Unexplored Territory: Writing Instruction in Pennsylvania Homeschool Settings, Grades 9-12, Part I

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For more than a century, the culturally mandated task of teaching American high school students to write well has been a primary responsibility of professional educators in public school systems. Now, as postmodern cultural shifts facilitate the expansion of such social movements as homeschooling, increasing numbers of teenage students are developing as writers in family-oriented and parent-supervised ways. Although scholarly educational research addresses such global issues as why or how effectively families self-educate, little of that research details the ways in which homeschoolers implement specific curricula. Therefore, this descriptive study explores the educational perspectives, teaching approaches, family roles, and relationships— as well as the writing experiences and composing processes—that energize a selected range of homeschool approaches to high school level writing.

Homeschool Writing Instruction As Research

Homeschooling is not an unresearched topic. A virtual “cottage industry” (Cizek & Ray, 1995, p. 1) generates and distributes many advocacy and how-to materials. Journals publish special issues full of factual and anecdotal articles. More importantly, a “small, but growing group of researchers” is generating a respectable number of “books and journals … scholarly articles … conference papers, theses and dissertations, and independent reports” (Cizek & Ray, 1995, p. 1) that analyze and theorize homeschooling. Still, as Cizek and Ray demonstrate, in 15 years of homeschool studies recognized by the Home School Researcher, few curricular studies have been completed. For example, only two studies (one briefly) address math (Richman, Girten, & Snyder, 1992; Sande, 1995). Just two explore science (Hornick, 1993; Ray, 1989). A single study considers writing (Galloway & Sutton, 1995) by determining differences in the performance of 180 students who graduated from public schools, private Christian schools, and homeschools. The study found no significant difference in the mean scores these students received on a required freshman library research paper or on tests that indicated their composition knowledge. However, since the study is at best a snap shot of a rapidly developing phenomenon, it appears there are few, if any, well-grounded research studies that explain why or how specific homeschoolers achieve writing proficiency in adolescence.
since the study’s focus was on how well homeschoolers had performed on the college level, there was no examination of their pre-college writing instruction. Neither this researcher nor Dr. Ray, whom I consulted on the matter, is aware of more than three other studies that even tangentially consider homeschool writing. June Hetzel (1997) discovered that in a typical day, students in 272 California homeschool families spent 19.5 to 34.5 minutes on writing instruction and 21 to 36 minutes engaged in the writing process. Parents provided opportunities for print-rich experiences. Hetzel’s report, however, specifies neither ages nor grades and offers only a few tantalizing statistics.

Elizabeth Treat’s (1990) ethnographic case study of two parents and one student interacting as readers and writers documents and analyzes variables involved in learning to write at home. In a case study format, it provides “a natural, in-depth, holistic … view [of] the sociolinguistic context of [one] home school family” (p. 11). Participant observations, interviews, recorded teaching sessions, dialogic journals, and personal interactions “capture the complexity and spontaneity of … ongoing, everyday language behavior during reading and writing events” (p. 11), and illustrate how one set of parents designed a literacy curriculum and “envision[ed] … themselves to be teachers of reading and writing” (p. 13). However, since Treat’s study focuses on only one family with one third-grade child, its contribution to this study—which targets teenage writers—is somewhat limited.

Gary Hafer’s (1990) descriptive study of homeschool writing instruction (a) profiles major homeschool composition textbooks; (b) analyzes how they exclude, include, or alter four crucial writing variables—planning, types of writing, grammar, and responses; and (c) illustrates with a case study of a single family who patronizes such texts. The study is Hafer’s response to “previous calls for home school research in the area of curricula and pedagogical descriptions and evaluations” (p. 16). His rationale for focusing on writing parallels the motivation for this study: “Writing has never been a subject for analysis because its complexity escapes the easy categorization of standardized testing. Even when verbal ability has been tested, writing ability has not been measured” (Hafer, 1990, p. 16).

