

NEW EDUCATIONAL OPTION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN OF THE USA**N.V. Mishchenko**

During the last 20 years, increasing numbers of families in the United States have chosen to educate their children at home. Current estimates range from 500,000 to 1.2 million home students. A significant percentage of families has chosen homeschooling as the educational option for their gifted children. The aim of the article is to show these important issues concerning the education policy in the USA, which can be relevant to the Ukrainian training improvements and educational reforms.

За останні 20 років кількість сімей у Сполучених Штатах, які вибрали навчати своїх дітей вдома, значно збільшилась. Поточні оцінки розташовуються в межах від 500 000 до 1,2 мільйона домашніх учнів. Значний відсоток сімей вибрав домашнє навчання як освітню опцію для своїх обдарованих дітей. Ціль статті – показати ці важливі моменти, що стосуються освітньої політики в США, які можуть бути доречні для поліпшення навчання й реформ освіти в Україні.

За последние 20 лет число семей в Соединенных Штатах, которые выбрали обучать своих детей на дому, значительно увеличилось. Текущие оценки располагаются в пределах от 500 000 до 1,2 миллиона домашних учащихся. Значительный процент семей выбрал домашнее обучение как образовательную опцию для своих одаренных детей. Цель статьи – показать эти важные моменты, касающиеся образовательной политики в США, которые могут быть уместны для улучшения обучения и реформ образования в Украине.

The victory of homeschooled 13-year-old Rebecca Sealton in the 1997 National Spelling Bee brought new attention to the growing phenomenon of homeschooling. Dissatisfied with the performance of government-run schools, more and more American families have begun teaching their children at home. Children were considered to be homeschooled if their parents reported them being schooled at home instead of at a public or private school, if their enrollment in public or private schools did not exceed 25 hours a week, and if they were not being homeschooled

solely because of a temporary illness.

A lot of foreign scientists have made some research on the problem of homeschooling gifted and talented students in the United States. Among them are Montgomery L. R., Lines P. M., Sutton J. P., Ray B. D., Taylor J. W., Shyers L. E., Galloway R. A., Hong P. Y. and others. They estimate the number of homeschooled children very widely; the best estimate is 500,000 to 750,000, but some estimates range up to 1.23 million. All observes agree that the number has grown rapidly over the past 15-20 years.

The aim of article is to show a number of issues in exploration homeschooling American gifted and talented students, to represent the information about time commitment, resources and financial considerations, legal considerations, state requirements, ways to homeschool and where families can get the necessary information in order to teach their children.

Challenges and opportunities

When families consider homeschooling, there are many issues to explore.

Time commitment. Homeschooling requires an enormous time commitment by at least one parent. However, many parents of highly gifted children are already actively committed to their children's education. Parents find themselves trying to squeeze in extra hours for music, dance and art. Frequently, their evenings are spent enriching the classroom curriculum so their children will continue to be academically challenged. These parents claim that homeschooling is a way to tailor their children's education to specific needs and interests at the appropriate academic challenge level and to create an integrated educational environment that includes a wide range of activities.

Choosing homeschooling each family together with their children decide if this is the appropriate choice for them. As with any educational option, homeschooling works better for some students and parents than for others. Some find the demands and intensity of homeschooling to be too stressful; others love the freedom and challenge.

Resources and financial considerations. Homeschooling parents use many resources and materials. These can become expensive, but there are ways to defray some of the costs. Homeschooling parents can borrow from each other, share resources and make use of common items in the house and natural environments for curriculum material. The public library is a rich resource for books and videos. Many libraries offer interlibrary loans and

vacation-loan extensions to the public. The Internet offers a wealth of highly sophisticated information, especially in the academic subject areas. A computer in the house is an advantage, but there are other ways to gain access to the Internet; for example, some public libraries and schools offer access. When considering homeschooling, explore resources and materials in advance. At all levels, verify the type of support schools will provide. If they have a gifted program, they may provide curriculum suggestions and guidelines. Contact others who are homeschooling through your state's homeschooling network.

Legal considerations. Homeschooling is legal in all 50 states of the USA, Canada and many other countries. Some states require that parents notify the local school district of their intent to homeschool; others require parents to register with the state department of education. Some permit a homeschool to register as a private school. Many states require yearly proof of student progress. Some states have additional requirements, such as the submission of a curriculum plan or education requirements for parents. Except for yearly standardized testing as an assessment of student achievement, services for homeschoolers have not been routinely available from the states. A few states permit homeschooled students to participate in public school classes or activities. Many state education agencies have a homeschooling liaison to help families understand state requirements. Federally mandated special education services may be available to homeschooled students through the public schools.

