

HOW HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS PERCEIVE THEIR EXPERIENCES
INFLUENCING ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL
INTEGRATION IN COLLEGE

by

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of

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DEDICATION

To my family. Thank you for the support, encouragement, inspiration, and memories throughout my academic journey. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

K-12 homeschool enrollment in the United States has increased to over two million students since legalization in 1993. As more homeschoolers enroll in higher education, colleges are taking notice of potential opportunities and obstacles they bring to campus from their homeschool experience. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of how homeschool students perceived their experiences contributing to academic and social integration in college.

Eleven state university and nine community college students participated in personal, face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions providing opportunity for students to tell the story of their personal homeschool experiences. Two themes evolved from the interviews as influential to integration: homeschool platform and student learning characteristics. Student learning characteristics consisted of self-discipline, independence, memorization, organization, and respect functioning as both obstacles and opportunities to college integration.

Homeschool platform evolved from one-on-one instruction to student self-instruction, allowing flexibility to engage in self-discovery experiences developing capital with similar and diverse individuals. These relationships helped transition to academic and social integration. A sense of belonging was a product of the relationships built through integration and contributed to student engagement and satisfaction.

Data showed homeschool students come to college with student learning characteristics to self-instruct, ability to develop relationships through respect, and gain respect from peers because of their morals and values. Relationships with individuals sharing similar interests provided students confidence to enroll in early start college courses to better understand college expectations.

Limitations of the homeschool experience as students transitioned to college included: working in group projects, peer relationships with diverse individuals, and college expectations. Working on group projects caused anxiety for students due to their motivation for academic excellence and lack of interpersonal trust to allow peer responsibility of projects. Uncertainty of college expectations became evident as students enrolled in college with limited experience outside homeschool education. Students lacked experience using text books, taking notes, lectures, schedules, and inability to progress at their own pace.

As homeschool students enter higher education, institutions have the capacity to address obstacles and opportunities they bring to campus to enhance their college experience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

K-12 homeschool enrollment in the United States steadily increased following the 1993 legalization of the practice in all 50 states and establishment of the first standards in 1999 (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Growing from 11,994 in 1993 to an estimated two million in 2010, higher education is taking notice of the potential source of incoming students and their contribution to campus. Initial external opinion of the homeschool population provided a picture of socially stunted students taught by their mothers with limited access to the outside world (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). The contemporary homeschool model evolved with advancement of technology, resources, networking, and program development. As more home educated students enter college with potentially diverse K-12 education experiences in comparison to most public and private school students, it becomes increasingly important for members of higher education to gain an understanding of the opportunities and obstacles the population brings to campus.

The tradition of homeschooling in the United States comes from colonial ancestors, who directly or indirectly through tutors, provided their children's education at home, which continued to be common practice until implementation of compulsory education laws in every state of the union by 1918 (Houston & Toma, 2003). Resurgence of homeschooling began to take shape in the 1970s with an estimated 10,000 to 15,000

children of families who felt fervently in their right to educate their own children at home. In the infancy stage, contemporary homeschooling has only been legal since 1993 in all 50 states, limiting research of the population (Murphy, 2013). Electronic media, global expansion, private scholarships, tuition vouchers, mother's education attainment, family salary, and second generation homeschool families contribute to the rapid expansion of the practice.

Rise in homeschool enrollment brings the population to the attention of higher education and characteristics these students bring to campus. Researchers initiated one of the first collections of experiential data focusing on contemporary homeschool student enrollment in 1999 when the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) Program began compiling empirical information of the population (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Limited data can be attributed to lack of standards and illegal status of homeschooling in 30 states until 1993. In the 1999 study, parents of 11,994 homeschool students were interviewed to gain a comprehensive picture of this faction with comparable studies conducted every four years. Studies identified 850,000 reported homeschool students in 1999, 1.1 million in 2003, and 1.5 million in 2007 (Planty, et. al, 2009). Reported homeschool numbers in 2010 by Ray (2011) were approximately 2.04 million students. Actual numbers are difficult to pinpoint due to diverse reporting methods for every state, continued lack of trust by homeschool families, and variances between reporting agents. Total percentage of students being homeschooled rose from 1.7% of the total population in 1999 to 2.9% in 2007 and 3.8% during the spring of 2010. These numbers are approximate due to the lack of consistent reporting requirements from

state to state and difficulty distinguishing homeschool enrollment from private schools established for homeschool students. Table 1 provides a summary of national homeschool enrollment trends from the 1970s through 2010.

Table 1. National Estimated Homeschool Enrollment Trends

	Estimated Contemporary Homeschool Population				
	1970s	1999	2003	2007	2010
Homeschool students (95% confidence level)	10,000 - 15,000	850,000	1,096,000	1,508,000	2,040,000
Percent of all school-aged students who were homeschooled	N/A	1.7%	2.2%	2.9%	3.8%

As homeschool population increases, higher education enrollment of the faction has potential to follow the trend, but tracking these students can prove to be difficult due to lack of common admission standards and institutional admissions policies identifying homeschool populations (Duggan, 2010). The Profile of Undergraduate Students data excludes homeschool students from classification as high school completers (Staklis, 2010), but the Co-operative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) gives a rare glimpse at college enrollment of homeschooled students (Cogan, 2010). The study estimated 11,500 homeschooled college freshmen enrolled at 1,693 CIRP institutions in 2008. Campus personnel are now streamlining admissions policies providing a more accurate picture of homeschool enrollment in higher education (Haan & Cruickshank, 2008). Even though legislation requires institutions to admit homeschool students using the same requirements as public and private students, some colleges continue to question validity of transcripts provided by parents and urge students to develop an academic portfolio,

complete ACT or SAT exams, seek a GED diploma, or enroll in community college to generate transcript credits from an accredited institution.

Research specifically related to academic and social integration of homeschool students into higher education from sources outside the homeschool circle is minimal (Postlewaite, 2004). A significant body of homeschool research has been conducted directly by researchers and homeschool advocates associated with the HERI, the majority connected to academic achievement (Lubienski, Puckett, & Brewer, 2013). A study by Rudner (1999) demonstrated the challenges of collecting a random sample of homeschool students to establish non-anecdotal data of the population. First, homeschool students self-selected to participate in the study and took standardized tests offered through a testing service from a conservative, Christian university providing a sample non-representative of the homeschool population at large (Lubienski, Puckett, & Brewer, 2013). Secondly, the actual homeschool population was impossible to pinpoint because of self-reporting and possible bias by homeschool associations. Two factors contribute to these challenges: legalization and data collection of the contemporary population is a recent occurrence and homeschool families are cautious to provide intimate information concerning home education due to past negative public opinion of the practice (Lubienski, Puckett, & Brewer, 2013).

Tinto's Interactionalist Theory of College Student Departure emphasizes the relationship of student entry characteristics, academic and social integration, and institutional commitment to student retention and completion (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). Identifying whether the influence of homeschool experience on social

and academic integration in college could play an integral role in viewing homeschool students through a holistic lens. The goal of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of how homeschool experiences influence academic and social integration in college to increase enrollment, persistence, and attainment of students, and institutional commitment to their needs and development of a sense of belonging on campus.

Statement of the Problem

Students and parents choose to participate in homeschool education for various reasons, including public school environment, religion and morality, instruction quality, physical or mental health problems, and other special needs (Gaither, 2009). In light of the motivation for receiving a portion of the K-12 education in a homeschool situation, these reasons influence the homeschool experience and ultimately, academic and social integration of students as they reach the college campus. According to Luebke's (1999) study, the most common concern institutions face when homeschoolers enroll in college is lack of socialization skills, diverse real world perspective, and limited interaction with diverse populations. The relatively new practice of contemporary homeschooling and limited research addressing the growing population as they enter higher education demands a conscientious examination of their academic and social interaction before and after entering college. As the population continues to multiply and their role in higher education becomes increasingly evident, it becomes imperative to support their academic and social needs. Viewing this population through the personal lens of the student provides a genuine depiction of their homeschool and college experience. This in turn,

contributes an enhanced understanding of how students academically and socially integrate, providing opportunity for practice and program development specific to their needs and enhancement of their college experience.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore how students perceived their homeschool experience contributing to their social and academic integration on the college campus. To align with data reports of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), this study defined homeschool students as schooled at home by parents or guardians at least part-time and not enrolled academically in a public or private school more than 25 hours per week. Students homeschooled for temporary illness were not included in this category (Staklis, 2010). Two unique campuses were chosen to provide the opportunity to draw from a broad spectrum of student characteristics. The researcher was familiar with homeschool students on the Community College campus, but realized, as with any student, campus characteristics appeal to a specific taxonomy of students. For this reason, students were included from a larger four-year university to gain a broad view of homeschool students in rural areas with little academic support outside the home, as well as, a metropolitan community with college professors providing advanced coursework for homeschool students. As with any population, the perception from within the group has the potential to be contrary to that of those looking in.

Guiding Research Questions

The following questions guided the research in developing an understanding of experiences of the homeschool population:

1. How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?
2. What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?
3. How do homeschool experiences serve as obstacles for academic and social integration?
4. How do homeschool experiences serve as opportunities for academic and social integration?

Research Structure Methodology

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to explore how students perceived their homeschool experiences contributing to social and academic integration on the college campus. The research design was developed to describe experiences through the lens of homeschool students. The principal method of gaining insight to the lived experiences of the population was through face-to-face interviews with the sample population.

My previous experience with homeschool students was limited to the Community College campus in which many students belonged to the same homeschool and church organizations or familial relatives. For this reason, I chose to sample students from two

campuses, State University and Community College, to gain greater depth of experiences from a diverse cross-section of different genders, college level, academic and social experiences, religion, and family backgrounds. Criterion sampling was chosen due to the limited population from which to elicit participants. I requested interviews through e-mail from students falling within the given parameters of the study from query lists provided by each institution. Potential students were enrolled in at least their second semester of study allowing time for institutional student integration. After a difficult period obtaining ample subjects through criterion sampling, I transitioned to snowball sampling until the goal of 20 students was attained.