Hafer’s profile of specific composition texts and his analysis of how the enabling perspectives and pedagogies compare or contrast with composition theories up to the end of the 1980s do provide interpretive background to this study. Their application, however, is limited since only two of the study’s six participating families used the traditional resources modeled in Hafer’s study. Also, although Hafer targets writing instruction, the participating student is a single third grader rather than high schoolers, the focus of this study.

**Writing From Home**

Though the range of writing pedagogies in educational institutions is known (Tate, Rupiper, & Schick, 2001); home-based writing pedagogies remain unexplored. This study addresses that lack by extrapolating from Mary Hood’s (1990) categorization of homeschool philosophies and Diana Baseman’s (1989) model of homeschool educational choices. According to Hood, parent-educators are motivated by essentialist, perennialist, progressive, or existential philosophies of learning. Essentialism or perennialism generally fosters such
instruction-based approaches as fact transmission, while progressivism or existentialism encourages learning-based choices that target skills or insights useful for integrated social living. Conversely, Baseman discounts basic motivational differences and models the graduated blending of educational choices.

Baseman’s continuum (see Figure 1) begins with observing and being-available parents who respect their students as interest-driven learners and encourage them to structure their own learning environments and tasks. At the polar end are directing and school-at-home parents who turn their homes into classrooms and authoritatively direct children who obey and learn. Scattered at many intermediate points are shaping-the-environment parents who may regulate or monitor behaviors, roles, and relationships at one stage but relax into emergent and flexible patterns at another.

![Figure 1. Model of homeschool educational styles. Reprinted by permission.](image)
This study’s writing model (see Figure 2) retains Hood’s continuum (see Figure 1) but substitutes those writing-based components that blend as an educational phenomenon—family living choices, teaching approaches/learning relationships, and writing practices. A family-by-family blending of components empowers extensive pedagogical variation. Projecting these sometimes contradictory choices onto a continuum stretching from total parent structure on one end to total learner structure on the other illuminates nuances of writing instruction that are inaccessible with other analytic methods. This study employs that pattern. First, it holistically overviews homeschool writing instruction as variegated exemplars of language arts training structured by parents, parents/learners, or learners. Then, reflecting available curricular materials, the study qualitatively documents and analyzes the perspectives, teaching approaches, relationships, and writing experiences of six Pennsylvania homeschool families as separate yet mutually impacting components diversely structured by parents, parents/learners, or learners.

**Parent Structured Writing Instruction**

Parent-structured (instruction-based) writing instruction follows a factory model of education. Parents or other teachers staff “assembly line” classrooms in which they add the “parts” writers need—language mastery that generally involves memorizing grammar rules and drilling with decontextualized exercises. Though such practices often decrease as parents choose to teach in less essentialist ways (Hood, 1990, pp. 57-82), most do consider some grammar study necessary for writing “correct” and “appropriate” texts. Another common practice is imitating models and correcting workbook texts. Such imitative teaching and
learning generally decrease as parents give students more responsibility for choosing their learning resources and directing their own learning and writing experiences. Writing assessments may or may not involve creating original text. A behaviorist assumption underlies this bandwidth of writing instruction. The assumption is that learning to write involves a “series of stimuli provided by instructors or peers, responses by students, and feedback from instructors or peers” (Wallace, 1996, para. 6). Parents derive those stimuli from the knowledge and skills they want students to master (scope) and the levels and orders they wish to include (sequence). Students respond, memorizing rules, learning to use structures, following prescribed composing patterns, and producing correct and appropriate texts for parents or other teachers to evaluate.

Families who choose educational styles structured either totally by parents or collaboratively by both parents and learners generally use either the textbook-based Traditional Approach or the Classical Education Approach.

**Traditional Writing Instruction**

Traditional homeschool writing instruction replicates many features of conventional writing classrooms. Parents use textbooks and focus on issues of grammar, usage, and writing formats. They supervise and intervene as their students memorize rules, do language exercises, and compose assigned texts that progress in a scope-and-sequence manner from sentences through paragraphs and themes to research papers.

