

# BILINGUAL HOMESCHOOLING: LEAVING ACADEMIC LANGUAGES AT SCHOOL

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# WHAT IS HOMESCHOOLING (HOME EDUCATION)?

- Education of children outside the institution of school
- Reasons for homeschooling have traditionally included philosophical, religious and specific needs, but increasingly families are choosing homeschooling for
  - Educational and linguistic continuity
  - Closer family relationships
  - Deeper intellectual engagement
  - Opportunity for extensive or prolonged travel, experiencing diverse places
- Who homeschools “bilingually”?
  - Language maintenance contexts
  - Heritage or minority language contexts
  - Bilingual families



# BENEFITS OF HOMESCHOOLING

- Families report more family and community activities, and engagement in civic affairs. Children are able to interact extensively, and form deep friendships, with people of all ages (Ray, 2004).
- Homeschoolers perform as well in higher education as traditionally schooled students (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004) and are encouraged to develop serious expertise at a younger age.
- Ethnic and gender-based academic achievement gaps appear to be non-existent in the homeschooled population (Rudner, 1999).



# BILINGUALISM IN HOMESCHOOLING

- Language policy in homeschooling is (an extension of) family language policy
- Support of family bilingualism
- Maintenance of the family (minority) language
- Opportunities for participation in institutional educational environments (i.e. Saturday schools) (Chinen & Tucker, 2003)
- Multilingual Living <http://www.multilingualliving.com/>
- But who?



# FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY SPECTRUM

- On one end of the spectrum: Homeschooling parents who value 'language purity,' and believe in, and insist on, the separation of languages.
- On the other end of the spectrum: Homeschooling parents who value codeswitching, and model and encourage the free, unrestricted alternation of languages, translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014).



# SCHOOLING AT HOME VS UNSCHOOLING

- Schooling at home
  - Structured similarly to school, with separation of *subjects*
  - Instruction proceeds similarly to school, sometimes with an equally narrow, standardized curriculum
  - Generally teacher (parent) directed, curriculum-centered
- Unschooling
  - Parents support pursuit of children's interests.
  - Learning proceeds according to the developing interest of the child
  - Child-centered, as children are *trusted* to know how and what to learn and to choose their own challenges
- In practice, this represents a spectrum.

## UNSCHOOLING

- Literacy and numeracy development may occur early (age 3) or late (age 13),
  - language development and academic learning continue to occur through extensive interaction with expert peers and adults, since unschoolers seek out expertise and focused experiences (including classes) at an early age.
  - Typically, “late” readers learn to read “overnight;” when they do begin reading, they suddenly can read textbooks, screenplays and novels, so they do not need ‘beginner’ level materials.
- Pursuit of “subject interests” and project-based learning
  - Early development of expertise
  - Typically employ an integrated approach to learning a variety of content. An unschooler who is interested in architecture, for example, is not concerned with separating math from art from science, but works on them all together in creating architectural drawings.



# WHAT ABOUT ACADEMIC LANGUAGE?

- Academic language can be thought of as just a register specific to the institutionalized context of school (c. f. MacSwan & Rolstad, 2003; Schleppegrell, 2004; Cazden, 2001)
- Homeschoolers may have greater opportunities than schooled children to develop authentic “academic” language
  - School-at-home homeschoolers through formal instruction
  - Unschoolers through coursework or through deep, personal engagement in the subjects they pursue.
- Register development proceeds as children are immersed in their interests, i.e. they become members of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), especially on line





# WHAT ABOUT BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT?

- Register development in more than one language, or in the home language
  - Cases where there is limited bilingual education option in the home language
  - Cases where the language being learned is not supported by the local education system
  - Cases where the family is transient and wishes to maintain linguistic and educational continuity
- Learning resources are available in more than one language
- Natural, bilingual process, not artificially restricted by educational language policy



## SUMMARY

- Register development is not dependent on school.
- Bilingual development is becoming more widely recognized as a benefit of homeschooling and unschooling.
- Family language policy may succeed in supporting bilingualism where state language policies have failed.
- Evidence suggests that homeschooled children may succeed in maintaining a minority language and developing high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy while learning to participate as valued and effective members of an educated citizenry.

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# SCHOOLING

Two of the most important lessons children learn at school are that they should not rely on each other and that they cannot rely on themselves. School teaches children that the knowledge they need is in their books and, occasionally, in the adults who teach them; that children themselves are helpless to know what they should learn or how to go about learning it, and that helping their friends is cheating.



## MORE SCHOOLING

Further, school teaches children that knowledge is available only through a specialized language, and that this specialized language and the knowledge it reveals cannot be acquired unless and until children learn to read. Because nothing can be gained at school without reading, the early grades are primarily concerned with reading instruction, and since not all children learn to read in the early grades, reading instruction is being pushed down into preschool and even into infancy.