The researcher transcribed digitally recorded interviews and field notes verbatim promptly after each interview. Results were color coded according to student and entered into a master text document in congruence with each research question. Meaningful data emerged through the interview process, inserted into an Excel spreadsheet according to student, and organized in categories. Preliminary patterns appearing to belong together were organized, analyzed, and coded according to category. The process was evolutionary and proliferated with each analysis review, revealing a greater understanding of the population experience. Spreadsheet analysis was chosen to conduct preliminary research analysis rather than using an automated program to develop a closer relationship to the findings of homeschool student experience. Original research methodology called for triangulation by means of social media audit. Due to the limited number of participants granting access to their Facebook page, a series of validity assessments were conducted using homeschool students not associated with sample

participants. Student comments were documented and analyzed for similarity and deviation from participant results.

The Researcher

I am a full-time tenured faculty member at a community college in the Rocky Mountain states. Fall of 2014 marked my twenty-fourth year as instructor and program director in the music department on that campus. I hold a bachelor's degree in music education and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Montana State University and am currently working on a doctorate in adult and higher education on that campus. I was first introduced to homeschool education when my daughter was entering school. The idea was new to the community, as it had just become legal in the United States. We did not choose to homeschool because she was an only child and felt she needed the social integration a public or private school could provide. Since that time, I have worked with homeschool students on a daily basis on my home campus. Many of these students enroll in courses as early as the age of sixteen, in academic areas homeschool education cannot deliver. One of these areas is music performance. Many of the students register for only one or two courses without academic advice from campus faculty or staff and navigate the college experience on their own. This may become problematic as they enroll full-time and courses necessary for transfer are not on their transcripts. As more homeschool students enrolled in my courses and became part of the music community, I observed strengths and limitations of the population contributing to their college experience. I conducted a qualitative pilot study to determine some of the

perceived characteristics of the population in an attempt to advance my method of instruction to enhance their college experience.

The literature review provided limited evidence outside homeschool association researchers and publications focusing on homeschool students. Most of the literature was quantitative in nature, stressing demographics and academic success of the population. My inquisition continued to gravitate toward student perceptions of the homeschool experience and eventual college academic and social integration. I was aware of possible personal bias due to previous experience teaching homeschool students and how it may affect the research. My objective was to remain impartial during all aspects of the study to provide a clear, honest depiction of student's experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. To remain true to the study, I not only interviewed students on my campus, but State University, a four-year institution for which I had no direct connection to students or past history as their instructor. I was not a homeschool parent, nor do I have any bias for or against homeschooling. The focus of this study was to contribute to the academic and social success of this population.

Introduction to Literature

Two distinct factions in the 1960s and 1970s motivated the contemporary homeschool system seeking a better answer to a faltering education system (Isenberg, 2007). One unit was led by fundamentalist religion and the other in philosophical search for a higher quality of academic education. Improving instruction was the objective of homeschool families who were identified as pedagogues by Van Galen (Collom, 2005).

The focus of the group was to decentralize the education system and place the responsibility of education with the family. The second group, ideologues, gained momentum and dominance among the homeschool population in the 1980s. This group was comprised of members from the religious right striving to separate from secular practices and instill religious values in their children. Conservative families with stay at home mothers were more likely to fit this model, but spousal involvement was also imperative. The values of pedagogues were referred to as earth based and ideologues as heaven based. These groups joined forces throughout the next decade to secure legal rights for homeschool education, develop networks to support program development, and establish statewide homeschool organizations (Isenberg, 2007). Increased development of the internet provided a pathway for greater connection between homeschool organizations and families, contributing to a surge in the movement.

Current research no longer labels homeschool families in two categories, but identifies four reasons for school choice including: religious values, academic and pedagogical, dissatisfaction with public school systems, and special needs (Collom, 2005). Special needs range from physical to emotional limitations, family travel related to parent occupation, actors, performers, and athletes. The predisposition of these categories to overlap and expand led to enrollment growth from 13,000 K-12 homeschool students in the late 1970s to approximately 1.5 million in 2007 (NCES, 2010). According to Ray (2014), approximately 2 million students were home educated in the United States in the spring of 2010. Reporting of homeschool data continues to be challenging due to diverse

state homeschool reporting laws limiting precise data collection, but the trend seems to show continued growth at an estimated 2% to 8% per year nationwide.

Demographics

The average homeschool student comes from a White, two-parent household, with one parent in the workforce (NCES, 2010). Seventy-seven percent of homeschool students are White, constituting 3.9% of all school age White students, compared to 0.8% of Black, and 1.5% of Hispanics students. Eighty-nine percent of homeschool students come from two parent homes with 54% of those households having one parent in the work force. The rate of homeschool families with both parents in the work force increased from 25% in 2003 to 33.8% in 2007. This increase may be attributed to development of distance education technology providing families more curriculum options and allowing mothers to enter the workforce. Homeschooling was the choice of 7% of all students falling in this category compared to 2% of other family classifications. Families tend to have three or more children (60%) compared to 44% of public and 41% private school students. Parents of homeschool students are likely to have at least some college education, earn \$25,000 to \$75,000 per year, and live in urban areas. Of the 1.5 million homeschool students, 80% are homeschooled full time, while 20% concurrently enroll part time in public or private institutions for nine to 25 hours per week. Male and female homeschool students enrolled in similar numbers in 1999 and 2003, but in 2007, females outnumbered males 58.1 to 41.9%. Families with household incomes of \$25,000 or less saw a 15% decrease from 1999 to 2007, while those earning \$75,000 or more increased from 17.4 to 33.2%. Parents' education demonstrated the greatest variance

within the high school diploma or less subgroup with a decline from 24.5% to 13.7% of all homeschool parents. Parents with some college increased 6.4% and those with a bachelor's degree increased 4.4% from 2003 to 2007. Graduate or professional degree varied slightly from 1999 to 2007, down from 22.3% to 20.5% during that eight year period.

A similar survey conducted by Ray (2010) showed slightly different results from the homeschool community perspective. In his survey of 11,739 homeschoolers, 76.8% were conservative Protestant and 95.2% identified themselves as Christian. Over 91% of homeschool students were White with nearly 98% of homeschool students coming from two-parent homes. Eighty percent of households have a full-time stay at home mother with families of three or more children (68.1%). Sixty-two percent of mothers in the sample had received a bachelor's degree or higher and almost half (45.9%) of families earn from \$80,000 to \$100,000. Ray's report also documents homeschool students perform on average in the 84th to 89th percentile. Table 2 provides comparative view of NCES 2010 homeschool demographics to research by Ray during the same period.

Table 2. Homeschool Demographics

Demographic	NCES (2010)	Ray (2010)
White	77.0%	91.0%
Two parent home	89.0%	95.0%
At least one parent in the workforce	54.0%	80.0%
Both parents in the workforce	33.8%	20.0%
Children in family		
Three or more	60.0%	68.1%
Four or more		42.2%
Seven or more		6.3%
Parent education bachelor's degree or higher	N/A	50.0%
Family income		
Less than \$25,000	N/A	18.0%
\$25,000 - \$75,000	N/A	44.0%
\$50,000-\$74,000	N/A	25.0%
\$75,000 or greater	33.2%	13.0%

Conceptual Framework

A preliminary conceptual framework developed from literature referencing homeschool students within Astin's I-E-O (input, environment, output) Model and Theory of Involvement and Bowen's (1977) indicators of student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The goal of the framework was to exemplify how homeschool students perceived their experiences influencing college academic and social integration. Using Astin's I-E-O Theory, the framework linked themes according to Bowen's goals and objectives for college students to Astin's theory stressing the importance of academic and social involvement for student success. Drawing upon Bowen's indicators of success as projected outcomes, the framework utilized homeschool platform and student learning characteristics as inputs. Self-discovery experiences developing interests and talents provided opportunity for bonding and bridging capital within the environment of transitioning to college (Bowen, 1977). These experiences, student learning

characteristics, and gained capital contributed to college academic and social integration. The conceptual framework implemented three of Bowen's (1977) indicators of student success in higher education: cognitive learning, emotional and moral development, and practical competence as they related to students' perceptions of homeschool experiences and contributed to academic and social integration in college.

Significance of the Study

The study of homeschool students outside the homeschool circle is limited for several reasons. First, the rapid growth of this population has been a recent phenomenon. Second, the practice of homeschooling has only been legal in all fifty states since 1993. Third, compilation of experiential data focusing on homeschool students began in 1999. These factors contribute to recent numbers of homeschool students matriculating into higher education. As numbers continue to increase, institutions have the responsibility to gain an understanding of this population and how it fits into the academic and social puzzle. The goal of this study was to serve as a guide for homeschool program development, contributing to enhanced understanding of how students academically and socially integrate, and opportunity for practice and program development specific to student needs in the college experience.

Definition of Terms and Concept

1. Homeschool Students: To align study results with NCES data reporting, homeschool students are defined as any homeschool student whose education is

designed and implemented by their parent or guardian at least part-time and not enrolled in public or private school for more than 25 hours per week. Students with a temporary illness or exclusively participating in public or private school extracurricular activities will be excluded from this definition (NCES, 2010). No specific parameters were considered in relation to years or period of homeschooling for this study.

2. **Academic Integration:** Intellectual, psychological, and physical energy a student commits to assimilating into the campus-learning environment will define academic integration in this study. This includes classroom and academic interaction with peers, faculty, and staff outside the formal arena (Astin, 1993).
3. **Social Integration:** Social integration refers to the level homeschool student social behaviors and upbringing assimilates with that of peers, faculty, and staff within the college environment. Assimilation of social behaviors embraces development of social capital, forming campus networks, extracurricular and collaborative participation, and involvement with peers, staff, and faculty outside the learning environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The premise of this study lies with the assumption homeschool students are unique to the general population. This assumption is derived from the historically homogeneous backgrounds and demographics of these students and data provided by National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The question of this study is not

whether homeschool student characteristics are unique, but how their homeschool experience contributes to their college experience. This study will not attempt to answer why families choose to homeschool, even though these reasons influence homeschool experience and college academic and social integration.