Two popular high school traditional textbook series available to homeschool families are Bob Jones University Press’s English for Christian Schools: Writing and Grammar (Bob Jones University Press [BJU], 1986) and Pensacola Christian College’s A Beka Series Grammar and Composition (Chapman, 1995, 1996). Both publications present grammar and composition separately in graded textbooks or consumable worktexts that set clear objectives and provide preplanned lessons and tests. Writing assignments or suggestions are preceded by thorough explanations or exercises and supported by copious models. Grammar and composition comprise the whole of Bob Jones’ writing course. Pensacola’s A Beka programs add vocabulary, poetry, and literature. Both schools offer their series in several different formats: (a) as part of a total-curriculum package; (b) as a supervised home study program; or (c) as texts, videos, or satellite services (satellite, Bob Jones only). They are recommended as easy to use but as costly because of the need to reorder materials for each succeeding grade or ability level.

**Classical Education Writing Instruction**

The Classical Education approach intentionally replicates English educator Dorothy Sayers’ (1947) understanding of the medieval trivium. The grammar stage—a knowledge or facts section (grades 1-4)—develops phonics-based reading, writing, and spelling skills and introduces beginning writers to language structures and rules. During the logic/dialectic phase—an understanding or theory interim (grades 5-8)—writers outline content areas and compose argumentative paragraphs. During the rhetoric stage—a wisdom or practice level (grades 9-12)—students independently outline, summarize, identify theses, and write critical responses to Great Books (e.g., ancient to modern classics in the areas of history or government, science, and philosophy or religion).
There are numerous guides to Classical Education’s perennialist rationales, resources, and strategies (Hood, 1990, pp. 107-132). One that is well known is Jesse Wise and Susan Bauer’s (1999) 764-page book, The Well-Trained Mind. Against the backdrop of their homeschooling experiences, this mother-daughter team appropriates Sayers’ arguments that classical reading and writing train the mind by providing a “parent’s guide to a do-it-yourself, academically rigorous, comprehensive education—a classical education … [that] is language-intensive—not image-focused. It demands that students use and understand words, not video images” (Wise & Bauer, 1999, p. 18).

As Wise and Bauer explain, during the rhetoric, or high school level years (grades 9-12), Classical Education students use Aristotle’s inventio, dispositio, elecutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio to follow a regimen of taking notes, outlining, and identifying the theses of Greek through modern classics. Then, using the composing implications of Aristotle’s canons of rhetoric, they write book reports and essays. During 11th and 12th grade, they do two writing projects to demonstrate mastery of content and communication skills.

Classical grammar and composition resources include (a) Pensacola’s A Beka grammar and composition series, (b) the grammar-and-style videos and seminars of the Institute for Excellence in Writing (http://www.writing-edu.com/writing/), and (c) Writing Strands—a seven-level workbook series (National Writing Institute, 1998; http://www.writingstrands.com/). The authors of The Well-Trained Mind recommend Pensacola’s A Beka grammar series followed by Writing Strands.

Wise and Bauer consider Writing Strands a stand-alone series that addresses a range of writing skills and protocols. The Institute for Excellence in Writing features the note taking, summary, outlining, and analysis skills needed for Classical writing. The Classical Education Approach is knowledge- and supervision-costly for parents. Yet, since reading and writing experiences are rigidly scoped-and-sequenced, parents of rhetoric students may need only to monitor and suggest—or, as Wise and Bauer suggest—offer students Mortimer Adler’s How To Read A Book (Adler & van Doren, 1972).

**Learner Structured Writing Instruction**

At the other end of the continuum, programs of learning to write that range between parent/learner- and learner-structured draw their inspiration from a cognitive apprenticeship or novice-expert model of education and a collaborative theory of learning. The apprenticeship model suggests that learning to write involves using one’s emerging writing skills to act out real life communication tasks under the supervision of a skilled communicator. Knowledgeable peers or experts demonstrate whatever processes are necessary for mastery. Novices observe, then replicate what they have seen, accepting scaffolding or coaching at points of need. As learners develop expertise, collaborators slowly fade or remove their support and hand responsibility to the emerging “experts.”

