What Does the Evidence Say? Presenting the Research on Home Education

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Overview of this Presentation

1. Research findings in selected key areas
2. Research designs – what they tell us
3. Criticisms of the research
4. Future research directions

Main Theses

Positive things are associated with home education
Interpretation, criticism, and policy suggestions are worldview-based
1. Research findings in selected key areas
   In many nations around the world, parent-led home-based education is re-emergent
   • Canada
   • England
   • Australia
   • New Zealand
   • Ireland
   • Japan
   • Germany
   • Czech Republic
   • Hungary
   • Lithuania
   • Poland
   • South Korea
   • Scotland
   • Mexico
   • Russia
   • United States
   • Wales
   • Et cetera

Czech
Are We Talking About Just a Few Underground, Fringe, Peculiar, Families?
FIGURE 1.
GROWTH OF HOMESCHOOLING IN THE UNITED STATES

Who Home Educates?
(basic descriptives)

... And who does not?
"No, I’m not in favor of home schooling."
Who Home Educates?

- Basic demographics
- Wide variety
- Variety rapidly increasing
  - Demographically
  - Special needs
  - TAG
  - Minorities
Why Do They Home Educate?

- Academics
  - To transmit a particular worldview . . .
- Alternative pedagogies, customization
- Close family ties
- Reasoned, guided social interaction

Safety
And Reasons Often Change Over Time
Does home education work? Define your terms. Student is/is is becoming . . .

- Literate, well-read, values and enjoys reading
- Able to use math for basic commerce and economics
- Clearly expressing self via written word
- Professor of educational freedom
- Engaged civil citizen
- Living coherently with freely-chosen weltanschauung
- Free (of coercion)
Consider Academic Achievement

- One widely accepted measure of success (or failure)
- Can untrained, non-state-certificated parents successfully teach their own children?
• Dozens of studies on academic achievement
• Results are very consistent
• State-school average is the 50th percentile
• Most of the above are studies by researchers
• Note also, state-collected data where testing of home-educated students was required, percentiles; for example:
  – Arkansas, 1997, grades 5, 7, and 10, basic battery, 59th, 61st, and 60th
  – Oregon, 1998, all grade levels, about 75th
  – Tennessee, all grade levels, 73rd
  – Washington, 1998, all grade levels, 58th
Summary of Academic Achievement

• Public (State) school national average on achievement tests is the 50th percentile
• Home educated score, on average, at the 65th to 80th percentile
Yes, But What About Certain Important Factors?

- Family income
- Minority status
- Amount of money spent on education
- State regulation, degree of
- Formal teacher training of parents
FIGURE 10.
FAMILY INCOME AND ACHIEVEMENT
BASIC BATTERY TEST SCORE, GRADES K-12

No Impact on homeschool achievement.

Family Income Level

National Percentile Rank Average

$14,999 or less: 87
$15,000-$24,999: 83
$25,000-$34,999: 82
$35,000-$49,999: 83
$50,000-$74,999: 87
$75,000-$99,999: 85
$100,000 or more: 92

Note: The current U.S. state-school per-student cost is about $11,000 per year plus capital expenditures plus research and development.
FIGURE 7.
TEACHER CERTIFICATION NEEDED?

FIGURE 8a. 
GOVERNMENT (STATE) REGULATION AND HOMESCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

LOW REGULATION: 
No state requirement for parents to initiate any contact with the state.

MEDIUM REGULATION: 
State requires parents to send notification, test scores, and/or professional evaluation of student progress.

HIGH REGULATION: 
State requires parents to send notification or achievement test scores and/or professional evaluation, plus other requirements (e.g., curriculum approval by state, teacher qualifications of parents, or home).

STATE REGULATION: 
No Impact on homeschool achievement.

Percentile Rank, Homeschool, Basic Battery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>86</th>
<th>85</th>
<th>86</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Regulation</td>
<td>Medium Regulation</td>
<td>High Regulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amount of State Regulation


FIGURE 8b. 
BREAKDOWN OF STATES BY REGULATORY POLICY

LOW REGULATION
MEDIUM REGULATION
HIGH REGULATION

If they are doing well, why?
Ask researchers and classroom teachers.
Okay, But
What About “Socialization”? 

*Christianity Today* magazine had the answer 23 years ago . . .
“It’s the year 2009, and Billy Harris is attending his 20-year home-school reunion.”
How Does a Homeschooling Parent Feel and Think When Someone Asks Him or Her, What About “Socialization”?

“As sociologist David Reisman once observed, words are not merely transitory objects, ‘they change us, they socialize or unsocialize us.’”

One Must Define “Socialization”
Research, Several Studies

- Self-concept, self-esteem
- Family cohesion
- Actual observed behaviors with other children
- Activities with others and outside the home
- In activities that predict leadership in adulthood
FIGURE 13.
HOMESCHOOLERS’ ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent of Students Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Scouts</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Ballet/Dance Classes</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4H</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Work</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Clubs</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes Outside Home</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Classes</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Sports</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday School</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play with People Outside the Family</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in Two or More Activities</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Are They Succeeding (or Not) in Adulthood?