Length of homeschool experience will not be a factor for selection for several reasons: each student, no matter how long homeschooled, will have contributing experiences; diversity of homeschool experience is a true picture of the homeschool population; length of the homeschool experience may vary according to reason for homeschooling; and homeschool population on some campuses may be limited.

Transferability in this qualitative study is belief in the value of information gained using credible methods and trustworthy actions of the researcher. Data does not support a given hypothesis, but contributes to development of knowledge through a working hypothesis. Although homeschool enrollment in Montana colleges is steadily increasing, numbers are limited, reducing the population from which to gather information. Inferences and comparisons may be conducted in reference to this particular study, but data is contextual to this specific situation. Emergent themes may continue to develop through additional study to advance knowledge of the population.

Several factors may cause delimitations to this study. First, the majority of students from each campus belonged to the same community homeschool organizations. They were like-minded, many times related, families who shared similar academic and social activities within the association. Second, limited number of homeschool students agreeing to provide interviews led to snowball sampling of related, friends, or enrolled in

the same college programs, specifically, music. Thirdly, several interviews were conducted in the summer of 2013 after students had graduated, possibly providing a different perspective to the homeschool experience.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore how students perceive their homeschool experiences contributing to their social and academic integration on the college campus. As homeschool students enroll on college campuses in greater numbers, it becomes imperative for higher education to gain an understanding of opportunities and obstacles this potentially unique population brings to campus. The following chapter will examine the literature used within the research to support and organize the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how students perceived their homeschool experiences contributing to social and academic integration on the college campus to gain a deeper understanding of the population through the lens of their own experiences. As more homeschool students enter college, it becomes necessary for faculty, staff, and administration to gain an understanding of home education and the skills and limitations homeschoolers bring to campus to improve campus services to the population.

An in depth investigation of literature surrounding homeschool education was conducted to develop of framework of knowledge related to how homeschooling influenced students in building their academic and social capital, which would ultimately influence college experience. The literature review also examined social and academic developmental theories relating to the conceptual framework of the study. Initial analysis of literature encompassed homeschool education, student characteristics, student involvement, academic and social integration, and developmental theories. Searches were conducted through the Montana State University (MSU) library online data base using the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), Academic Search Complete, and InfoTracPowerSearch. Also considered were books, journals, and dissertations related to the topics discovered through library search. Online investigation outside academia

included homeschool associations to gain an inside perspective of the families and what information is disseminated directly from those within homeschooling. This information was accessed online through National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) and Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HLDA). Online web searches for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) provided a view of homeschooling in Montana and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) afforded insight into national homeschool data. After initial exploration, the following search subjects contributed to the final review: homeschool, private school, public school, charter school, early start, homeschool co-ops, dual enrollment, unschooling, parental encouragement, academic integration, social integration, pre-entry characteristics, student success, personality traits, academic preparation, academic and social engagement, capital, student involvement, Astin, Bowen, Braxton, Pascarella, Terenzini, and Tinto. This literature provided a lens to view homeschool students and fundamental factors for conceptual framework development using Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Bowen's indicators of student success.

Homeschool Education

National Trends

Homeschool education evolved for centuries in the United States, changing with society. One element remained unchanged throughout the stages of development is parental rights to instruct their children versus public education for the greater good of

the country. The ebb and flow of homeschooling moved the practice to become a viable choice in contemporary academic education.

Educating students in the family home was a common practice by early Native Americans and Christian immigrants in the United States prior to the 1700s (Cogan, 2010). Growth of the country and use of child labor during the Industrial Revolution of the late 19th century advanced momentum for compulsory public education to educate and protect children (Hanna, 2012). Compulsory public education became law in 1918, providing education for not only the elite, but also all classes of students, making homeschooling controversial, if not illegal, in many states. Court actions in the early 1920s allowed parents to send their children to private schools on the grounds of religious freedom and personal choice.

By the 1950s, many parents sought alternatives for education because of national fear of communist influence and dissatisfaction with public education following the launch of the Russian Sputnik (Hanna, 2012). A second motivation of the contemporary homeschool movement was a reaction to loss of influence on local schools felt by families. The number of high school graduates nearly doubled from 1930 to 1970 and the required school year grew from 144 to 178 days (Gaither, 2008). Some 117,000 school districts in 1939 diminished to 41,000 in 1959 by consolidating into larger, less community centered entities. This movement was also fueled by violent actions on college campuses such as Kent State and political assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Over seven thousand communes surfaced in rural areas during the early 1970s, with the ultimate goal of developing a new society. Opposing external rules and advocating personal autonomy, families started their own schools or began homeschooling to provide their children a better education than the public school system (Gaither, 2008). Homeschool education was a lasting legacy of the movement.

The libertarian left led by John Holt, teacher and humanist, promoted homeschooling as a feasible answer to decentralizing public school education and providing greater autonomy for parents in their children's education (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). This facet of homeschool teaching made up of ex-hippies and homesteaders with New Age philosophies was known as unschooling. Over half of the United States prohibited homeschooling until it was legalized in all 50 states in 1993 and state standards were finalized in 1999.

Three Supreme Court cases in the 1960s were instrumental in furthering homeschool expansion (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). *Engel v. Vitale* banned prayer recitation in public school classrooms in 1963. The same year, *Abington School District v. Schempp* prohibited voluntary prayer in state schools. Finally, *Murray v. Curlett* removed the *Bible* from state schools. Evangelical and fundamentalist parents began withdrawing students from public schools seeking alternative education focused on Christian values and practice.

Increased desegregation and public school instruction of evolution and sex education in the 1960s and 1970s turned evangelical Protestants toward establishing private Christian schools (Gaither, 2008). These organizations went from 308 schools in

1973 to 3,957 in 2005. Some studies estimate another 25,000 non-accredited, independent schools. Even with numerous private school options, many families turned to homeschooling due to the high cost of tuition, theological differences, special needs of children, desire to spend more time with their children, or Biblical belief education as primarily the responsibility of parents. Now legal in all 50 states, a student is considered to be homeschooled if:

Their parents reported them as schooled at home instead of a public or private school, their enrollment in public or private schools does not exceed 25 hour a week, and they are not being homeschooled solely because of a temporary illness (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009, p. 309).

Current homeschool education identifies primarily with two factions, ideologues and pedagogues, or a hybrid combination of the two. Ideologues are predominantly conservative, fundamentalist Christians who oppose public and/or private school teachings and believe in strong family relationships. Moral and religious education as part of children's education is imperative (Hanna, 2012). Ideologues maintain a structured education environment incorporating values and beliefs of parents with the majority choosing pre-packaged curriculum with time structured schedules.

The perception of poor teaching and curriculum of public schools leads pedagogues to choose home education (Hanna, 2012). Parents of this faction are usually well-educated and wish to provide their children with the opportunity to thrive in an academic system encouraging individuality and creativity. Pedagogue education is student centered and holistic rather than organized time and curriculum practice of the ideologues. Curriculum is designed for the individual student with extensive practical application, laboratories, and service learning.

Studies conducted in 1998 and again in 2008 demonstrated changes in reasons families chose to homeschool. (Hanna, 2012). The first study found 56% of families considered themselves to be ideologues, 22% as pedagogues, and 20% viewed themselves as a combination of ideals. Comparatively, ten years later 48.6% identified themselves as ideologues, 24.6% as pedagogues, and 26.4% felt they were a combination. A small fraction of the second study population (2.2%) homeschooled for other reasons including medical, special needs, and safety issues. Table 3 compares motivations for homeschooling in 1998 and 2008. Table 4 then compares motivations for homeschooling according to 1998 demographics.

Table 3. Primary Motivations for Homeschooling 1998-2008

Motivation for Homeschooling	1998	2008
Ideologues	50%	46.8%
Pedagogues	22%	24.6%
Combination	20%	26.4%
Other	0%	2.2%

Table 4. Motivations for Homeschooling According to Demographics 1998

Motivation for Homeschooling	Urban	Urban-suburban	Suburban	Suburban-rural	Rural
Ideologue	20%	22%	41%	18%	38%
Pedagogue	16%	12%	17%	6%	4%
Combination	4%	16%	21%	4%	6%
Other	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%

Table 5. Motivations for Homeschooling According to Demographics 2008

Motivation for Homeschooling	Urban	Urban Suburban	Suburban	Suburban Rural	Rural
Ideologue	18	19	24	18	31
Pedagogue	12	14	21	5	6
Combination	7	12	32	4	7
Other	0	1	1	1	2

Homeschool Curricula

Contemporary homeschool curricula and pedagogy have vastly changed since 1970. Immeasurable advancements in media, technology and internet provide parents with limitless access to resources previously unavailable, difficult to access, or available only in hard copy format (Andrade, 2008). These resources provide opportunities for parents who previously could not afford homeschool curricula and resources, do not have the academic background, or lack the ability to develop and communicate effectively within homeschool communities to make the choice to homeschool. Technological advances provide limitless resources at little or no charge to families. Even at that, homeschool families can expect to pay \$300 to \$1,000 per child for educational resources (Hanna, 2012).

Since 1995, homeschool families built strong network systems with access more to 70 publishers of homeschool resources, education software, video recorded lectures from actual classrooms, newsletters, magazines, public school partnerships, and national organizations supporting homeschool efforts (Hanna, 2012) and (Templeton, 2008). Appearance of virtual learning platforms began in approximately 1996 with an estimated 33% of all homeschool students learning on-line (Templeton, 2008). Virtual schools are publically funded and families may be eligible for financial incentives for enrollment. Non-homeschool families also find these resources helpful to supplement public and private education of their children.

Homeschool families currently use three main categories of curricula: classical, prepackaged curriculum, and unschooling (Templeton, 2008). Classical homeschooling

methods are embedded in books from *The Trilogy of the Middle Ages* and *Great Books from the Western World* teaching grammar, logic, and rhetoric in stages coinciding with the child's development. Skill development includes memorization, writing, factual knowledge, critical thinking, apologetics, literature, communication, independent thinking, and lifelong learning. The following section briefly describes packaged traditional homeschool methods, which are also illustrated in Table 6.

Charlotte Mason Method provides a wide spectrum of real life activities in which students learn from first-hand experience, the museum and zoo, field trips, and whole books, which stimulate imagination and develop a broad vocabulary (Templeton, 2008). A central focus of the method is sharing the learned knowledge with others through communication and journal writing.