The collaborative assumption underlying this apprenticeship model is that of the old proverb, “Two heads are better than one.” Applied to writing instruction, it means that language concepts and writing skills are not considered artifacts transferable from teacher to student. Instead, they are treated as products of sharing communicative tasks.
This apprenticeship approach to writing instruction occupies a vague location near the learner-structured end of the continuum. It generally encourages the use of either life-oriented projects or real life communication tasks. That may reduce the need for costly instructional materials, but it also demands more planning. In the long run, however, families who fall within the learner to parent/learner structure range can benefit from creative and personally satisfying writing experiences. Approaches that accommodate this range of structure include Unschooling, Living Books, and Unit Studies.

**Unschooling Writing Instruction**

The Unschooling approach grows out of the existentialist conviction (Hood, 1990, pp. 133-170) that living is learning and that acquiring knowledge is best gained in whatever ways and by whatever time schedule families prefer. The approach is the logical outcome of John Holt’s creeping disillusionment with organized education and his intensifying conviction that parents should release their students from schooling and curriculum and allow their natural instincts to blossom into self-education.

Holt’s 1950’s frustration—watching eager young learners enter school and become “frightened, timid, evasive, and self-protecting” (Holt, 1981, introduction)—surfaced in his 1960s books—How Children Fail (1964) and How Children Learn (1967). A decade later, concluding that effective school reform would be a slow, perhaps unlikely prospect and impressed by Ivan Illich’s (1971) Deschooling Society thesis that schools may be socially repressive, Holt began courting the idea that schools may not be necessary (Teach Your Own, 1981). In 1977, he started publishing Growing Without Schooling, a small bimonthly magazine where parents called “home schoolers” could exchange their experiences, questions, and answers. An educator happy never to have been trained as a “professional” teacher, Holt continued to quietly advocate natural ways of learning. Now, a quarter century after his untimely death, Holt’s notions of education have evolved into a fluid educational approach known as unschooling. The rationale is that education is learning rather than teaching and that families should free their lives in ways that allow natural learning to occur. Applied, the approach produces family-by-family variations that are hard to define, harder to categorize, and nigh impossible to generalize for useful research purposes.

The clearest explanation of how unschooled students learn to write is that they learn by simply writing. Since their parents often forgo the structure of curriculum, unschooled writers write in whatever ways and at whatever times social living demands text or whenever they feel personally compelled to write. They and their parents relax into collaborative or apprenticeship relationships, allowing daily living, changing student interests, or career plans to occasion such writing activities as letters, journals, e-mails, personal themes, reflective pieces, journalism, formal essays, or academic themes.

If unschooling parents desire grammar and writing resources for either themselves as facilitators or for their students as writers, they often do their own resource gathering since there are few centralized resources that so abstractly address learning to write. They may turn to “writing” articles in an unschooling periodical like Home Education Magazine (e.g., Cohen, 1997), or search for advice on websites, or network with other unschoolers, or check out books by writers like Donald Graves and Virginia Stuart (1985) or Peter Elbow (1973). However, the search is primarily a private one. For such reasons, parents may encourage students to include themselves into
writing groups, take college or online writing courses, or seek writing apprenticeships—perhaps writing a column for a community newspaper or some other writing enterprise.

**Living Books Writing Instruction**

The Living Books approach is based on English educator Charlotte Mason’s (1989) turn-of-the-century concept that education is life experience structured only by the necessity to learn such basic skills as reading, writing, and math. All other preparation is to be found in disciplined leisure in nature, the arts, and “living” books—books that are well written and that “come alive” when read. Writing is not eliminated, just delayed.