- Academically, university
- Other
  . . . continue . . .
### SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) 2000 results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Type</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-religious independent</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>1114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home educated</strong></td>
<td>568</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious independent</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>1071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic independent</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>1044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public school</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACT results showed that home-educated students scored higher than the national average for four years in a row (on the scale of 1 to 36) (year 2000; then data no longer made available circa 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Score</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home educated</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private school</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-run school</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance at University

• Galloway and Sutton (1995) – aptitude for and achievement in college English; no significant difference
• Oliveira, Watson, and Sutton (1994) – critical thinking skills, no significant difference
• Ray (2004) – matriculating at college or university at little higher rate than average and finishing college a little faster; some evidence
• Cogan (2010) – college GPAs and graduation rates
“Real World” other than university . . .

- Montgomery (1989) – predictors of leadership
- Galloway and Sutton (1997) – positions of leadership in college, as much or more
- Smith and Sikkink (1999) – civic involvement of families, parents
- Knowles and Muchmore (1995) – “... they were employed in a variety of professions and occupations, with many concentrated in occupations that allowed for independence, flexibility, and creativity." (p. 52)
- Ray (2004) – *Home Educated and Now Adults*; about 7,000; about 5,300 homeschooled 7 or more years
  . . . continue . . .
FIGURE 14.
CIVIC INVOLVEMENT OF ADULTS WHO WERE HOME EDUCATED

Note: The two items represented in the figure are (a) Wrote/telephoned editor/public official or signed a petition, and (b) Voted in national/state election in the U.S. in past 5 years. For more detail, see the source of the statistics – Ray, Brian D. (2004). *Home educated and now adults: Their community and civic involvement, views about homeschooling, and other traits*. Salem, OR: National Home Education Research Institute, www.nheri.org.
FIGURE 15.
COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITY OF ADULTS WHO WERE HOME EDUCATED

Note: The two items represented in the figure are (a) Do you participate in any ongoing community service activity, for example, coaching a sports team, volunteering at school, or working with a church or neighborhood association?, and (b) Are you a member of any organization, like a community group, church or synagogue, union, homeschool group, or professional organization? For more detail, see the source of the statistics – Ray, Brian D. (2004). Home educated and now adults: Their community and civic involvement, views about homeschooling, and other traits. Salem, OR: National Home Education Research Institute, www.nheri.org.
Summary of Research

- Academic achievement
- Social, emotional, and psychological development
- Into adulthood
Reminder: Overview of this Presentation

1. Research findings in selected key areas
2. Research designs – what they tell us
3. Criticisms of the research
4. Future research directions

Main Theses

Positive things are associated with home education
Interpretation, criticism, and policy suggestions are worldview-based
2. Research designs – what they tell us
(Nature and Limitations of the Research)

• Cross-sectional and descriptive; not experimental
• Much descriptive statistics, simple tests of contrast, and some multivariate analyses
• Challenging to be assured of representative samples
• Studies provide correlations and associations; do not build a strong case for causation
• Some have been simply collections of data (e.g., some state agencies)
• A few have been more causal-comparative (e.g., Cogan, 2010; Martin-Chang, Gould, & Meuse, 2011; Drenovský & Cohen, 2012)
• A consistent theme (positive findings) has emerged
  
  
  . . . But is this picture too positive?!
WHAT MORE EVIDENCE DO WE NEED? HOMESCHOOLERS ARE HIDING SOMETHING!
3. Criticisms of the Research

• Cross-sectional, descriptive, and correlational – yes; this is common in social sciences

• Volunteer or convenience samples – yes, to a degree; but not only (e.g., in Ray 2010; state-provided data)

• Does not tell us anything – this is patently false; 30 years of research tell us much (e.g., much positive associated; essentially nothing negative; everyday parents and children doing very well)
4. Future Research Directions

• More causal-comparative designs
• Evaluate objectives of home educators (and do not let institutional schooling drive research)
• Effects of home education on children and them into adulthood, and on home-educating parents
• Encourage research by scholars with worldviews that are friendly toward parental rights and freedom in education (e.g., classical liberalism, Christianity)
Reminder: Overview of this Presentation

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2. Research designs – what they tell us

3. Criticisms of the research
   - Positive things are associated with home education
   - Interpretation, criticism, and policy suggestions are worldview-based

4. Future research directions

Main Theses
Second Main Thesis, Last Point: Interpretation and criticism of research, and policy suggestions are worldview-based

- All forms of education are the teaching, training, and indoctrination of children
- All researchers are influenced in what they study and how they interpret and present findings by their own worldview (e.g., statist, neo-Marxist, GLBTQ-ist, feminist, metaphysical naturalist, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, New Age, classical liberal)
- “Non-partisan” or “objective” is a euphemism for different from the “Other” (i.e., you)
- Many of the scholars who criticize research on homeschooling say or imply that the choice to home educate is okay, but they inexorably move to the position that the State must control it (more)
- If more methodologically tight research found the home educated to do as well (no better, no worse) as state-taught students, without spending the citizens’ tax dollars on them, would professors of education, advocates of State education, and critics of current research promote home-based education? Why not?
Sign Up Free with NHERI on sheet of paper and we will give you:

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• An e-file of full-color booklet, *Home Education Reason And Research: Common Questions and Research-Based Answers about Homeschooling*
The End