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All School Is Homework

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The Annotated Bibliography

Research in Progress for English 1301: Composition 1

Faculty Mentor: Lisa Roy-Davis Ph.D.

The following papers represent research work begun by students in English 1301, the first course in the two-semester composition sequence at Collin College. Students in 1301 are introduced to the concept of academic research by learning to ask research-focused questions and then use the library resources to find sources that provide answers.

In what follows, students have chosen research questions based on their areas of interest and expertise and then assembled a group of five sources that begin to answer those questions. Being able to write this work involves close reading of textual sources, notetaking, and working on summary and analysis skills so that the arguments and focus of each work can be adequately represented in each annotation. Proper citation format must also be followed. Students are also encouraged to see the connections between the sources by including sentences that indicate how the authors might engage each other's ideas in conversation.

The annotated bibliography assignment is separate from a research paper in that it works to focus students on finding and understanding sources before the research paper writing process begins. In this way, students are encouraged to understand the research process as a first step taken separately from the research paper composition process. Students are also encouraged to connect the work done on this project to other research projects in the disciplines they aim to major in.

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All School Is Homework

A child's education is a process whose importance cannot be stressed enough. A person's existence can be determined largely by the education that person receives during childhood. Many different options are available for a child's education: although many children in the U.S. are educated by the state's public schools. Another group of children (less than 10%) is privately educated, and there exists a smaller group—homeschoolers. Homeschooling allows parents to assume direct control over the teaching of their children, and parents are free to teach what they want (for better or worse). I myself was homeschooled, so the topic of homeschooling is one with which I have experience and one that matters to me. I would like to think that homeschooling worked out wonderfully for me and my siblings, and I would encourage others to consider it, but I also realize that it is not for everyone. Under what circumstances, then, is homeschooling beneficial? My research is a small piece of the answer, and the following articles should help people, whether students or parents, to decide whether they want to pursue homeschooling in education. "Revisiting the Common Myths about Homeschooling," by Michael Romanowski, attempts to dispel the disparaging cloud surrounding homeschooling to consider the topic seriously. "Home Schooling and Developmental Education: Learning from Each Other," by Betsy Bannier, advocates the

synthesis of homeschooling ideals with common contemporary education. “Education, Schooling, and Children’s Rights: the Complexity of Homeschooling,” by Robert Kunzman, examines the complicated relationships of education, the law, and the freedom to teach with regard to homeschooling. “Home is Where the School is,” by Patricia Heidenry, is an account of homeschooling and its trials and triumphs. “Homeschooling is not the Right Choice for Every Family,” by Dawn Pitsch, is a realistic look at the shortcomings of homeschooling.

Bannier, Betsy. “Home Schooling and Developmental Education: Learning from Each Other.” *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education* 23.2 (2007): 62–68. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Oct. 2014.

This article, which would largely agree with Romanowski’s, is presented as an exploration of homeschooling rather than a defense or attack. Betsy Bannier seems to support traditional education but also advocates the adaptation of homeschooling principles or practices to improve education. Bannier interviewed a number of homeschooling parents and observed several common elements of their teaching, such as complete mastery of a subject material or accommodation of learning styles. She then calls on developmental education professionals to examine such practices for possible adoption in the general classroom. She writes, “Seeking out the best practices in education is a common sense goal for all developmental educators. By seeking out new expertise, by sharing, adapting, and practicing, we make ourselves more valuable

to our students” (66). She sees the potential in homeschooling, even if she applies it more narrowly than does Romanowski. This article then might be helpful to educators who are still on the fence about homeschooling. Public schooling and homeschooling should not try to drown each other out but should give each other the best methods and principles they have to offer.

Heidenry, Patricia. “Home Is Where the School Is.” *New York Times* 19 October 1975: 70–80. Print.

This article is a personal, firsthand account of homeschooling in the 1970s. Patricia Heidenry, mother of four young children, found herself—almost unexpectedly—as their full-time teacher. She was disaffected with public schools, at least in the U.S., and could not afford private schooling for her children, so she turned to homeschooling as the last feasible alternative. This story provides a counterpoint to Pitsch’s, because it shows what a surprise homeschooling can be to parents from a completely different angle. Heidenry did not always intend to be a homeschooling mother, yet she succeeded where Pitsch’s determination failed. She has nothing against public schools in general, but she has specific criteria for what constitutes a good school. She writes, “Each person has his own definition of a good school. For me, a good school has come to mean one that encourages children to learn and to love learning in a happy, relaxed atmosphere.... A good school is a community of teachers and students engaged in an exhilarating search for knowledge and self-awareness” (1). Heidenry’s family lived in

England for a time, and she was quite pleased with the school her children attended there, but she was equally displeased with the state of schools in the St. Louis area, where the family lived next. Heidenry compared what she observed with Charles Silberman's "Crisis in the Classroom" and decided that her experience aligned with his. From this, she decided that the majority of American schools at the time were cold, sterile places that stifle children's natural learning inclinations, unlike the ideal schools of Banner that adopt personal teaching principles. Heidenry's article is primarily noteworthy because it can help show the evolution of public schooling and homeschooling in the past several decades. It would be most useful to parents who wonder if homeschooling can work, but it could also help parents who wonder if modern public schools have improved.