First, as children hear and later read these living books, they orally narrate the stories back to parents. Gradually, parents expand that oral interaction to include written narratives, perhaps even essays that substitute for exams. Although the method does not team parents and students as true collaborators, it seeks to encourage parents to structure learning environments and activities—at least moderately—and to encourage the kinds of observation, analysis, and reflection that later encourage quality writing.

Families at either end of the structure continuum may at times appropriate elements of this approach because it incorporates the Classical concentration on Great Ideas and yet filters its reading-writing regimen through narration and life experiences.

Mason’s Classical Approach rationales and methodologies are described in several major publications, including Catherine Levison’s (Levison & O’Brien, 2000) More Charlotte Mason Education and Karen Andreola’s (1998) A Charlotte Mason Companion. Andreola updates Mason’s pedagogy of handwriting in elementary grades, dictation on middle levels, and composition during the teen years. Those who use Mason’s Living Books Approach move through a listen-read-narrate-record-create progression. Numerous listservs and e-mail discussion groups are available to network parents who wish to collaboratively figure out the details of doing just that.

Families who use this Charlotte Mason approach may delay the study of grammar until writers are fairly comfortable with subject content and have developed a comfortable writing style. They introduce grammar only when necessary with such supplemental resources as (a) Daily Grams (Phillips, 1992), a 180-day, four-sentence-per-day exercises on capitalization, sentence combining; (b) Editor in Chief (Baker, Block, & Beckwith, 1994), error-detection exercises set in the context of a publishing house; or (c) Grammar Smart, Princeton Review’s (1997) compact review of writing-related grammar structures and terminology.

**Unit Studies Writing Instruction**

The Unit Studies approach is a progressivist (Hood, 1990, pp. 83-106), topical method of learning in which students and teachers choose topics and “live with them” for an extended period of time, integrating the knowledge, methods, and skills of all applicable content areas. For example, students studying the Civil War may read biographies of generals, calculate the dollar cost of particular military campaigns, research why disease killed more soldiers than cannons, build a working model cannon, and create fictional accounts of families divided
This type of study works well for families, whether they prefer parent- or learner-imposed structure. Teacher-student roles frequently ebb and tide. At one point, parents may be collaborative peer-learners; at others, they or persons with the necessary knowledge or skills may step into “expert” roles. Prepared resources, family-generated materials, or inputs from other useable source serve as sources with which to create knowledge and encourage understanding. Such fluidity both frees and challenges the writing choices families must make.

When families intentionally integrate writing into self-generated unit studies, they are free to include any mix of genres, methodologies, or writing experiences suitable for the topic under consideration. Writing is used to help students learn, to review what has been learned, and to test what has been learned. Writing may take the form of stories, essays, diaries, portfolios, multi-media presentations, hypertext, perhaps Web pages.

Magazines such as Homeschooling Today or books like Valerie Bendt’s How to Create Your Own Unit Study (1994) can help parents gather materials or implement the 5-Rs of unit study and writing:

- research
- reading
- writing
- recording
- reporting

Examples of popular commercial reading materials and study guides include Beautiful Feet Books’ literature-based approach to history, science, and geography (http://www.bfbooks.com/), and Greenleaf Press’s history-based biographies, chronologies, and fiction (www.greenleafpress.com/). Parents concerned about character training may choose materials prepared by groups that reflect their religious or philosophical orientation. One such evangelical unit study provider is The Advanced Training Institute (www.ati.iblp.org/), which offers correspondence unit studies that filter all subjects and assignments through biblical character qualities. However, parents using this approach may find it challenging to integrate certain topics or types of writing. Similar to the Living Books Approach, unit studies do not address direct teaching of grammar or style. Parents may append instruction, but only if necessary and then using resources such as Daily Grams (Phillips, 1992), Editor in Chief (Baker et al., 1994), or Grammar Smart (Princeton Review, 1997).

