Home Schooling; A view of future education?
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INTRODUCTION
Home schooling has a longer tradition than compulsory school education. Education in the family or home began as the each parent saw the need to pass onto each succeeding generation the accumulation of knowledge and skills and routines of the previous generation. School education as we know it today began as a response to the needs of industrialisation. In England school education was to educate the population who were too poor to be educated privately in a manner approaching that of the wealthier classes. In USA compulsory school education was to ensure that all were able to read the Bible and not be deceived by the wicked. Home schooling today is described by Mayberry and her colleagues as "woven into the very fabric of family life. For home school parents, playing a primary role in their children's education is fundamental to their sense of what it means to be a parent." Mayberry et al. 1995, p2.

A DEFINITION OF HOME SCHOOLING
Coming to a study of home schooling as an academic specialising in educational psychology and the parent of a child going to school I looked at home schooling from both these points of view asking how is home schooling different to other forms of education and is it worthwhile for the people involved, namely the parents and the children. I found that home schooling is sometimes seen as distance education. Reference to home schooling in Australia often includes the many children in Queensland and Western Australia who are involved in distance education because they live in isolated, inaccessible locations. Home schooling is sometimes seen as that which happens before the child enters formal preschool or primary education. Many research discuss the importance of home education and the influence of home education instead of pre school education for the poor who cannot afford it. In New South Wales, there is very little free education before the age of 5 years of age when children can legally be enrolled in a state or public school. Home schooling is not just restricted to this period. Nor is it homework or private instruction in addition to traditional education in the school setting. Home schooling or home based education or education
otherwise than in school is education where the child is instructed, facilitated or co-learns mainly in the home environment following a curriculum devised or authorised mainly by his or her parents. Home schooling is not to be confused with distance education or private education in the home where the student follows the same curriculum as other children in his or her educational age group or state while isolated from his or her peers by distance or illness or disability. Whether or not home schooling should include tutoring by a non-family member employed by the family in the home is also an issue. The more inclusive term home based education includes all these situations.

COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE HOME SCHOOLING
Australia, Britain, United States, Canada, Netherlands and Japan are countries which are recorded as having some home schooling parents in the strict definition of the term, as well as within the more inclusive term. Other countries may have home schooling, too but one author (Meighan, 1989) suggest because countries such as Sweden have such good home-school relationships, the idea of teaching your own has not gained favour.

All states of Australia have home schooling or home based education as a provision of their educational systems, which are controlled legally under various state acts. In NSW the Education Reform Act 1990 provides for registration of children for home schooling (Division, 6, clause 70-74). [Overhead of clauses

LEGAL STATUS HOME SCHOOLING
The above countries have now legislated for home based alternatives to school education. (Overhead--Here is an outline of the States of the USA). The registration is more or less flexible in some states all the parents have to do is notify the educational authorities of their intention to home educate their child that is the end of the matter. In NSW one has to request registration and registration may be refused. [ overhead points 1-8] There is the right to appeal the failure to be registered and registration may be for a little as one term or as long as 2 years. There are a number of registered person who authorise home schooling under the NSW Board of Studies. The registration is mostly in terms of being able to show that a satisfactory learning environment, an appropriate school curriculum and resources will be provided for the child as set out under the curriculum for either primary or secondary level depending on the age and ability of the child. It is also important that the parent will be
the main instructor of the child and this is different from distance education which is conducted by another section of the Department of education. In the USA some states legislate that the home schooled child must show at the end of each year that s/he has made satisfactory progress. Some states allow children other than the children of the family be taught in the home so long as they are registered. Some states allow children to participate in extra curricular activities of the public school system, some require the parents to be qualified or demonstrate competency as teachers, some states require that the children take standard achievement tests and perform adequately, some states allow children to attend the school for some part of the week, or for some particular classes, notify the school principal, the local authority or the state authority of intention to teach, most require that adequate records be kept.

In Britain the law requires compulsory education not compulsory school attendance. In 1996, 1944, and 1993 education acts have been passed. The 1996 is a 600 statute act Section 7 "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him(sic) to receive efficient full time education suitable-(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." (Education Otherwise, 1996, p1.) The notification of this is to the school principal, who then informs the LEA who then is responsible for ensuring that the child is being educated.

In South Africa it is recorded that the new government will not recognise home schooling (National Center for Home Education, 1996). p1. In the USA, however, most of the legal problems seem to be with misunderstanding or contravention of the home schooling law, which as seen here varies from state to state. Some have seen legislatures as being quite well disposed toward creating home schooling and accepting this procedure as a right, whereas the law courts have quibbled at the interpretations and literally having to fulfill to the letter quite serious legal obligations. For example parents in Tennessee were home schooling their child beyond the 8th grade and the court upheld that the regulations were reasonable. Parents in Michigan were fined $50 each for educating their children when they did not have teaching certificates. The court denied the parents' claims that only parents have the right to direct the religious education of their children. The parent certificate regulation was found
to be reasonable.

RESEARCH INTO HOME SCHOOLING
The research into the viability of alternatives for school education is discussed here. The majority of the research into homeschooling has occurred within the USA or Britain. The variables mainly investigated are:

REASONS FOR HOMESCHOOLING

1. Religious reasons (Riemer, 1994), these were people with often devout or fundamental Christian attitudes such as the Amish people. In the USA the push to educate all seems to have historically arisen within their religious beliefs and the requirement that all should be able to read the Bible not just the priests or others.