# WHERE/HOW DO WE LEARN OUR L1(S)?

- At home, naturally, with innate mechanisms and social interaction.
- School claims credit for developing and elaborating child language abilities, and for cognitive development, but what is the evidence?
- Linguistic theory does not support school's claim of the existence of 'academic language.' There are many specialized language varieties and ways to use language; school has no special claim on language development.



# THE COMPULSORY NATURE OF SCHOOL

- Adults who choose to learn a second language may take classes and/or go abroad; they have the choice of whether to learn at all.
- Children in school have no choice at all. School is compulsory, and children's proclivities and comfort are not usually taken into account in school.



# Focus on Educational Linguistics

## Critique of language minority education

### How schools talk about children

-Children don't want to learn (anything), so must be forced to learn

-English learners don't want to learn (English), so must be forced to learn - IN ENGLISH

-ELLs and dialect speakers should be punished for speaking languages other than standard English

### How schools talk about parents

-Parents are the child's first teachers

-Low SES parents are poor first teachers

-“parent involvement” to get parents on board as agents of the school





# CRITIQUES OF SCHOOL MATH

- What do you remember of the math you learned through 12<sup>th</sup> grade?
- Paul Lockhart: “If I had to design a mechanism for the express purpose of *destroying a child’s natural* curiosity and love of pattern-making, I couldn’t possibly do as good a job as is currently being done - I simply wouldn’t have the imagination to come up with the kind of senseless, soul-crushing ideas that constitute contemporary mathematics education.”



# CRITIQUES OF SCHOOL LITERACY

- School forces literacy on children who may not be developmentally ready for literacy; these children become convinced that they are academically disadvantaged. A child who cannot yet read IS academically disadvantaged, but only because school makes her so.
- Children who are unschooled in our literate society ALL learn to read. Some learn as early as 3 or 4 years old, some as late as 12, and in one case, at 15. One day the child cannot read, and the next day, she is reading novels.



# UNSCHOOLING=TRUST CHILDREN

- “All I am saying ... can be summed up in two words: Trust Children. Nothing could be more simple, or more difficult. Difficult because to trust children we must first learn to trust ourselves, and most of us were taught as children that we could not be trusted.” ~ John Holt



# UNSCHOOLERS COMPLAINTS

- School demands too much from families
- School hampers learning
- School hinders child development
- School destroys family life and life skills
- School wastes children's time
- School prevents socialization
- Compulsory schooling is unnecessary; skip straight to college



# SCHOOL DEMANDS TOO MUCH FROM FAMILIES

- School insists that families act as school agents, enforcing homework policies and punishments
- School requires that out of school be used for school-related purposes, not for family time
- School teaches children that they are incapable of learning on their own.
- School teaches children to have contempt for those younger than themselves and to fear and envy those older and/or more highly evaluated than themselves; this affects siblings.



# SCHOOL HAMPERS LEARNING

- Teaching a child to read robs her of the experience of teaching herself to read, and robs her of the knowledge that she is capable of teaching herself to read and to learn many other things. It forces children to be intellectually dependent on teachers and school.



# SCHOOL HINDERS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Children in school are not allowed to work or play with each other except briefly and/or in structured ways.
- Children are not allowed to interact with children older or younger than themselves, except in structured activities.
- Children in school are prevented from exploring their own interests, are told instead that their interests are either unimportant or untimely.



# SCHOOL DESTROYS FAMILY LIFE AND LIFE SKILLS

- Siblings are not allowed or encouraged to interact at school.
- All adults become suspect because of children's experiences under constant adult surveillance and interference. Parents soon come to be viewed with as much suspicion as teachers.
- Children at school are prevented from interacting with other children or adults in natural ways that would lead to mentoring and life skill development.





## SCHOOL WASTES CHILDREN'S TIME

- Ask any child, “Where would you like to be right now?” “School” is the least likely response. One reason is that children have interests and projects that school prevents them from engaging in, for long periods of time.
- School’s agenda rarely coincides with a child’s agenda. Children, like all humans, are learning animals and have their own learning agendas.

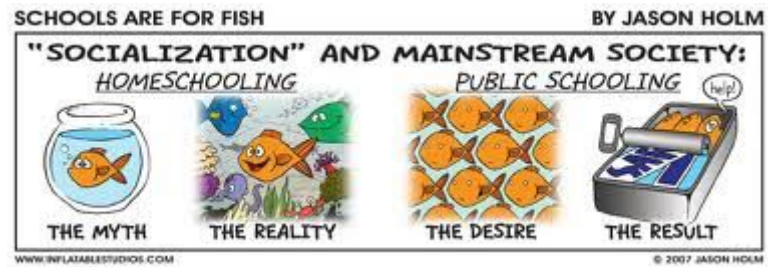


# SCHOOL PREVENTS SOCIALIZATION

- School prevents children from talking. Children and parents often express the belief that school is a place to make friends, but children are told, “You’re not here to socialize.”
- Socialization in school is partly viewed as ‘learning to get along with other children’ and partly as ‘coming to understand and comply with societal rules,’ but children are rarely given opportunities to develop relationships with same-age friends and NEVER given opportunities to relate to adults or older children.



