obviously a controversial subject. Depending on which side you are on there can certainly be many pros and cons. According to Academic Stats, homeschoolers who were in the last two years of their education scored in the 86th – 92nd percentile statistically (Academic Stats, 2004).

The study found that it is the quality of the education for homeschools which matters. As we see in public education, the effectiveness of the educator is what has the greatest effect on academic achievement. It is reasonable to conclude that an educator who may be regarded as ineffective would produce poor academic results. Contrary to what many believe race, and finances do not factor into the equation regarding the quality of the education (Academic Stats, 2004). According to research it is the educator's ability to meet the needs of all their students through instruction and leadership qualities that have the most impact.

The same study also revealed that the longer students attend public schools the lower their test score were on standardized test. This is the opposite of the homeschooled student. The

older homeschooled students did better on the standardized tests. This did include students being taught by higher educated parents as well and parents who did not receive a postsecondary education (Academic Stats, 2004). One would conclude that although race and money does not play a role it may be suggested that class size and demographics does play a role.

Areas of possible controversy surrounding the study included the numbers of students who tested as well as who tested as well as the demographics as to who was tested. Certain kids, not a random group of students, but those who agreed to participate were used. Since it was not random one could argue that they study would only include those who felt confident in their ability to score high on standardized test. There were other factors brought up in the study including income, students strictly homeschooled for their entire school years, and students who attended public schools but later withdrew and decided to homeschool. These variances raised questions as to the accuracy of the results (Rothermel, 2004, p. 281).

Families choose to homeschool for various reasons. In the Romanowski study the researchers put the parents who homeschool into two categories, ideologues and pedagogues. The people categorized in the ideologues justification for home schooling are due to the lack of faith they have in the public school system, as well as their belief in the family relationship (Romanowski, 2001). These parents also want to have more control over what values are taught to their children. By homeschooling they have the means to accomplish these goals, taught at home the children can be taught Christianity or any other faith.

Pedagogues' reasons for homeschooling are different. Pedagogues people believe that believe that public schools do not do a good job of educating their children therefore they keep them home to educate them at a presumed higher level than what they feel the school is capable.

They view schools as not being able to connect with their child in a way that will best educate their child (Romanowski, 2001).

College for Homeschooled Students

Being successful in college is the general goal for every student, which makes it important for all college bound students to have the skills necessary to enter college. Students journey through three stages of transition as they adjust and become assimilated into college life; separation, transition, and incorporation (Bolle, Wessel & Mulvihill, 2007).

A comparison of students who transitioned from homeschool into college life with students in public schools was conducted. There was not a difference in adjustment issues between the groups. It was important to understanding why parents choose to homeschool was identified as; to give their children a better education, for religious reasons, to avoid a poor school environment, for family reasons, and to instill character/morality (Bolle et al., 2007).

Bolle et al (2007) conducted their comparisons through interviews. The main researcher had been homeschooled herself, giving additional insight into the study. Through personal experience and studying a selected group of six homeschooled students, data was collected revolving around success of the students in college as well as completion of their college degrees.

Part of the study focused on the emotional development spanning into their college years. It also analyzed the impact of home schooling on self-esteem and depression levels in undergraduate college students. The study tested 185 college students over the age of 18 who had been homeschooled for at least some of their primary and secondary education. The homeschooled college students were asked to complete the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D). The test to determine self-esteem

demonstrated no significant differences between students who were homeschooled versus public schooled students. The results of the CES-D demonstrated a greater instance of depression in students who were not home schooled. Considering the outcomes of this study, it can be stated that college students demonstrate no greater lack of self-esteem than do students that have received a traditional education and lower rates of depression, thus disproving the common stereotype that homeschooled children have increased difficulty with social adjustment with a transition to higher education.

Many factors influence each individual. Everyone, whether homeschooled or not, comes from a different background. How individuals adjust may depend on their upbringing, community ties, which type and size of college they attend, and how they adjust to the changes. If colleges recognize there is a transition for every student, they can better serve all first year college students. Another important finding was that, although the numbers were not significant, the college GPA, number of credits earned during the first year of college, and ACT test scores of homeschooled students have been greater than that of traditionally educated students (Bolle et al., 2007).

A study by Cogan (2010) was conducted at a private university. It included 27 students who were homeschooled. These students were compared to their public schooled counterparts. The study looked at first-year GPA, fall-to-fall retention, and four-year graduation rates (Cogan, 2010). Although many students start college, this does not mean they finish and are successful.

Due to changes within education and the growing number of students who are homeschooled, there is more assistance now than there used to be by test providers and colleges for students to be able to process the necessary paperwork to attend college and complete testing. Homeschoolers can take tests at public schools for the purpose of reporting the information to

colleges. This is how it is determined that homeschooled kids typically score higher on these tests when compared to public schooled students (Aasen, 2010). With evidence that homeschooled students score higher on standardized tests, it is interesting to note that students' socioeconomic status is not a factor. This is in direct contrast to students who are in public schools. There are only about 50 percent of the homeschooled student's parents who have attended college. However, approximately 75 percent of homeschooled students attend college. A staggering 50 percent of the public schooled counterparts drop out of school (Chang et al., 2011).