Ways to homeschool

There are many methods of homeschooling; no single method is best. Success often comes through experience, confidence and willingness to experiment. Many parents prefer the structure and security of a correspondence or purchased curriculum in the first year, switching to their own tailored program once they have developed experience and feel more confident. Some parents prefer to use textbooks and commercial curricula; others prefer to use a variety of resources.

Some parents opt to teach all subject areas to their children; others seek out classes or tutorials for some or all of the subjects, especially for homeschooled high school students. Approaches may vary with individual children and change over time as demands and experiences alter their lives. Reading accounts of other homeschool experiences and getting to know other homeschoolers offers perspective, ideas and appreciation for the many ways

of homeschooling.

How well do homeschoolers perform?

One way to compare homeschooled students with peers who attend public schools is to use standardized achievement test scores. A study of homeschooled student scores on standardized achievement tests shows higher scores than the general population. Galloway (1995) investigated homeschooled graduates' potential for success in college by comparing their performance with students from conventional schools and found insignificant differences, except in the ACT English subtest scores. Homeschooled students earned higher scores in that subtest [2,p.2].

What about college?

The later high school years should be structured with college applications in mind. These years may be managed in a variety of ways. Some students remain in homeschooling and receive no diploma. Others choose to reenter public school during high school to align themselves with peers and obtain a standard diploma. Others select a combination that will take advantage of Advanced Placement courses or other academic and extracurricular offerings.

Limited research suggests that the home educated do well in college [2,p.4]. Furthermore, homeschoolers may find the unique experiences and abilities gained through homeschooling make them attractive to competitive colleges. Check with the colleges of interest to determine if they have specific application requirements for homeschoolers. When standard high school student transcripts are not available, colleges may need other information to make an informed decision. SAT scores may be given more weight, since they are a way of comparing a homeschooler to the general college-bound population. Transcripts from community college courses taken during high school years can be useful. Letters of recommendation from persons who have worked with the homeschooler in tutorials, apprenticeships, community service and social activities may prove very valuable. A detailed description of unique homeschool courses, in-depth independent projects, competitions, publications and community service activities will help a college understand the quality of an applicant's homeschool education and recognize the student as a competitive applicant. An interview, when offered by a college or university, is particularly important for homeschool applicants.

Conclusion

The modern-day homeschooling story is fundamentally one of a grassroots movement of parent educators. Homeschoolers have also received a great deal of positive media coverage over the past 10 years. Favorable stories about homeschoolers have been featured in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today and the Washington Post [1,p.B1]. "Home-Schooled Christian Teenagers Tout Advantage of Their Lifestyle" was a Washington Post article about 900 homeschooled teenagers who attended a homeschooling youth conference in a Fairfax County, Virginia, church [5,p.B1]. In 1994 the Wall Street Journal ran a series of articles about the backlash against public schools. The first article focused on homeschoolers and featured a day in the life of the Cardiffs of San Jose, California, a homeschooling family [6,p.1]. "The Dawn of Online Home Schooling" was a Newsweek article about the marriage of homeschooling and technology [3,p.67]. The American homeschooling story has even grabbed the interest of the international media. "US mother says it's not such a great sacrifice" was a sidebar in an Irish Times story about Ireland's homeschoolers [4,p2].

In short, homeschooling is here to stay and is giving new meaning to the old maxim "there's no place like home." It is likely that the number of homeschoolers will grow if the current public school system continues to be viewed by parents as an irrelevant institution that can hinder a child's ability to learn. The lesson for reformers bent on promoting statist educational models, such as Goals 2000 or School-to-Work, is this: homeschooling has produced literate students with minimal government interference at a fraction of the cost of any government program.

We consider that it is necessary to think over the American experience in homeschooling gifted and talented students thoroughly. We suppose the development of good state schools in the USA to be the most important issue, that's why we are far from propagandizing this kind of movement, though we can see some advantages of this teaching children type. It's difficult to say whether the tendency of homeschooling will develop in Ukraine, but if it happens, in this case it will be better to use the experience of others instead of blaming them and it will be better to become more thoughtful in how to inscribe this phenomenon into education system of our country.

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ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ У ВИХОВАННІ „ДОБРОПОРЯДНИХ ГРОМАДЯН” У ШКОЛАХ США

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У статті розглядаються тенденції у вихованні „добропорядних громадян” у школах США.

В статье рассматриваются тенденции в воспитании „добропорядочных граждан” в школах США