Many homeschool students use the Eclectic Method of study combining various resources, integrating between disciplines within the curricula, and a flexible schedule to afford new opportunities for exploration (Templeton, 2008). Knowledge development of specific themes leads to discussion, experimentation, and project development in establishing individual subject knowledge.

Individually paced learning and development of younger students is the focus of the Montessori Method (Templeton, 2008). Emphasizing independence, freedom and life skills, older students experience peer related interactions, self-directed learning for intellectual development, and discovery of the world. This method emphasizes a minimalistic environment, devoid of clutter, to avoid confusion in learning. Montessori

students are discouraged from computer and television use and encouraged to engage all five senses when learning.

The School-at-Home method is the most expensive method and leads to high parent burnout (Templeton, 2008). An all-inclusive program designed to reach the needs of homeschool parents new to the practice, provides detailed lessons and materials for parents who need added guidance and allow for variance to create their own lessons. Additional modification by parents is recommended to increase motivation for the student.

Unit Studies Method is a frequent alternative for families with more than one child (Templeton, 2008). Units designed for modification for students of any level of development are used for all children in the family at the same time. Educational kits are provided to coordinate with field trips, activities, and experiments encouraging discovery and multidisciplinary thinking.

Families desiring a method allowing the greatest freedom choose John Holt's unschooling method of teaching (Templeton, 2008). Students control learning through interest led everyday experiences from Holt's belief that living and learning are co-dependent. Unschooling employs informal lessons, scheduling, textbooks, grades, and tests, but encourages creative thought, exploration of knowledge, and integration of skills and knowledge through activities.

Students from the Waldorf Method learn from a holistic method of fine arts and nature focusing on body, mind, and spirit (Templeton, 2008). Students do not use traditional textbooks progressing through the stages of personal development, but

develop their own curriculum according to maturation. Learning to read is delayed and individuals are dissuaded from using the television and computer.

Advancing technology and media provides many methods and resources for homeschool families never imagined two decades ago (Templeton, 2008). Homeschool families develop co-ops where knowledge, resources, instructors, and activities are shared. Previously secretive and secluded education at home is now a community of learners interacting with peers and multiple generations of the homeschool community. Parents who choose to educate their children at home, now have countless opportunities and resources at their fingertips to provide a quality academic and social education in preparation for adulthood. Table 6 identifies and briefly describes common homeschool curriculum models discussed in previous paragraphs.

Table 6. Common Homeschool Curriculum Models

Common Curriculum Models	Overview
Charlotte Mason	Literature based Real life applications
Eclectic Curriculum	Variety of curricula to fit learner
Maria Montessori	Natural, self-directed learning
School-at-Home	Purchased boxed curriculum
Unit Studies	Organized by topic or learner interest
Unschooling (John Holte)	Learner interest with minimal structure
Waldorf (Rudolf Steiner)	Childs development stages Integration of the arts
Multiple Intelligence (Howard Garner theory)	Learner strengths as mode for learning
Prepackaged and other curriculum	A Beka Curriculum Saxon Math Hewitt Homeschooling Resources Omnibus Apologia Educational Ministries Singapore Math K-12 Pennsylvania online program Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) Homeschooling Books: Comprehensive Curricula Heritage Home School Academy Curriculum Calvert School Curriculum Core Curriculum of American

Homeschool Co-op Organizations

Co-op organizations provide opportunities for families to supplement home education and have become key elements for peer and parent interaction and networking, classroom environment for students, group activities, field trips, access to resources, discipline experts, outreach, faith based interaction, and social opportunities (Harris, 2008). Some faith based co-ops require a statement of faith, but others are open to all beliefs or have no religious connection. Students benefit from co-op experiences through the ability to take classes, which are not conducive to home education, such as robotics,

sports, drama, band, and choir and serve as an umbrella institution for documenting transcripts (Komis, 2007). Parents holding bachelor's or advanced degrees or have real world experience contribute to co-op classroom experiences for students and some state formal teaching programs use co-ops as an outlet for student teacher training (Everhart & Harper, 1997).

One of the main concerns from people outside the homeschool community is the controversy concerning social skills among its students and families (Komis, 2007). Participation in co-ops provide peer interaction for students and their parents, interaction with individuals of many ages, and skill development necessary for life outside of homeschool circles. Rural families benefit from co-op interaction and activities due to seclusion and lack of local resources (Black, 2008). Pooling talents and activities with other rural families provides broad academic opportunities and network capability for parents with their peers. Lack of diversity of opinion and population is seen as a limitation from many in the outside world, but homeschool families value the interaction with people of common beliefs and backgrounds, which is difficult to achieve in public school situations (Sieg, 2011).

The practice of homeschool military families has grown since 2002 when the military confirmed homeschooling as a legitimate form of education (Press, 2013). Estimates of the Military Child Education Coalition identify up to nine percent of military children as homeschooled. Co-ops become the contact point for military families as spouses are deployed or transferred to a new location. Education of children is not disrupted by moving and children are not hindered by various qualities of education

according to location. Co-ops can be located on the base to accommodate groups of students and taught by discipline specialists from military families and personnel.

Early Start Programs

Early Start programs appear in several forms: Advanced Placement (AP), dual credit courses, early start programs, International Baccalaureate (IB), and transfer credits (Lyons, 2012). Early start programs referred to in this study allow students to dual enroll in college courses for high school and college credit prior to high school graduation. Each of the two institutions in this study offered early start programs.

Availability of early start programs provides opportunities for homeschool families to supplement homeschooling in disciplines and activities not available at home, or provide resources for advanced courses in which parents lack the necessary background or equipment to offer. Financial benefits of taking college courses at a reduced cost while living at home and the ability to jump start their college education contributed to enrollment (Mechur Karp & Hughes, 2012). Enrollment provides students ability to experience college courses at one or more institutions while in high school and ease transition into a full-time college experience.

Research also shows disadvantages to early start programs for homeschool students (Heath, 2008). Credits earned by students enrolled in early start programs may cause complications in grade level identification, ultimately affecting transferability, housing, scholarships, and program eligibility. Early start credits are not accepted equally, transferred seamlessly, or recognized in all institutions

A study by Lyons (2012) identified desire for challenge, ability to earn as many credits as possible prior to entering college full-time, decrease duplication of courses between high school and college, and financial as reasons students choose enrollment in an early start program. Students identified positive outcomes of early start enrollment, including courses were more demanding, prepared them for college, and being treated as adults. Several students worried about transferability to other colleges, whereas AP classes have a history of easier transfer.

Montana Homeschool Trends

As enrollment declined in Montana K-12 public school enrollment from 154,875 in 2000 to 142,908 in 2012 and private schools from 8,537 to 7,757, homeschool population during this period increased from 3,627 to 4,329 students (OPI, 2013).

American Indian enrollment patterns during the same period decreased from 16,293 to 16,228, Asian students went from 1,308 to 1,193, Hispanics rose from 2,658 to 5,644, Black students from 877 to 1,399, and Pacific Islander population grew from 165 to 336, while White student numbers fell from 133,574 to 115,094 students. If the homeschool population is a minority subgroup within the Montana K-12 population, it has potential to provide a unique pool of higher education applicants. Table 7 compares public, private, and homeschool enrollment numbers for 2000-2012 in Montana.

Table 7. Montana School Enrollment 2000-2012

School Type	2000	2012
Public School	154,875	142,908
Private School	8,537	7,757
Homeschool	3,627	4,329

State of Understanding on Homeschooling

Literature shows various factors influencing homeschool achievement. First, homeschool mothers certified to teach were linked to positive achievement in two studies (Collom, 2005). Second, three bodies of research demonstrated no relation to achievement and parents' academic attainment, while an additional three studies revealed a positive correlation between the two variables. Third, research by Rudner (1999) established significance between several variables in relation to academic achievement of homeschool students. Students homeschooled their entire academic career surpassed those only enrolled during part of their K-12 experience, but the study made no comparison of either population to private and public school students. The study also showed positive effects in relation to financial investment parents dedicated to educating their children, family income, and parent educational attainment. Hours students watched television was negatively related to standardized test scores.

State of Homeschooling

Several factors limit researchers when comparing homeschool students with private, charter, and public schools including: tracking academic progress, college admissions standards and requirements, methods of instruction, class size, demographic homogeneity, parental encouragement, pre-entry characteristics, personality traits, and academic preparation. Each of these variables points to the uniqueness of the population (Hadderman, 2002). Tracking academic progress of homeschool students in K-12 education is difficult due to variances in state law and policy requirements surrounding enrollment and education of homeschool students. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Reasoning Test data from 2000 implies homeschool students are above average,

with scores of 1100 compared to 1019 for the general population and average ACT scores of 22.5 compared to 20.8. Other achievement tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Tests of Achievement Proficiency, demonstrate similar results during the same period (Hadderman, 2002). Members of academia are cautious when comparing scores of homeschool students to the general population due to voluntary reporting of student achievement, parental test administration, and homogeneous demographic variables of homeschool families compared to heterogeneous general populations (Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, et al, 2004).

Higher education lacks common admission standards and policies in relation to homeschool populations, even though enrollment for K-12 homeschool students has increased 74% from 1999 to 2007 (Duggan, 2010). The mere lack of a high school transcript makes even application to higher education difficult for homeschool students. Many institutions continue to question validity of transcripts provided by homeschool parents and urge students to seek a General Education Development (GED) diploma or enroll in community college to generate transcript credits from an accredited institution, neither of which is a common recommendations for public and private school graduates.

Context of Homeschooling

The complexity of comparing homeschool student academic achievement to public or private school students is even more evident when considering methods of instruction (Rudner, 1999). Public and private school classrooms of two dozen diverse students following a prescribed curriculum are far from similar to the one-on-one approach of the homeschool experience granted to students through self-paced, individually designed curriculum, implemented and supported by parents. Motivated students with grades excelling ahead of their public school peers are not uncommon to homeschool situations. Research is limited regarding whether these students differ characteristically from graduates of public schools and if those qualities translate to the higher education environment.