Parent/Learner Structured Writing Instruction

Between the end points of a parent-to-learner continuum of structure are intermediate points of collaboration between student and teacher. Rather than representing fixed ways of doing things, these points indicate flexible approaches based on a developmental model and a constructivist theory of learning.

A developmental model maps learning to write as incremental moves through cognitive processes that transform internal concepts and ideas into external texts. The underlying constructivist assumption is that humans instinctively make sense of life and cognitively develop ways of sharing that meaning. Though natural maturation triggers these processes, they develop best as students learn in socially integrated settings. Instructors encourage writers to explore their personal knowledge and experiences, to develop control of their thinking processes, to dialogue and collaborate, and to practice the conventions of targeted discourse communities.
This approach empowers families to diversify their curriculum or to satisfy
transitory curiosities. They may limit digressions to single subjects or particular
stages and allow individual students to opt in or out. Writing instruction benefits
from such agility in that writers may move from parent-imposed structure to self-
direction—perhaps beginning with grammar-based textbooks, then moving to
unit studies or taking part in writing groups, enrolling in distance courses,
perhaps eventually taking on self-directed writing projects. Curriculum and
pedagogies are free to range widely and relationships to remain constant or
bend according to personal need. The possibilities are as restrictive as
resources and schedules or as unlimited as a family's creativity and ambition.
Families opting for such flexible writing instruction may risk “over-challenge" To
experience that sensation, all one has to do is to browse the vendor booths of a
homeschool curriculum fair. I was glad that I was not one of the 7,499 other
parents milling through the materials displayed at Pennsylvania's 2000 CHAP
curriculum fair by some 180 homeschool suppliers. If that had been my first
introduction to writing instruction approaches or resources, I would have gone
home with a mind more tired than my feet.
Families who settle at the center of the continuum may patronize one or blend a
number of popular options, including textbooks, writing groups, cooperative
classes, online writing services, umbrella school services, and college courses.

**Textbooks**

Some families incorporate—for longer or shorter periods of time—Traditional
Approach textbooks or courses. Whether parents intend these materials as
regular courses or as reference handbooks depends on what they feel are the
greatest needs for their students at any particular grade or maturity level.

**Family-Based Writer’s Groups**

Writing groups are a frequent component of parent/learner-structured approach
instruction. As I moved in and out of families who prefer this approach, I learned
that such groups typically involve the students of several families, often with few
of the same age. They choose a simple format in which all participating writers
share something they have written between sessions (usually bimonthly or
monthly). Some groups limit feedback to only positive comments; others share
limited criticism. Sometimes parents lead short mini-lessons on grammar or
style, offer creative composing strategies, or make assignments for future
sessions. Many groups publish small newsletters that feature writers' manus
cripts.
Many of these spontaneous groups implement the kinds of writer relationships
Elbow (1973) suggests in Writing Without Teachers, or they replicate elements
of the writing workshops Nancie Atwell (1987) models in her popular book, In the
Middle. However, there are also homeschool resources for parents who wish to
help their writers to interact with peers. In a “Writing Together” chapter in her
book, Writing From Home, Susan Richman (1990) shares her family-shaped
ideas for creating writers' groups. In another chapter she refers readers to her
sources for urging this kind of “audience" — (a) life as a homeschooler, (b)
Donald Graves’s (1983) Writing: Teachers and Children at Work, (c) Donald
Graves and Virginia Stuart’s (1985) Write From the Start, and (d) Lucy Calkins’
Support Group Writing Classes

In the county targeted by this study, families who belong to local homeschool support groups often set aside one day per week so that their students may take advantage of group study in such core areas as math, science, or the arts. Parents or group leaders include classes where students of specified age or grade levels work with a qualified volunteer parent or a hired professional instructor whose sole responsibility is to help them develop their writing skills, to troubleshoot their personal composing processes, or to encourage written creativity.

The teaching approaches, instructional materials, teacher-student relationships, and writing experiences in these organized classes generally are as flexible as the parents who enroll their students. Some classes may use textbooks, though perhaps only those that integrate grammar study and writing exercises. Other groups may function as oversized read-and-comment gatherings. Others serve as tutorials that help students generate the themes required by their homeschool diploma programs.