Kunzman, Robert. "Education, Schooling, and Children's Rights: the Complexity of Homeschooling." *Educational Theory* 62.1 (2012): 75–89. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 28 Oct. 2014.

In this article, Robert Kunzman presents the topic of homeschooling from multiple perspectives, including the interests of children and the state, and leaves the conclusion largely open-ended. He has studied homeschooling for years, and he goes into the more legal aspects of it. Without seeming to strongly support or disapprove of homeschooling, he shows how a child's education cannot be too strongly regulated or left free in the eyes of the law without damaging the education system, so it appears

that he favors a middle-road but legally grounded system. For example, he writes, “At its essence, our challenge is to protect the interests and rights of parents, children, and the state without drawing the circle so tightly that reasonable disagreement about what constitutes an acceptable (rather than ideal) education is not honored” (88). In other words, the legal system encapsulating the education system must be lenient enough to allow parents (like Heidenry) the freedom to take over the education of their children, while providing a strong enough framework to support students such as Pitsch’s children, who languished under their mother’s care. In the end, Kunzman contends that homeschooling will continue as an education choice, regardless of the response to it, and that its complexity and importance will grow. He would most likely agree with Bannier in that, as the lines of education blur, homeschooling and state schooling could learn from one another. This also lends credibility to Romanowski’s claims about homeschooling as a system in its own right. Kunzman’s article would be useful for someone who is looking for the broader picture of homeschooling, especially if that person is curious about how homeschoolers “get away” with so much (meaning the government does not require school attendance for homeschooled children).

Pitsch, Dawn. “Homeschooling is not the Right Choice for Every Family.” *Home Schooling*. Ed. Heidi Williams. Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2007. 58–62. Print.

This article is especially important because it was written by a conservative Christian woman who was determined to homeschool her children, yet it tells a much different

story than does Heidenry's article. Dawn Pitsch does not present an idealized view of homeschooling at all. Instead, as Pitsch's children aged, she began to slip on the teaching path she had started on. Her children clashed with her over homework methods, she found it more difficult to prepare for lessons, and her family felt isolated. Eventually, she gave up on homeschooling and enrolled her children in the local middle school. Rather than being reluctant or bitter, she said, "I can't begin to describe my relief at finally letting go" (62). This proclamation could come as a much-needed dose of reality for parents who think they can force themselves to homeschool until they make it work. Such an independent system that requires so much personal commitment will not work for every family, or even for every child in any given family. Homeschooling has its place, but it is not without its limitations, and nobody should believe that every parent is fully equipped and prepared to provide a full education to their progeny. The accounts from Pitsch and Heidenry show that the central figure of homeschooling—the parent—is both its greatest strength and greatest weakness.

Romanowski, Michael. "Revisiting the Common Myths about Homeschooling." *The Clearing House* 79.3 (2006): 125–29. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Oct. 2014.

This article is essentially homeschooling apologetics, because it only defends and fortifies the movement. The "myths" that Michael Romanowski attempts to dispel include the following: "Homeschooling produces social misfits," "Homeschooling fails to prepare good citizens," "Students who are homeschooled have difficulty entering college," and

“Most people homeschool only for religious reasons.” Romanowski is a professor at the Center for Teacher Education who provides convincing proof for his claims, and he concludes that the educational system at large needs to widen its avenues of listening and service. Public schools cannot be expected to perfectly meet the needs of every child in the community, and so less institutionalized education options should be available for those parents who want to pursue them. Romanowski supports homeschooling but within the framework of existing education. He contends, “Instead of constantly comparing and contrasting public schools and homeschools, we should look at how each can learn from one another and then use this information to improve the learning experiences of all children, no matter what form of education takes place” (129). Romanowski would certainly agree with Bannier that homeschooling has benefits, but he seems to recognize the homeschooling model itself more than does Bannier. That is, he believes that, instead of public schools merely adopting homeschooling principles, homeschooling is an effective education model in its own right, and that both systems can draw from one another. This article would best serve teachers who are cold toward homeschooling as well as parents who are unsatisfied with the public school system, because it could help them forget any prejudice they possess and focus on helping the children, which is what education should be all about.