Another limiting factor in comparing school environments is demographic homogeneity of homeschool families (Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, et al, 2004). These families are more likely to be White, have married parents with more formal education, higher family income, higher rate of stay at home mothers, and view fewer hours of television per week than non-homeschool students. Eighty-nine percent of homeschool students come from two parent families compared to 77% of non-homeschool students. According to Rudner (1999), these characteristics may be influential in academic achievement. Families join homeschool communities with common demographics, interests, purpose, and mission. Demographic and environmental differences of public school students limit the ability to make comparisons of this population as a whole to homeschool students.

Parental encouragement has been identified as a key factor of college enrollment for high school graduates (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). Parents who attended college are familiar with the importance of college, serve as role models, and are equipped to assist their children in college endeavors, while parents of first generation students may lack the time, knowledge, or finances necessary to support their children. Student exposure to college and extent of college expectation are also related to parent education level, as parents who attended college are more likely to take their children on college visits and express their values of higher education. Parents with lower education levels may lack the knowledge, confidence, or self-efficacy to be involved in the student's education (Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). A parent's own experience in school may inhibit participation in student activities or limit comprehension of the college environment and bureaucratic systems due to language and cultural disparity.

Encouragement to attend college may be provided to students in the following forms: college discussions, academic preparation, high expectations for degree attainment, and parent attendance at school functions (Rowan-Kenyon, Bell, & Perna, 2008). Parental involvement contributes to social and cultural capital for student success with low income families relying on extended family for support and middle class families depending on other parents to build needed capital for college enrollment.

Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, et al (2004) studied the relationship between student perception of parental involvement and academic achievement. Results demonstrated correlation between student perceptions of parental involvement and academic achievement of homeschool was not statistically different from that of public school

students. Perception of parental involvement significantly influenced ACT scores of students in both homeschool and public school environments. This study credits parental involvement as key to academic achievement no matter what the population.

Research continues to support the value of parental involvement in student success, prompting institutions to develop practices integrating parents and school throughout a student's education journey (Smith, 1991). As undergraduates matriculate to higher education, involved parents continue to engage in their student's educational career. Since parental involvement is greater among middle and high income families, low income and minority students may experience fewer academic and social advantages compared to those of higher socioeconomic status. Development of a support community comprised of parents, faculty, staff, and administration contributes to student success and retention.

Student Characteristics

Pre-entry Characteristics

According to Tinto's Theory of Student Departure, students arrive on campus with a set of pre-entry characteristics including personal, family, and academic skills and objectives related to their personal lives and college attendance (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). Positive interaction within the college environment contributes to community integration and persistence, while negative interaction may lead to attrition. Attrition and retention are contingent on fit of the campus to the student's pre-entry characteristics, goals, and commitments.

Customary epistemologies for quantitative study focusing on student success maintain persistence and attainment are contingent on personal characteristics of the student (Bensimon, 2007). Models of student success point to the advantage of relationships between faculty and student, but research is limited supporting benefits of casual interaction in relation to how students view their college experience. Exploration of entering college students' characteristics and perceived experiences prior to higher education contributes to theory development by researchers from their personal knowledge and past experiences, playing a role in achievement of positive or negative academic outcomes for students. The role of student characteristics, motivation, goal orientation, and engagement relative to persistence and attainment is conventionally viewed as a product of effort put forth by students themselves. Gaining perspective of how homeschool experiences contribute to these characteristics provides a picture specific to the population and ultimate academic and social integration in the college experience.

Personality Traits

Personality traits can affect college success through their influence on first year college grades, critical thinking, and quality of effort in academic and social activities (Bauer & Liang, 2003). Predictors such as verbal ability, aptitude test scores, gender, family financial characteristics, experiences in and out of the classroom, and personality traits have been studied in relation to college outcomes. Aptitude test scores can explain the greatest variance in relation to critical thinking skills and high school grade point average (GPA) is related to first year college grades. In his 1994 research, Pascarella

found not only direct relation between precollege characteristics to college outcomes, but also indirect relations through course activities, formal classroom experience, and out of class experiences.

The study of personality characteristics such as need for structure, conscientiousness, and extroversion in relation to college success has been limited, but conscientiousness in the form of organization and purposeful and persistent behavior has been shown to directly and indirectly effect retention through college GPA (Bauer & Liang, 2003). Conscientious students open to new experiences may become more involved in academic and social activities, which lead to higher levels of critical thinking compared to those who are anxious in such situations. Social relationships are important to transition from high school to college, academic and cultural learning, and development. Students may benefit from gaining an understanding of the contribution of homeschool experience to personality trait development and how these characteristics play a role in college integration.

Academic Preparation

Numerous factors linked to student retention in higher education include academic preparation, integration into the college environment, and academic achievement (Strayhorn, 2010). Academic preparation provides knowledge and skills necessary for college enrollment and becomes a predictor of student retention and completion. These knowledge and skill sets contribute to success in the academic arena and encourage integration into the college environment promoting attainment. Research shows experiences in and out of the classroom, dedication to homework, co-curricular

activities, grades, social integration, and peer and faculty interaction are related to academic integration. Disparity of academic preparation between minority students and their counterparts may contribute to lower success rates in students lacking knowledge and skills necessary for rigors of the college environment.

Studies of homeschool students by Rudner found one fourth of homeschool students perform one or more grades above their public and private school peers (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Ray found similar numbers within homeschool students in grades one through four, but by eighth grade were performing four grade levels above the national average. Homeschool students scored between 75th and 85th percentile on standardized tests compared to 65th and 75th percentile in private school students and 50th percentile in public school students.

Academic and Social Integration

Social and academic integration evolves as individuals develop the identity of a student and assimilate into the college experience (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). Theories by Astin and Pascarella underline the relationship between precollege characteristics, positive and negative interactions, and engagement with student retention. Quality interactions contribute to level of student success through student learning and development. In postulating homeschool students are a unique population with incoming experiences contributing to their academic and social integration, this study examines research focused on characteristics shown to influence student outcomes, including pre-entry characteristics, personality traits, academic preparation, and academic and social

engagement. The study will then view these characteristics through the lens of homeschool students to develop a sense for how they perceive these characteristics influencing their college experience.

Members of higher education realize the importance of social and academic integration to student success and attainment (Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Persistence is contingent on personal characteristics of the student and experiences while in college. Engagement in and out of class with faculty and peers, co-curricular activities, and informal interaction leads to a sense of belonging and contributing to retention. Building of social capital, scaffolding, student involvement, and academic engagement are central elements for student success.

Level of engagement in an academic course is related to degree attainment with the level of engagement correlating to efficiency in reaching attainment (Svanum & Bigatti, 2009). Students with elevated levels of academic engagement have graduation rates 1.5 times greater than those less involved and reach attainment one semester earlier than others. Research of Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) maintains the same relationship between levels of academic engagement and learning.

Social Capital

Social capital includes networks and relationships students bring to campus and develop through the college experience. These associations provide connections for leadership and access to opportunities which otherwise may not be available (Strayhorn, 2010). Family, peers, and faculty contribute to development of values, linguistics, and cultural experience encompassing cultural capital. Elements of social and cultural capital

contribute to student success and retention by providing avenues for involvement in the college experience.

Putnam (2000) identifies social capital as resources, connections, engagement, trust, economic productivity, and growth a person develops through participation in social networks. He categorizes these relationships into two categories: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital is recognized in relationships entrenched in social networks with a common attribute, such as common ethnicity, region, faith, family, and interests. Bridging capital across normal social networks allows students to gain assets from diverse class, race, faith, or social groups (Siisiäinen, 2000). Interpersonal trust is identified by Putnam as a form of social capital acting as, “the lubricant of the inevitable frictions of social life,” (Beaudoin, 2011, p. 157) and a means to gain beneficial resources. Ability to form social capital is important for homeschool students bridging capital with heterogeneous individuals working in groups and organizations outside the homeschool circle.

Research conducted by the NHERI found homeschool students are above average in areas of social engagement in areas such as interaction, leadership, community service, and self-esteem (Ray, 2014). His survey indicated homeschool students interact with people other than their nuclear family through field trips, scouting, 4-H clubs, politics, church, sports, and community service. He maintains there is no empirical evidence conclusively supporting the premise homeschool education is the direct cause for this population to be above average in this area.

Academic Attainment

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), college grades are the most consistent predictor of persistence and attainment. Research focusing on college academic achievement of homeschool students is limited, partially because of the limited number enrolled in public institutions of higher education, but also because private institutions not receiving federal funding established for homeschool students, such as Patrick Henry College, are not required to report education data (Cogan, 2010). A study conducted at a medium sized, private doctoral institution in 2009 examined academic outcomes of students who had been homeschooled, of which 76 of the total enrolled 11,000 students were homeschooled. Academic achievement of homeschool students was significantly higher (3.37 GPA) after their first semester compared to the general population (3.08 GPA). The trend continued into fourth year comparisons with homeschool students earning 3.46 GPA and the general population averaging 3.16 GPA. Homeschool retention and graduation rates were not significantly related to homeschool enrollment, but were higher in both comparisons (88.6% homeschool retention compared to 87.6% overall and 66.7% homeschool graduation rate compared to the overall rate of 57.5%). After controlling for demographics, engagement, first term academic factors, and precollege academics, fall to fall retention, and four year graduation rates were not significantly different for homeschool students and publically educated students. College GPA continued to be higher for homeschool students. Table 8 summarizes and compares homeschool and non-homeschool student academic outcomes from a 2009 study at a private doctoral institution.

Table 8. Academic Outcomes at Private Doctoral Institution in 2009

	Sample Size	GPA	Fourth Year GPA	Retention Rate	Graduation Rate
Homeschooled	76	3.37	3.46	88.6%	66.7%
All other students	10,924	3.08	3.16	87.6%	57.5%

Several studies on the net effect of college demonstrate gains in reflective thinking cannot be explained by differences in academic ability (Pascarella & Terenzinni, 2005). In a 2000 study by Wood using results from the Reasoning About Current Issues Test (RCI), average freshmen to senior gains were 18 to 20 percentile points higher for students with nearly identical ACT scores (Micceri, 2010). A study conducted at the University of South Florida (USF) assessing the association of ACT and SAT scores of minority students found except for Asian students, there was no relation or slightly negative connection to academic progress, combination of USF GPA, and hours completed. After controlling for reported homeschool composite ACT scores of 26.5, compared to 25.0 within the overall cohort of students at a private, Midwest campus, the average homeschool GPA was significantly higher for the homeschool sample (Cogan, 2010). If the relationship between academic preparation (ACT scores) and academic progress holds true for homeschool students, what characteristics do these students bring to college from their homeschool experience that may account for higher GPA compared to the overall cohort?