Variations of weekly support group classes are special feature writing seminars or workshops. Support groups organize day or weekend seminars that feature skilled parents or professional writers who easily relate to adolescent writers’ interests and composing needs. For example, one homeschooling mother, herself a publishing author and former writing instructor, advertises her staffed Young Writer’s Institute as an event that 15,000 homeschool writers in 50 cities have already attended. During a 2-day seminar, two authors—popular among Christian children—present keynote addresses and conduct hands-on workshops in which writers experiment with stories or other creative genres.

Online Writing Services

Homeschool families are as close to today’s writing resources as their computers. Online they can access writing links, writing instruction, and writing assessment.

*Online writing links.* Producers of educational materials sometimes add writing links to their commercial websites. A representative example is The Write Source, a Houghton-Mifflin writing materials house (http://www.thewritesource.com/index2.htm) that adds to its site adolescent-oriented links to (a) writing topics, (b) student models, (c) multimedia reports, (d) online research aids, (e) Internet evaluation helps, and (f) simplified style manuals. About.com (http://www.about.com), a “human internet,” is a portal into a seemingly endless number of sites, some as specialized as journal writing, teenage website writing, application essays, or writing contests.

Online writing laboratories, or OWLs, are professional sources of writing help. Rare is the college or university that does not have a writing lab, and though these labs primarily serve matriculated students, most of them maintain websites where anyone with a monitor and a mouse is welcome to access whatever she or he finds useful. What is useful to homeschool writers are the professional, no-cost, easily accessible writing aids. Purdue University’s OWL (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/owl/index.html) is a good example. Under the direction of Muriel Harris—a noted writing center and
good example. Under the direction of Muriel Harris—a noted writing center and composition researcher—the lab posts on its website many printable handouts: explanations, exercises, and tests of such grammar issues as parts of speech, sentence mechanics, or paragraph construction. Other pages discuss writing genres and composing processes. Power Point presentations illustrate research processes and protocols. Several sections introduce students to efficient use of the Internet, and there is even a tutorial on search engines. For families willing to point and click, there are plenty of reasons to do what the “writer” in Purdue’s online virtual tour decides to do—return for more.

**Online writing instruction.** One online writing instruction site with programs for homeschoolers is Write Guide (http://www.writeguide.com/homeschool.htm). Using daily e-mail exchanges, trained writing instructors help students complete reports, biographies, book reviews, memoirs, personal essays, persuasive essays, critical essays, or research papers. These projects may be completed on either a piece-by-piece month long program, an unlimited yearly program, or a completed project assessment program. Also available free by e-mail are a number of articles that may interest home-based writers, including the difference between reports and research papers, writing in the content areas, contextualized grammar, becoming your favorite writer, and lots of other choices.

**Online Writing Assessment.** Homeschool families who want only writing assessment can access it online. For example, one writing instructor (http://www.writingassessment.com/) offers graduated fee-based evaluation and consultation services for completed writing projects. Also available are free downloadable tutorials and links to teaching and composing helps, homeschool listservs, and Classical Approach tutorials.

**Umbrella School Services**

Some alternative K-12 schools open their courses to interested homeschoolers. Depending on the organizational and operational policies of the school, homeschoolers may access resources and enroll in individual classes even though they primarily learn at home. The options allow writers to move in and out of classes on fiction, creative writing, poetry, drama, basic composition, and grammar.

Alternative schools that offer such homeschool incentives frequently also offer to keep student records, act as curriculum advisors, or serve as representative or mediators in dealing with state officials in matters of compulsory attendance. In some states, however, homeschool laws forbid or complicate such dual enrollments.