In addition, this study showed that homeschooled college students tested did better academically than public schooled students. Their test scores, namely ACT, GPA and graduation rates were equal or higher than public school students (Cogan, 2010).

Controversy over homeschooling

According to a study by Bohon (2012), there are harsh comments made toward public education by those who homeschool. The study looks deep into the reasons why parents homeschool. It explains that parents are basically fed up with the behavior and morals that kids portray in public schools. It is obvious that they want to keep their kids away from perceived negative outside influences. In addition, parents want to teach them the values they hold (Bohon, 2012).

Merry & Karsten, (2010) takes a look at the three main concerns people have regarding homeschooling in the Netherlands. The concerns are that "homeschooling aggravates social inequality, worsens societal conflict, and works against the best interest of children" (Merry & Karsten, 2010, p. 498). Homeschooling is legal in the Netherlands as it is in all 50 states of the U.S. The Dutch, however, do not see value in homeschooling. Most believe it is not necessary

because of the “extremely diverse school choice system –incorporating a variety of school types” (Merry & Karsten, 2010, p. 499). This could be why there is a very low percentage of students who are homeschooled in the Netherlands compared to the United States. Only 0.01% children were homeschooled in a 2008 in the Netherlands. Since these homeschoolers are not regulated by the government there is not a lot of information in regards to how homeschoolers are being educated.

This study was conducted over a six year period containing qualitative research. The article seeks to explain current and potential regulation on homeschools. The researcher in this study monitored six families over a two year period. He encountered a variety of methods of homeschooling which included some not so good approaches but state that the not so good approaches were not the norm (Kunsman, 2009).

The controversy of homeschooling comes from many angles. The concern for an equal education for everyone is among one of the most argued points. Since there are people who have more money than others, it is considered an unfair advantage for those who do not. This is where the belief has come in for inequality. Although in the United States, many reports clearly state that having wealth or not, the outcomes of success are the same. There is also very little difference in whether or not the parents are highly educated. We don't look at whether or not there is equality. As compared to the Netherlands, our school choice is not as varied in Michigan. Because of the Michigan Merit Curriculum it is difficult to deviate from the required curriculum. This has caused controversy at the technical and vocational level for students. The students have to take so many core classes they do not have room in a 6 period day to take the electives such as welding, drafting, art, and business classes.

Common Myths about Homeschooling

Like many other issues surrounding education there are common myths about homeschooling. The image of homeschooling has evolved over the years into a more positive option for students.. The first myth is the idea of socialization. Those against homeschooling believe that homeschooled students are isolated from society. In a study conducted with public school superintendents, the results were overwhelmingly unfavorable for homeschoolers. Ninety-two percent of superintendents surveyed believed homeschooled children did not get socialization experience. They felt they were sheltered from the real world (Romanowski, 2006).

Acknowledged in the study is evidence that there are students who are socially behind or reserved, however the same is true for some students in public schools. “Homeschool parents are aware of the issue of socialization and are strongly committed to providing positive socialization opportunities for their children” (Romanowski, 2006, p. 126). Romanowski found that homeschooled students are not social introverts.

Another myth in this study is the idea that homeschooling fails to prepare good citizens. This claim is because people think homeschoolers are not aware of the whole political picture and the greater good of society. It is assumed they are sheltered from political information therefor are not prepared as citizens (Romanowski, 2006) There is overwhelming evidence to dispel this claim. The following information was noted in this study: (Romanowski, 2006, p. 126)

1. Seventy-one percent of homeschool graduates participate in an ongoing community service activity, compared to 37 percent of U.S. adults of similar ages.
2. Eighty-eight percent of the homeschool graduates surveyed are members of an organization (such as a community group, church, or professional organization) compared to 50 percent of U.S. adults.

3. Homeschool graduates are more likely to contribute money to a political party and are more likely to work for a political party or cause.
4. Seventy-six percent of homeschool graduates surveyed between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four voted in a national or state election within the last five years, compared to only 29 percent of the relevant U.S. population.
5. Homeschool graduates are more likely to have participated in a protest or boycott, attended a public meeting, wrote, or telephoned a public official or signed a petition more often than the general population.

The lack of citizenship has been proven wrong in this study.

Another myth this study seeks to reveal is that homeschooled students have difficulty entering college. This is not reality. “Every year homeschoolers are admitted to hundreds of colleges and universities in at least five countries” (Romanowski, 2006, p. 127).

Homeschoolers are welcomed and do attend postsecondary schools.