Student Involvement

Academic and social involvement with other individuals is more limited within the lower class than thirty years ago, while upper class students continue to display social

trust through volunteering, social friendships, academic ambition, and self-esteem. Astin's research supports the significance of the quality and quantity of student involvement in student outcomes (Strayhorn, 2010). The level of student engagement, co-curricular activities, and frequency of involvement in college experiences are proportionate to student success. Characteristics of secondary institutions and their relationship with higher education combine with student social capital, parental involvement, and peer interaction to promote social and cultural capital encouraging retention (Wolniak & Engberg, 2007).

Many studies have identified student involvement as a contributing factor in student success (Svanum & Bigatti, 2009). Student motivation, social involvement, institutional commitment, and social support contribute to student involvement and ultimately academic engagement. Engagement in academic and social activities improves student success, increases retention, and the likelihood of degree attainment. Whether involvement is actual or perceived, the result is improved college success.

A study of 7,306 homeschooled adults were surveyed in 2004 to assess academic enrollment, civic engagement, and community involvement compared to the general public (Cogan, 2010). Results of this study revealed homeschoolers educated at home for seven or more years (N=5,254) were more likely to be involved in community service, vote in general elections, and enroll in college level courses than the non-homeschool educated population. Relating these results with studies linking involvement to college success, engagement should be a contributing factor to success as homeschool students enter higher education.

A study by Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvihill (2007) examining transition experiences of first-year homeschool college students found six issues homeschoolers faced when transitioning to college: leaving home, differing value systems, identity development, co-curricular involvement, confidence, and making friends. Leaving home was challenging for homeschool students living on campus, but they soon valued the independence the experience afforded, opportunities to develop friendships on campus, and the eventual sense of belonging on campus. For some students, college was the first interaction with individuals outside their Christian beliefs and their values were challenged. It was also the first experience making friends with non-homeschoolers. In developing their own identity, students learned to juggle homeschool and college friends. They participated in campus and Christian activities to develop new interests and keep grounding in their beliefs and morals. Through college activities, students gained confidence, developing assertiveness to academically and socially build friendships. The study showed homeschool students transitioning through Tinto's three stages of development: separation, transition, and incorporation as they adjusted to the college experience (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007).

Student Development Theories

As the number of homeschool students enters higher education, institutions must develop an understanding of experiences brought to campus by this population and their contribution to student success and institution dynamics. Student development theories of the last century contribute to the foundation of understanding developmental education (Boylan & Kerstiens, 1988). Cognitive theories of student development such as Astin's Model and Theory of Involvement suggests the influence of college on student change is related to degree of involvement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Astin's work states the ability of an educational policy or practice to enhance student involvement directly reflects the effectiveness of the practice (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Astin correlates student involvement to Freud's depiction of an individual's psychological energy investment to objects outside themselves, such as family, friends, and jobs. Physical and psychological energy linked to student involvement is essential to the academic experience. Astin's Theory of Student Involvement developed through systematic research of diverse populations and environments associated with student success. The theory emphasizes five postulates as reliant on active participation of students in an educational environment (Astin, 1993). These include: investment of physical or psychological energy in highly generalized or specific objectives; involvement occurs on a continuum; involvement requires both qualitative and quantitative features; student learning and development outcomes are relative to student involvement quality and quantity; and educational policy or curriculum effectiveness is related to student involvement. The result is a model of Input-

Environment-Outcome (I-E-O). As one of the most robust college impact models, Astin maintains college outcomes are products of the three elements. The input of family and demographic characteristics and academic and social experiences students bring to campus have direct and indirect influence on the change process and engagement in the campus environment. Interaction with elements of the environment on and off campus leads to student growth or outcomes of the college experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The input represents characteristics and experiences the student brings to college upon enrollment. These inputs may directly affect outcomes, but also indirectly influence the college experience according to choices the student makes in academically and socially engaging within the campus setting. Environment relates to programs and experiences of exposure students encounter with institution, faculty, and peers. The resulting student characteristics are outcomes of the college experience.

If homeschool students are indeed a unique population contributing to the diversity of our society, members of the institution must address the experiences of this population in determining the environmental role in attaining desired outcomes. Astin's model is equally important when examining social and academic integration of homeschool populations who come to the table with a seemingly distinctive set of experiences and characteristics when compared to public school students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). How students perceive their experiences influencing the college experience may provide insight to college officials in co-curricular development. By providing academic and social opportunities for campus involvement, students experience diversity of ideas, people, and experiences (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The degree of student commitment to these opportunities determines the level of change and growth.

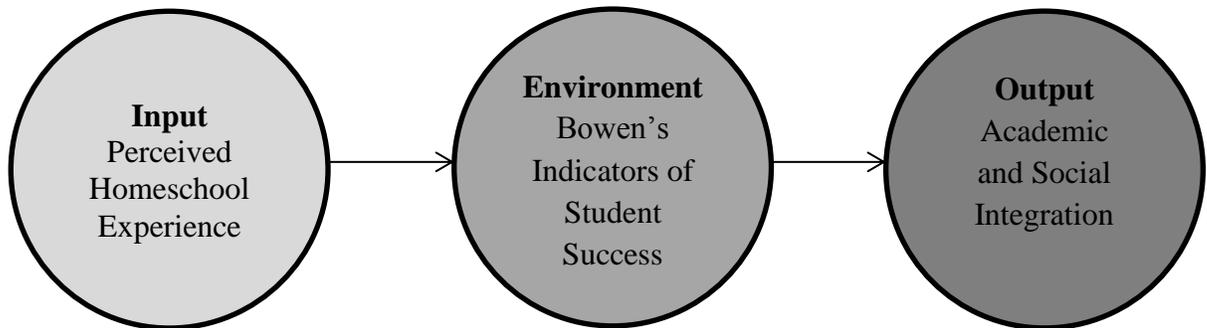
Bowen delineates several goals in holistic education of the student, respecting individuality of student, and providing accessibility to a broad spectrum of students in seeking student success (Braxton, 2006). Five areas to be addressed when assessing student success include cognitive learning, emotional and moral development, practical competence, direct satisfaction with college experience, and avoidance of negative outcomes. Bowen recognizes ten objectives of cognitive learning as excellent opportunities to contribute to change of both the individual and society. He views student outcomes in three categories: instruction, research and scholarship, and public service, maintaining instruction as the major goal to bring about desired change in students (Lee, 2004). Outcomes of research and instruction relate to “preservation, discovery, and interpretation of knowledge, artistic and social criticism, philosophical reflection, and advancement of fine arts” (p. 351), aiming at educating the whole person, individuality of the student, and maintaining accessibility. Cognitive learning skills of individual students may then be divided into verbal, quantitative, substantive knowledge, rationality, intellectual tolerance, esthetic sensibility, creativeness, intellectual integrity, wisdom, and lifelong learning. I will focus my interview questions to cultivate a rich description of how students perceive characteristics of their homeschool education influencing their college experience through academic and social integration and how these experiences contribute to the development Bowen’s goals for students.

Conceptual Overview

The conceptual framework of this study drew upon research from Howard Bowen and Arthur Astin to gain an understanding of how homeschool experiences influence students' academic and social integration in college. Bowen stresses the importance of outcomes obtained through a college education and their influence on developing human beings as productive members of society (Bowen, 1977). Astin posits what a student brings to the college experience (input) contributes to academic and social integration (environment) leading to student change and development (outcomes) and ultimately student success. Conceptually, homeschool student experience will serve as the input in Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, which will influence academic and social integration. The results of the integration become Bowen's indicators of student success. This research examined how students perceived homeschool experience influencing academic and social integration leading to Bowen's indicators of student success.

The conceptual framework for this study incorporates homeschool platform and Bowen's (1977) goals of student success: cognitive learning, emotional and moral development, and practical competence as thematic influences of homeschool experience within the inputs domain of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). These themes influence engagement in self-discovery experiences within homeschool and community environments and cultivate bonding and bridging of homogeneous and heterogeneous capital contributing to academic and social integration. Figure 1 illustrates the preliminary conceptual framework implementing Bowen's Model for Student Success and Astin's Theory of Student Involvement.

Figure 1. Preliminary Conceptual Framework



Conclusion

The overview of the literature encompassed three realms of the contextual framework of the study: homeschool education and student characteristics, elements of college environment, which influence academic and social integration, and indicators of student success in the form of outcomes. Within these realms, I investigated history and trends of homeschool education in the United States and Montana, literature related to student entry into higher education, elements of academic and social integration, and student development theories. I also explored history, enrollment trends, and factions of the contemporary homeschool movement, in addition to factions of the state of homeschool encompassing demographics, tracking, college admission, transitions, and attainment data.

The second element of the review was incoming characteristics of student learners and the affect on first year college experience. This element of research is important if homeschool students are indeed a unique population with distinctive pre-entry

characteristics. Are the incoming characteristics different from other populations and if so, how do homeschool students and the institution maximize and develop the characteristics for academic and social integration?

An important theme of homeschool student literature lies within academic and social engagement focused on academic excellence in comparison to the public school student. Given Astin's Model and Theory of Student Involvement laid the foundation of my conceptual framework, this literature is key to Astin's environment element. This section of the review also discussed the importance of building social capital, academic and social integration, academic attainment, and student involvement.

The melding of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Bowen's indicators of student success to develop a model for homeschool students led me to explore student development themes to gain a comprehensive look at the research of student involvement and college success. These indicators are the last element of the I-E-O model fitting into outcomes of homeschool academic and social integration.