2. Lack of dissatisfaction with school teaching methods (Holt, 1978, 81) the religious persons have formed an alliance with the deschooling or the alternative schooling or alternative social movement. Many persons within these groups were dissatisfied with school and the teaching there as well as the hidden curriculum of the traditional school and did not wish to establish alternative schools so kept their children at home to be properly instructed or given appropriate values there. The Christians and some Muslims and Jewish person feel their values can be better taught in the home environment. The followers of Holt and Illich feel that their children can be better taught or instructed at home.

3. Fear of the safety of child within the public school (inner city) environment. More recently with the growth of violence in inner city areas of places like Los Angles parents have found that the public schools cannot guarantee the safety of their child and therefore home is a safer environment in which to educate the child.

4. Economic reasons. The parents who home school often have no quarrel with private schools they just cannot afford them or their is not affordable religious school close by and they do not want to pay for boarding and tuition.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HOME SCHOoled CHILDREN IN COMPARISON TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

Many opponents of home schooling feel that the insularity of the home could not provide adequate academic instruction for children. Recent research in this area
indicates the children who are home taught do better academically than children in conventional schools particularly public or state schools. Certain individual children obtain placements in tertiary institutions and some in prestigious institutions such as Harvard. [overhead academic results]

SOCIALISATION OF HOME SCHOOL CHILDREN

Cutting the child off from his or her age peers and the social opportunities of school is another worry of the opponents of home schooling. Contrary to expectations children who are home schooled often have greater social opportunities outside home and school. They are often active church goers and attend many of the social functions attached to their church as well as informal friendship group networks. They often belong to social clubs associated with sport or cultural activities. More so than the conventionally educated child (Ray & Wartes, 1991). Studies of their behaviour in interaction with other children, have shown on the whole there is not a lot of difficulties in communication and interaction with other children.

SELF-CONCEPT OR SELF-ESTEEM OF HOME SCHOOL CHILDREN

When investigated the self-esteem or self-concept of the home school child seems better than the conventionally educated child, particularly public school children. (Ray & Wartes, 1991).

ACADEMIC OUTCOME

This all seems very favourable, but what happens when the children pass beyond the legal school age? Do they go into higher education? Britain and the USA have many distance colleges and university courses for which these students are eligible to enrol, and in the USA some Colleges are now providing scholarships and other inducements for home schooled students to attend their Colleges. They are valued as motivated and independent learners.

EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER EDUCATION

In the Britain some studies (Webb, 1989, 1990, 1990) of employment has shown that these children are able to gain employment and since the changes to home as a works station not just cottage industry for handicrafts etc. The person is home schooled can be readily employed in the home. Many fit in with the alternative life style of their parents and
run businesses from home. Recently in Britain some large corporations have now found that it is possible, and economically viable to maintain office employees and other company employees in their own home with the new technologies which enable them to be linked to the managerial/directorial staff.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND HOMESCHOOLING IN THE FUTURE

The new technologies have changed not only the nature of school education but education in general. The idea that information can be supplied to all quickly and effectively and in a form that all people can understand and act upon. That large memories and calculation are not necessary for the individual to achieve. Academic skills of the old order can be taught more effectively via the new technology and in the home environment at a lower cost than in large school environments.

A VIEW OF FUTURE EDUCATION?

Governments are being pressured to provide education opportunities for all groups particularly the disadvantaged such as homeless youth and minority cultural groups. Home schooling is obviously an economical way educating our children provides a chance for all children from birth to learn those academic aspects of education with minimal cost so it seems likely that educational authorities will be pressured to provide this for all persons particularly those families with children from birth onwards. At present a recent discussion of education in Australia costed the state involvement at $4,000 per child per year for children at state schools only $900 per child for children at private schools. No information on the cost to the state of education for the home schooled child, but the cost would be much less. Of course those parents who opt for alternatives will be allowed to do so, but most parents will choose that which seems to provide the most avenues for learning. For example with children with special needs, one would consider that the child will be able to demonstrate adequate learning without drugs or other intervention, would be better served. The child who currently is unmotivated to learn in the school environment, and the child who is terrified (school phobia) of school, could also be better served, Knox (1989). The child who is a behavioural problem in school and prevents others from learning in a safe environment may be better off at home.
PROBLEMS WITH HOME SCHOOLING

The major problem is providing a supervisor of this form of education. Now the provision of teaching has been a professional one. Any suggestion that the parent who is not a professional can provide education for a complex western society is greeted with dismay. The downgrading of the teaching role into childminding is another serious criticism of home-based education. The forcing of women back into the home environment when they have been recently liberated from the home work environment is one that some people, particularly feminists, would find unacceptable. But the provision of help to the parents of professionals and the training of parents in the home environment is an alternative. The emphasis of the education in the learning of children not just conventional school procedure and the provision of schools for socialisation of a different kind such as debating, oral communication, drama and dance or sport will liberate teachers from the drudgery of being involved with children who do not want to learn dreary academic material while seated. The teachers will also be more concerned with other aspects of the child, the spiritual and personality formation, the actual daily health of the child in all its aspects. From birth through to adult hood and the idea that learning and changes are life long. That the concept that all education can be provided in the school institution for younger years of growth and retained for life, to provide socialisation, physical wellbeing and continued employment of all persons, will no longer be the basis for compulsory education. Home-based education in all its varieties is what may occur in the twenty-first century.

REFERENCES


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