Chapter III: Results and Analysis Relative to the Problem

From Aztec times to now, education has changed tremendously. Education has come full circle from homeschooling being the primary form of education, to public education and few homeschooling, to many parents homeschooling. The first public schools in the United States were established in the 1600's. The oldest public school opened in Boston, Massachusetts to serve orphans who did not have parents to educate them (Aasen, 2010, p. 29).

Because of the transition from homeschooling to public schooling to now include both, homeschooling has become highly respected and a more prominent practice in our society. With the origination of boys being schooled until age 16 to boys and girls being homeschooled primarily by women has changed the course of education (Aasen, 2010, p. 29).

The evidence is clear that homeschooling has academic advantages over the public school system for students. In analyzing the data and reading the results regarding socioeconomic status not being a factor, it should reinforce the belief that every child can learn. Interestingly, research reveals that parent's education had little or nothing to do with the success of the homeschooling. The rate of college attendance for home schooled students far surpasses the rate of public schooled children. There are only about 50 percent of the homeschooled student's parents who have attended college. However, approximately 75 percent of homeschooled students attend college. A staggering 50 percent of the public schooled counterparts dropped out of school (Chang et al., 2011)

What is not as clear is *why*. Why is homeschooling so successful? Studies suggest many factors including the parents being emotionally connected to their children with a good understanding of who they are as individuals and students. Since homeschoolers typically score higher on standardized tests than those who attend public school in recent years more and more

people are talking openly about homeschooled students (Chang et al., 2011; Cogan, 2010; Academic Stats, 2004). The media, colleges, and universities are praising homeschooled students by presenting them with awards for academic success. Such competitions as the national spelling and national geography competitions has recognized bright homeschooled students it has put a feather in the cap of homeschoolers and has helped to debunk the myths surrounding homeschooled students (Romanoswski, 2006).

Socialization

When picturing a homeschooled student one might see a scared un-socialized student sitting in the corner of a room full of public schooled students on the first day of classes at a large university. The truth is, they do not have any further adjustment issues than their counterparts who attended public schools. “Homeschool parents are aware of the issue of socialization and are strongly committed to providing positive socialization opportunities for their children” (Romanoswski, 2006, p. 126). Homeschooling allows for parents and groups of parents to be supportive of each other. Since homeschool parents are aware of the issue of socialization and are strongly committed to providing positive socialization opportunities for their children they ensure their children are involved in social events on a regular basis (Romanoswski, 2006). Since children often give in to peer pressure, parents’ ability to pick the socialization activities can be advantageous. In light of the prominence of bullying, cyber bullying and violence in public schools, homeschooling has become a virtuous alternative for students who are bullied (Davis, 2010).

Taking the Good with the Bad

As with many situations there is always good and bad. Although there is an abundance of supporting evidence of positive outcomes for homeschoolers there can be major drawbacks. Not

all parents who homeschool their children are cut out for the task. In many districts, students bounce back and forth from homeschool to public, from public to homeschool. This is not educationally sound for the children. It makes it difficult for schools to assess where students are at academically. For instance, since Michigan has the Michigan Merit Curriculum, classes are taught at a grade level in a certain order. If the student is not taking the necessary classes according to the school's grade level, placement is difficult.

Non-academic Advantages of Homeschooling

Flexibility of homeschooling is an advantage to homeschooling. Parents do not have to deal with bullying, school calendar issues for vacations, up to the minute academic information, one on one help for their children, lack of religion based education, and negative peer influences. In contrast, children who are connected to a religious organization type homeschool get taught religion, values, and citizenship at home. There is no separation of church and state so parents are free to teach the doctrine intertwined in the way they want to while teaching course such as history or biology.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Recommendations

Some students are pulled from public schools out of parent anger. They sometimes do not have the skills or funding to homeschool their children so the children do not get the education they should. Stronger regulations that would include all 50 states would help to ensure that homeschoolers are getting the education needed to be successful in life. If state required curriculums were followed it would make the transition from homeschooled to public schooling an easier transition. If the Michigan Merit Curriculum was followed at home a student could have a seamless transition.

Areas for Further Research

An area for further researched would be the curriculum taught and the alignment of the states. It is also not clear as to the number of hours students are homeschooled. Should there be regulations on homeschooling? Should parents take competency tests to determine if they are qualified? The specific reasons why homeschooled students are so successful still needs clarification.

Conclusion

Homeschooling can be an effective educational tool for students. It provides parents with time to spend with their children while learning in a way that is conducive to their learning style. If done appropriately, these students can have an even greater advantage over public schooled students. Since test scores tend to be higher for homeschoolers than their public school counterparts, homeschooling is a very effective option for many parents. In addition,

homeschooled students are accepted at a high rate to universities. Their acceptance is based on both their test scores and their college success rate. This gives them great opportunities to be accepted into universities or colleges who at times seek out homeschooled students, because they usually complete their education at high rates. Seventy-five percent of homeschooled students attend college and their success rate is equal or better than their public school counterparts (Aasen, 2010).

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