Strength of the literature review lies in theories and writings of Astin and Bowen. Their studies have been tested for decades providing strength in their findings, which supported the conceptual framework of this study. Availability of non-anecdotal homeschool literature is limited due to the relatively new legal status and data collection of the population, especially by qualitative researchers outside the homeschool circle. The majority is quantitative in nature and conducted by members of homeschool associations. Comparing homeschool samples with homogeneous demographics to heterogeneous public students does not provide a true picture of how the populations

compare. Homeschool students also self-select to participate in testing and reporting. My goal is to contribute to the growing volume of qualitative, non-anecdotal literature relating to the population.

Homeschool education is an age old practice, but contemporary practice is in its infancy, legal in all states since 1993 with empirical data beginning in 1999. Diverse study of the practice is limited and a majority of research quantitative in nature and anecdotal due to the large volume of studies conducted within the homeschool association and individuals closely connected to the population.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

To gain an understanding of the lived experience of homeschool students, this phenomenological study explored how students perceived their experiences contributing to their social and academic integration in college. Research examined personal stories of 20 homeschool students enrolled on two campuses through individual, face-to-face interviews designed to gain insight into the perceived experiences of participants and how they contributed to the college experience. Nine Community College and 11 State University students with homeschool experience in five states provided a broad perspective of experiences. The goal of the study was to direct future development of programs encouraging homeschool enrollment, advising, academic and social support, retention, and attainment of the population.

K-12 homeschool enrollment in the United States steadily increased following the 1993 legalization of the practice in all 50 states and establishment of the first standards in 1999 (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Growing from 11,994 in 1993 to an estimated two million in 2010, higher education began to take notice of the potential source of incoming students and their contribution to campus. Initial external opinion of the homeschool population provided a picture of socially stunted students taught by their mothers with limited access to the outside world (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). The contemporary homeschool model evolved with advancement of technology, resources,

networking, and program development. As more home educated students enter college with potentially diverse K-12 education experiences in comparison to most public and private school students, it becomes increasingly important for members of higher education to gain an understanding of what the population brings to campus and how their experiences influence academic and social integration to enhance college student success. Four research questions were developed from the literature:

1. How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?
2. What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?
3. How do homeschool experiences serve as obstacles for academic and social integration?
4. How do homeschool experiences serve as opportunities for academic and social integration?

This chapter provides a detailed depiction of the methodology used to garner information and perceptions of homeschool students to gain an understanding of their experiences within the following sections: research design, methodology, and procedures.

Design

As the practice of homeschooling gains momentum and standardized curriculum, support systems, and networks of homeschool families expand and formalize, it becomes imperative for institutions to gain detailed understanding of how these experiences

influence the college experience of homeschool students. Two primary reasons guided my method of choice. First, a phenomenological approach presented a view of homeschool students through the lens of actual experiences perceived by the population and provided a rich picture of home education through the participants eyes. Drawing on the actual experiences of the population, the study examined how these experiences ultimately shaped their college social and academic integration. Second, non-biased homeschool data was limited. The major portion of available research comes from the NHERI, but new studies have begun to surface outside homeschool organizations. Data from the two sides of the discussion can be conflicting. Numerous homeschool families are guarded when asked for information concerning the education of their children, given the practice has only been legal for 25 years. That being said, continued bias continues to surface from entities outside the homeschool community. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was implemented to gain an intimate understanding of these relationships, which numbers cannot reach or lend in the search for obtaining real life experiences.

Context of the Study

Data was collected through an individual interview process with 20 homeschool students enrolled at two institutions located in the Western Mountain states of the United States. Institutions were chosen due to their contrast in mission, geographic and size variance, diversity of student demographics, and proximity to the researcher. Homeschool enrollments at smaller campuses have the possibility of homogeneity by

belonging to the same homeschool organization or having a familial relationship, providing a picture of only that organization. A larger institution with higher out of state student enrollment afforded the opportunity to draw students from diverse homeschool associations and added to the depth of experiences. The distance between the two institutions exceeds 200 miles and spanned from the center of the state to the eastern border, providing physical and demographic variance among its native populations.

State University is a public, four-year state institution located in a large metropolitan city boasting 5,081 students in 2012 enrolled in associate, bachelors, and master's programs. Seventy-seven percent of the total population was undergraduate residents and 12% of the population was out-of- state undergraduates (Montana University System, 2014). Women outnumber men nearly two to one and White was the predominant race comprising 83.9% of the total population. Native Americans attend at a rate of 4.2% and Hispanic/Latinos at 4.3%. Approximately 80% of students received financial assistance. Table 9 provides State University student demographics and enrollment for 2012.

Table 9. State University: Fall 2012 Enrollment Trends

State University Enrollment Trends		Data
Total Enrollment		5,081
Undergraduate Enrollment		4,537
Gender		
Men		39.1%
Women		60.9%
Ethnicity		
White		83.7%
Hispanic/Latino		4.3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native		4.2%
Non-resident alien		2.8%
Two or more races		2.3%
Unknown		1.1%
Black or African American		0.8%
Asian		0.7%
Native Hawaiian /other Pacific Islander		0.2%
Financial Aid Recipients		80%

Program areas represented include: art, athletic training, biology, broad field science, business administration, chemistry, communication arts, criminal justice, education, elementary education, English, environmental studies, exercise and sport leadership, health administration, history, human services, liberal studies, mathematics, music, outdoor adventure leadership, political science, psychiatric rehabilitation, psychology, public administration, public relations, radiologic technology, rehabilitation and mental health counseling, rehabilitation and related services, sociology, Spanish, special education, statistics, surgical technology, sustainable energy technician, welding and metal fabrication technology, and welding for energy technology.

Community College is a rural, public, two-year community college located over 200 miles east of State University and offers associate's (AA and AS), associate of applied science (AAS) degree programs, and certificates to approximately 312 students in

2012 (Montana University System, 2014). Women students encompassed 58.0% of the population while men contributed 42.0%. White students were the prominent ethnicity with 78.5%, American Indians comprised 4.2%, and Hispanic/Latino 3.9%. The average ACT score was 19 and more than 85% receive financial aid.

Programs offered at this institution include agriculture technology, equitation, and mechanics and machinery, business management, business technology, criminal justice, early childhood education, engineering technology, and music technology. AAS certificates are awarded in: agriculture marketing and financial analysis, correctional officer, farm and ranch business management, livestock technology, office assistant, web development, and welding technology. Table 10 provides Community College student demographics and enrollment for 2012.

Table 10. Fall 2012 Community College Enrollment Trends

Community College Enrollment Trends		Data
Total Enrollment		312
Gender		
Men		42.0%
Women		58.0%
Ethnicity		
White		78.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native		4.2%
Hispanic/Latino		3.9%
Two or more races		3.9%
Non-resident alien		3.2%
Asian		1.6%
Black or African American		1.3%
Native Hawaiian /other Pacific Islander		1.0%
Financial Aid Recipients		85%

Data Collection

I conducted twenty student interviews through open-ended, probing questions using objective, predetermined variables in an attempt to gain a subjective understanding of the homeschool student experience. The semi-structured interview protocol was designed to cultivate a rich description of how homeschool students perceived their education experiences influenced their college academic and social integration.

The primary concept of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement suggests academic and social involvement during the college experience serves an integral role in the development of student outcomes (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). The theory focuses on three main concepts including input of characteristics, demographics, and experiences a student brings to campus; college environment, consisting of all academic and social interactions; and outcomes of the college experience comprised of characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and values which exist after the student leaves higher education (Hunt, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The conceptual framework for this study incorporated homeschool platform and Bowen's (1977) goals of student success: cognitive learning, emotional and moral development, and practical competence as thematic influences of homeschool experience within the input domain of Astin's Theory of Student Development (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008). These themes influenced engagement in self-discovery experiences within homeschool and community environments and cultivated bonding and bridging of homogeneous and heterogeneous capital, which contributed to academic and social integration.

Sample

A criterion sample according to homeschool classification and semester in higher education was identified through transcript analysis conducted by admissions officers from each of the two institutions. To garner a rich description of experiences, students were enrolled in at least their second semester of study. Criterion sampling was chosen due to the limited population from which I could elicit participants, but a portion of the sample was produced from the snowball method to obtain enough members. Each campus provided a different picture of homeschooling in Montana. Homeschool associations located near State University benefitted from local college professors who provided opportunities for advanced coursework within their area of expertise. The college also maintained a strong Connections Program (early start program) to integrate students 16 years of age and older into higher education. Homeschool students on the Community College campus primarily came from rural homeschool families using video instruction. Many of these students began college when they are sixteen through an early start program and receive limited college guidance when they enrolled as less than full-time students.

Each campus employed specific methods for identifying homeschool students. Only students classified as homeschooled according to individual campus designation were asked to participate in the study. Community College identified homeschool students by self-disclosure on their college application while State University identified participants from those who indicated homeschool or other on their admissions application. For this study to be relevant, only students educated in a homeschool setting

were considered for the study. This method of selection limited the population to only those graduating from a homeschool and excluded those who enrolled in public or private high school long enough to graduate. Students meeting the homeschool classification at each institution were contacted electronically with an invitation to participate, study details, researcher background, interview protocol, and rights as human subjects form. Two different queries were conducted by State University in an attempt to provide a larger sample and two follow-up contacts were made to non-responding students. A total of 26 State University students were contacted electronically with limited results. An additional 15 students were identified by snowball sampling through homeschool student referral to reach the final sample of 11 students. Six students were identified by Community College officials as homeschooled, fourteen through snowballing, and nine provided interviews, bringing the total sample for the study to 20. Students self-selected to participate in the study and were given pseudonyms to guarantee anonymity

Participants attended two Mountain West college campuses, State University and Community College. Nine students participated from Community College and 11 from State University. Equal male to female ratio was not possible due to the limited population from which to sample. Community College homeschool student ratio was seven women to two men. State University saw similar gender numbers with a ratio of eight females to three males.