# MYTH AND REALITY



## SCHOOLING IS NOT EDUCATING

- I never let my schooling interfere with my education. –Mark Twain
- Education is what is left after you forget everything you learned at school. -Einstein
- 'You don't learn something until you see a need to know it. –Piaget
- The parade of data presented by compulsory schooling will be useless to adults who will have jobs in occupations that don't even exist today. What will be useful is creativity; schooling kills creativity.



## THE CONCEPTUAL AGE

- The Industrial Age centered on machinery, standardization, conformity.
- The Information Age centered on data, data processing, data management.
- We're now in the Conceptual Age, where data is accessible (does not need to be memorized) and conceptual understanding is key.
- Schools are still teaching for the Industrial Age, and at best, pushing into the early Information Age. Curricula are hopelessly outmoded.



# FREEDOM-BASED EDUCATION

- Education in the Conceptual Age requires creativity, innovation, collaboration, mutual respect.
- Children who are trusted and allowed to learn in their own time, in their own ways, in social organizations of their own choosing achieve the sort of conceptual understanding that is needed.
- Growing and learning in freedom should be the right of every child who is expected to participate in a free, democratic society.



# UNSCHOOLING AS HOMESCHOOLING

- Unschooling vs. Homeschooling
- Not “doing school at home”
- No curriculum
- No standards, no standardization
- No testing or grading
- No age grouping
- Unschooling, not unparenting
- Strong parent involvement



# UNSCHOOLING DEFINITION

- Facilitating children's exploration of any or all of the things and ideas they wonder about, without making decisions for them about what they should do or why they should do it, nor about how, for how long, where, when or with whom they should go about satisfying their curiosity.





# LEADERS IN THE UNSCHOOLING MOVEMENT

- A.S. Neill
- John Holt
- Ivan Illich
- John Taylor Gatto
- Grace Llewellyn
- Sandra Dodd
- Dayna Martin



# JOHN HOLT

## HOW CHILDREN FAIL, 1964

### AND LATER

- “Children do not need to be made to learn about the world, or shown how to do it. They want to learn, and they know how.”
- School destroys intelligence and love of learning; teaches passivity, “right answers.”
- “It's not that I feel that school is a good idea gone wrong, but a wrong idea from the word go. It's a nutty notion that we can have a place where nothing but learning happens, cut off from the rest of life.”



# IVAN ILLICH

- Deschooling Society, 1970
- Renegade priest, against modernization of 3<sup>rd</sup> world, embraced subsistence farming.
- Opposed to institutionalization in daily life.
- Credentialing shifts focus from **being** competent to **appearing** competent.
- “Technology is available to develop either independence and **learning** or bureaucracy and **teaching**” p. 77



## ILlich's VISION

A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known. [Has this vision been realized?]



# JOHN TAYLOR GATTO

- NY State and City Teacher of the Year
- *Dumbing Us Down*
- Do we really need school? I don't mean education, just forced schooling: six classes a day, five days a week, nine months a year, for twelve years. Is this deadly routine really necessary? And if so, for what?



# GATTO'S PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF SCHOOL

- ❑ The first lesson I teach is confusion.
- ❑ The second lesson I teach is class position.
- ❑ The third lesson I teach is indifference.
- ❑ The fourth lesson I teach is emotional dependency.
- ❑ The fifth lesson I teach is intellectual dependency.
- ❑ The sixth lesson I teach is provisional self-esteem.
- ❑ The seventh lesson I teach is that you can't hide.



# GRACE LLEWELLYN

- Teacher who quit and wrote *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, - speaks directly to teens, not adults.
- School removes children from the world, groups them by same age and same “ability”, and runs them through discrete, decontextualized, meaningless lessons that are abstract and intellectualized.
- Children learn by living in the world, associating with all ages and types of people of varying interests and abilities, and using their minds, souls and bodies.
- Children can choose to enter into apprenticeships (as apprentices and as experts) as a way of learning skills and exploring their



# FHC SHEET

## (FREQUENTLY HEARD COMMENTS)

- That's fine for you, you're a teacher.
- I don't know enough math to teach my kids.
- My kids would just sit around watching TV.
- "Those" parents would raise their kids wrong.
- I want my kids to go to college.
- Poor/minority/ELL kids would not be able to get ahead if they're not in school.
- Kids need to be exposed to diversity.
- Kids need to be bullied; they learn to get along.