**College Writing Courses**

Community colleges, undergraduate colleges, and universities sometimes open their composition classes to high school juniors or seniors—whether they are studying in public school or homeschools. Either to increase enrollment or as a public service, some smaller colleges offer a limited number of free courses to those who qualify on placement exams or essays. Because of their flexible schedules, homeschool students sometimes find that they can accrue both homeschool and college credit at the same time. The option entices junior or senior homeschool writers who wish to improve or assess their writing skills before they graduate and transfer to larger or more distant colleges or universities.
Conclusion

Those who encouraged Pennsylvania parents to educate their own children could not have known that their activism would foster a quantum leap from alienation and prosecution to learning in undisturbed parent, parent/learner, and learner-structured ways. For more than a decade, Act 169 (1988) has empowered parent-educators to forge idiosyncratic ways of teaching and learning to write. However, that privilege has carried with it the obligation to submit certain documentation—more than some wish to comply with. Still, parent-educators who teach writing do have freedoms no law can affect. They may discount or implement composition theory and praxis as they flex with research. Local districts are obligated to loan homeschool parents course outlines, textbooks, and materials if they request them. Instructional services and writing curricula once available only to professional educators are accessible through libraries, bookstores, publishers, community colleges, correspondence courses, distance education, online search engines, or other sources that spring up like Jack’s beanstalk.

What no publisher, program, or service can ever duplicate, however, are the relationships homeschool parents and children forge as educators and writers in training. Because homeschooling is a social movement, a family-based culture, and a system of private education, these interactions both shape and constrain the writing experiences parents assign or facilitate and the composing processes homeschool writers develop. The second section of this study documents, characterizes, and analyzes those components within the unique contexts of six Pennsylvania homeschool families where high school level students learn to write.

References


ABOUT NHERI

NHERI conducts homeschooling research, is a clearinghouse of research for the public, researchers, homeschoolers, the media, and policy makers, and educates the public concerning the findings of all related research. NHERI executes, evaluates, and disseminates studies and information (e.g., statistics, facts, data) on homeschooling (i.e., home schooling, home-based education, home education, home school, homeschooling, unschooling, deschooling, a form of alternative education), publishes reports and the peer-reviewed scholarly journal Home School Researcher, and serves in

RESEARCH

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Bibliography of Research on Homeschooling
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The Old Schoolhouse
The Teaching Home
Homeschooling parents recognize the challenge of teaching their teens to write. Some of these adults have been taught little about writing, feel overwhelmed by the task of choosing instructional materials, or wonder what writing skills their students may need as they enter colleges or careers. The following sections document and analyze these data in accordance with the continuum of structure discussed in Part I of this report. The DeCous. I found the DeCous’ newly remodeled, spacious farmhouse at the end of a long lane. Inside, I met Darlene DeCou, a slender, neatly groomed mother. The Participants... 379 Johann Rafelski 29.1 The Participants ... 379 29.2 On Formation of QGP in Heavy Ion Collisions... 380 29.3 Experimental Opportunities to Study QGP... 381 29.4 Discussion on Relativistic Heavy Ion Collisions... However, Hagedorn’s ‘Distinguishable Particles’ is a clear stepping stone on the road to a better understanding of strong interactions and particle production. The insights gained in this work allowed Hagedorn to rapidly invent the Statistical Bootstrap Model (SBM). We can write down the energies contained in the longitudinal and transverse motion, respectively (remembering that m D 0): Z Ek D Z pknk.pk/d pk D NTk0 3N m ; E? D p?n?:p?/d p? ★ manheim ★ Manheim ★ Pennsylvania ★ USA ★ Fahnstock Excavating ★ Farmers Hope Inn ★ Farmers Hope Inn ★ Electys ★ Ferrellgas ★ Fenner Drives ★ Frog Hollow Evergreens ★. Rt 72 North @ The Pa Turnpik | 17545. See phone loading (717) 664 4673. Farmers Hope Inn, Manheim, Restaurant, Accommodation, Hotel, Pet, Vacation Accommodation. E Not evaluated yet Add to My list Added. Inaccurate result? Electys.