A Descriptive Study:

An Analysis of Perspectives in a Unique Homeschooling Program for Gifted and Talented

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Introduction

This paper addresses the historical beginnings and trends currently rising with homeschooling and gifted and talented students and the impact of the combined said groups.

Homeschooling

Homeschooling has existed for countless years, but only in the last few decades has it gradually been regaining popularity. Prior to the building of schools, learning in the home was the only form of education. (In a lit review, you need evidence to support statements like this. Please add a reference. I think many scholars would argue that children were raised in tribes and other forms of groups in recorded history.) Homeschooling around the world declined as private institutions and schools began to increase, but recently private schools have had more enthusiasm than resources and families are once again turning to homeschooling as the answer (Gaither, 2008). Each family has their own rationale for homeschooling; whether it is the closing of a school, anti-evolutionary beliefs, religion, sex education, finances, individual views and morals, politics, or some other rationalization or motivation. My rational for homeschooling is XXX and that rational is the one being researched for this study.

(be really careful not to lead the reader to believe that you hold a biased view and thus will not conduct valid research) there are arguments for and against whether homeschooling is beneficial for students. The next descriptions are questions and opinions that are published about concerns about home schooling. One of the questions often pondered by the general public pertains to the socialization of the students with peers their own age. Then you provide references, data etc about this issue. Please create a separate section for solutions and again
provide references. Your advocacy for a practice needs to develop from YOUR study, not from your current thinking and your personal thoughts and preferences.

The topic of socialization has been addressed by homeschoolers through sports teams, play dates, park visits, consortiums and many other social gatherings. Academic collaboration is another topic questioned as a worrisome issue, as concerns have been raised about whether students who are being homeschooled get enough academic collaboration with others their age. This issue has been addressed with the use of technology, as homeschooled students can easily collaborate with peers through community online clusters. Often homeschooled students participate in a wider collaboration with online clusters than they would in a classroom or traditional school setting (Eckstein, 2009). Online clusters include, but are not limited to: wikis, social bookmarking, aggregators, podcasts, collaborative documents, and blogs. Technology allows homeschooled students to learn and share with their peers, mentors, and teachers from around the world who have similar and different interests and abilities. Are these the only questions about homeschooling that are found in the literature?

Gifted and Talented

There are many levels of students within one class in a traditional school, unless the class happens to be a homogenously grouped class according to student achievement or intelligence. These classes will usually have a bell curve of students with mostly average
students and a few above and few below average. There seems to be a belief in education that educators should focus on the students who perform below average and not on the students who perform above average, because above average students are thought to have it easy and always be able to cope with school in a comfortable manner, but this is far from the truth. Again, find the references for statements like this. Also, if you wish to raise this issue then you also need to talk about tracking (grouping by perceived ability) and the research findings that support and refute the practice. Research is following these changing behaviors, practices, and strategies of gifted education (Renzulli et al., 2003). This statement needs more clarity. A gifted student who does not have his or her needs met can become bored and anxious; the unchallenging monotonous work can becomes stressful and demotivating for these students (Glass, 2004). And for the other students in the class, what happens? This can become a serious problem as researchers have found that gifted and talented children’s sensitivity rises with their intelligence (Tippey & Burnham, 2009). In today’s educational and financial climate the interest and encouragement of gifted and talented education has begun to decrease even more (Henshon, 2010). Are there research or opinion statements that show an increase in the interest of GATE? If yes, then that info needs to go here, if not then a statement about the prevalence of statements like Henson’s need to be included. This apparent apathy can lead to a group of concerned parents of gifted and talented students. Research has shown that gifted and talented certification and training are not a top priority in most schools (McHatton, et al., 2010). Yet in SC the CofC receives funding from the state to do exactly this—train GATE teachers. Please explain. Homeschooling has become an option for parents looking to address the needs of their gifted and talented children. What are the demographics of these parents?
Gifted and talented students are high-ability students who have unique academic, cognitive, social, and emotional needs. Two interventions that are often implemented in school policies for gifted and talented students are enrichment, which adds to the quality of the content, and acceleration, which adds to the quantity of content. There have been numerous studies of both methods of intervention in the past few decades. Most people agree with enrichment while many hesitate when acceleration is mentioned because of the social and emotional needs of students and school policies, but longitudinal studies confidently state that carefully planned acceleration decisions are successful (Colangelo et al., 2010). When students are homeschooled attention can be directed at research and not on school policies. This qualitative study will describe how enrichment and acceleration have been implemented in a unique homeschooling program. This paragraph should be filled with citations.

Most often the parents of identified (say more, this is fascinating) gifted and talented students are highly involved and provide more enriching and stimulating environments (Makel, 2009). Parents may try to accommodate at home what they believe their children are not receiving at school until they are practically teaching at home, which is the case with the students in this study. (unpack this sentence…it is not clear what you are saying) As students get older, their personal interests dominate what they find relevant in school. Researchers in the field of gifted and talented education tell parents to not fear, but embrace specialization if their children have a special interest (Henshon, 2010). Homeschooling allows complete specialization by the parent, while eliminating the bureaucracy of the school system. Again these paragraphs should be filled with references.
It is fascinating to research the impact and political force that homeschooling has and how it has developed different polices at the federal and state levels. (Is this part of your study or another fascinating idea to study?) Over a million families in the United States home school and the homeschooling movement is escalating in power while forcing local and state educational leaders to modify their approaches and policies (Cooper, 2007). There are many different reasons for homeschooling students, but this study will focus on the academic reasons for homeschooling, such as pulling out students who are not having their gifted and talented needs addressed. There is ‘political resistance’ to homeschooling that comes from those who see it as detrimental to ‘common good’ of all (Cooper, 2007). This idea is also evident as public educators spend a majority of their time preparing students, especially those who score lower, for standardized tests. Teachers are pushed to bring up test scores in schools for the ‘common good;’ this idea essentially translates to mean bring up the test scores for funding, which is said to help everyone. Your references seem to be opinion statements of the authors. Are you using research papers? If yes, then you need to include the data and other supporting references.

Homeschooling gifted and talented students is a more novel field of study than most fields in education and is harder to collect decent (please, edit for bias words) quantitative data on because of the diversity in which people can home school. Are you going to exclude qualitative data? It has been reported that generally parents do not deliberately choose to pull their gifted and talented students out of schools, but parents rather fall into it after supplementing at home becomes schooling at home (Winstanley, 2009). Traditional schooling is
set up to address differentiation for students, but often causes depersonalization and by essence is prone to bureaucracy (Winstanley, 2009). There is an argument for more pull-out programs for gifted and talented learners; in a fundamental nature, homeschooling is the ultimate pull-out program. Policy and educational systems are arbitrary ideas made by people; homeschooling simply allows for more ideas to be added to the collection, while also allowing for individualization and action research for a person’s own children. It seems to me that education could benefit from these ongoing action research projects, such as the one being described in this study. These homeschooling programs for gifted and talented learners are the quintessential action research projects for individualizing education. (This paragraph is a personal advocacy statement. That is fine, but it needs to come after your data are presented.)

Keep working on your lit review. You have a framework from which to work, but it needs a great deal of strengthening.
References