Precise identification of academic year was difficult due to early start programs allowing students to begin attending college on a part-time basis at the age of sixteen. Students may be classified as second semester students according to credits, but not yet

attending full-time. A second difficulty was hesitancy to provide interviews until after graduation. To meet these challenges, identification was made according to three classifications: lower division (two years or less), upper division (more than two years, but not graduated), and graduated. The graduated category identified students who completed their interviews after graduation. Table 11 exhibits academic level for sample populations enrolled in State University and Community College.

Table 11. Student Academic Level

Academic Level	State University	Community College
Lower division	3	8
Upper division	4	0
Graduated	4	1

Participants

The sample population came from a four-year state university (State University) and a two-year community college (Community College). Eleven State University students and nine Community College students agreed to participate in the study, of which 15 were females and five males. All of the students were traditional age at the time of enrollment and homeschooled most of their K-12 careers.

State University Participants

- Rebecca homeschooled from kindergarten through tenth grade when she also began taking early start college courses at State University. She was currently in her second year at State University as a full-time student. As a homeschool student, her family chose A Beka videos for her academic coursework and she

participated in co-op music and art. Her first college course was flute lessons, leading to a major in music. According to her, “Socially, just because someone is part of class does not necessarily mean they are a part of the group. It needs to be monitored better.”

- Kendra homeschooled from kindergarten through fifth grade, attended public school for sixth grade, and continued homeschooling through high school. She used several different curricula, including a Shakespeare class with other homeschoolers, Taekwondo, and 4-H club membership. She also participated in homeschool swim team. Her family was independent of other homeschool families and chose not to participate in many co-op activities. Kendra started college courses when she was sixteen enrolling in psychology at City College and Latin online.
- Joe received his home education with his brother for twelve years and went to private school for two years. His mom provided instruction using the A Beka method and some text books through eighth grade. Beginning in high school, he received lectures from college professors on nutrition, English, and science and his mother taught piano and guitar. He was socially involved in organized sports including basketball, baseball, and golf and competed collegiately in the golf program on his campus. Joe stressed the importance of sports, “We learned what to do and not to do in sports. I saw from the public school students.”
- Cindy, a college junior, homeschooled from the age of four through high school, except for second grade when she attended public school. She and her sister used

the A Beka method with her mother as primary instructor. She started taking early start college classes at 16 until she could enroll full-time. She participated in homeschool choir, but was not involved in sports. Comparing homeschool to public school, Cindy said, “Basically you are in school almost year round. It is a different pace than public school. You don’t forget as much and could move ahead.”

- Jack enjoyed his homeschool experience. “Awesome! I learned much more than public school students.” He homeschooled using the A Beka video curriculum except for one year in the public school system. “You feel like you are in a classroom but not.” He helped build the family house as part of his education and started taking college courses 12th grade. He worked with computers and construction, participated in basketball, soccer, snowmobile, rodeo, and skiing as extracurricular activities.
- Jill was one of two students that participated in two early start programs: State University and a local private institution for a variety of classes during her high school years. “It was nice because going to a private school is so expensive. I got to try it out at a cheaper price.”
- For Jackie, music was her extra-curricular activity and primary contact with peers. She traveled to New York and Chicago with the orchestra and participated with youth opera company during her homeschool experience. She also participated in an early start program.

- Melissa felt the biggest downfall of homeschool students going to college was the shock of not having someone there to help you anytime of the day or night. “The only hard part about the first week of college was math, when someone wasn’t right there to explain things.”
- Debbie took classes in the public school system in conjunction with homeschooling. Her local school district allowed homeschool students to enroll in a maximum of two classes per semester. People were surprised when she said she was going to be a teacher, “You’re gonna be a teacher, huh?”
- Carly used the technique of focusing individually from her homeschool experience to become a better musician as she navigated her undergraduate degree. “The amount of hours I practice my voice and flute were similar to my homeschooling. You spend a lot of time by yourself working on your homework.”
- Frank, “It was redundant to me, taking notes that were the same in the book. When I went to college I was not used to a person up in front talking, telling me what I needed to know.” He enjoyed both his homeschool and college experience and felt his early years contributed to his development as a unique person.

Community College Participants

- Michael, a sophomore and collegiate athlete, attended private school from kindergarten through fifth grade. He began homeschooling in sixth grade and continued throughout his high school career. He did not participate in an early start program and was a true freshman upon enrollment. Both parents participated in his homeschool education in conjunction with the Bob Jones Academy of

Home Education. In retrospect, “I took for granted that what I did in homeschool were gifts and talents that I eventually enjoyed.”

- Jane, female sophomore, started homeschooling at two years of age with her older sisters. She learned with her mom and sisters through the sixth grade when she switched to the A Beka Academy from grade seven through 10. As a junior in high school, she enrolled in up to 11 early start credits per semester. By the time she was in 12th grade, she almost exclusively enrolled in college credits. She said, “When I came in, I just looked in the catalog to see what didn’t have a prerequisite and that’s what I took.”
- Sophie, a sophomore, came to the United States through foreign adoption and began studying with her siblings. She skipped several grades, but the language barrier was an obstacle. She stated, “It didn’t really work out because my mom was my mom and my teacher.” Consequently, she tried public school, but that was unsuccessful. She returned to homeschool and eventually added early start courses as she became eligible for the program.
- Connie, a freshman, began homeschooling in Oklahoma when she was in kindergarten. Her mother acted as her primary homeschool instructor using textbooks chosen according to academic needs. She later transitioned to the A Beka Academy method with her two brothers and sister. She attended private school for one year while living in Washington and public school and homeschooled after moving to Montana. As an avid supporter of homeschool, she felt, “You will be two years ahead. At least that’s how me and my brothers and

sister are.” She did not participate in the early start program, but was very active in sports groups.

- Isabella, a freshman, attended private school for one year before beginning homeschool. She and her four siblings were educated by their mother, first using the Accelerated Christian Science (ACE) method and later the A Beka Academy. She participated in volleyball through the Montana Christian Athletic Association. She felt, “There’s not opportunity to socialize except through sports.”
- According to Sarah, she homeschooled from the day she was born through high school graduation, first by her father and then her mother after his death. Her mother used the Saxon method for mathematics and A Beka for science and history. “We also used odd books about creation and how Christians believe about evolution.” Her opinion of homeschool experience included, “Courses are comparable to public school, but without the bullying. I like myself better for it.”
- Desiree described a homeschool experience similar to her sister, Sarah. Homeschooling included hands-on experience building and marketing furniture, raising and marketing vegetables, and building and repairing their home. Some of her instruction came from books provided by her aunt from her experience teaching in a private Christian school. When giving advice for other homeschool students, she said, “Most homeschool students are not quite sure what they want. They take this and that. It leads to big time confusion.”
- Kyle was in his first year at a community college. He began his college experience as a full-time student rather than in an early start part-time program.

He was a traditional-aged student, married with a family, and worked full-time.

He felt his homeschool education was unstructured, but better than a public school education because of the personal involvement in your education. His curriculum was facilitated by his mother using the A Beka method. “Homeschool students need to have a place where they feel they belong, more of a social gathering.” The advantage of being homeschooled for him was the ability to enter the workforce earlier. “Because you have to be self-reliant, you develop leadership skills, you know what I mean? You have a mindset of knowing what needs to be done and transfer it to different roles.”

- Dottie said homeschool motivated her because, “I wasn’t pushed by a teacher.” Similar to several homeschool students, Dottie did not like group projects. “I wasn’t used to working with others and didn’t like to lose the responsibility and let the group evolve.” She participated in homeschool and collegiate sports and attributed these activities to college enrollment and success. Table 12 and 13 identify students according to pseudonym, academic level, and early start program participation.

Table 12. State University Participants

Student	Academic Level	Early Start Program
Rebecca	Lower Division	Yes
Kendra	Upper Division	Yes
Joe	Upper Division	No
Cindy	Upper Division	Yes
Jack	Upper Division	Yes
Jill	Lower Division	Yes
Jackie	Lower Division	Yes
Melissa	Graduate	No
Debbie	Graduate	Yes
Carly	Graduate	No
Frank	Graduate	Yes

Table 13. Community College Participants

Student	Academic Level	Early Start Program
Michael	Lower Division	No
Jane	Lower Division	Yes
Sophie	Lower Division	Yes
Connie	Lower Division	No
Isabella	Lower Division	No
Sarah	Lower Division	No
Desiree	Lower Division	No
Kyle	Lower Division	No
Dottie	Graduate	Yes

Data Collection Procedures

Phenomenological methodology was chosen for this study to view lived experiences of homeschool students and gain a deeper understanding of their perception of how homeschool education contributed to academic and social integration within the college experience. Research questions were designed to gain insight into students' homeschool experiences and their influence on college experience. Open-ended interview questions were implemented to allow participants to tell their story from their perspective.

After approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Montana State University and the two participating campuses, registrars were contacted from State University and Community College to access contact information for students who met the sample criteria. Due to limited homeschool populations on both campuses, two queries were run on the four-year campus and an initial list of six students was provided by the two-year campus. Initial electronic invitations to participate in the study were sent through campus e-mail providing an introduction to my professional experience, study details, and research protocol. Initial students were offered a \$10 gift card for participating in the study, and subsequent students who had just graduated were offered \$10 cash. After a follow-up e-mail, three students from each campus agreed to provide an interview. An additional population query was conducted on both campuses in an attempt to obtain a sample of at least 20 students. Lack of success led to snowball sampling by word of mouth from active members of homeschool associations in both communities and students themselves. Several students who declined or did not reply to the initial contact, later agreed to an interview after the researcher developed a relationship with a known homeschool organizer or one of their peers. These connections led to additional interviews until 20 interviews were obtained, 11 State University and nine Community College students.

I obtained permission from sample homeschool students to conduct and record face-to-face interviews with a portable recorder prior to each interview to increase accuracy. Accommodations were made to secure interviews according to participant convenience, location, parent confidence, trustworthiness of the study by the participant,

and academic scheduling. I met with several parents over Skype or telephone to solidify the authenticity of the study before allowing an interview. Interviews were face-to-face and scheduled outside the student's regular class hours at a quiet location of the student's choice. One hour time blocks were prearranged for each interview, but varied according to student response. Due to location complications, some interviews were conducted with participants over Skype and through phone interviews to accommodate out of state and country student obligations. Time of scheduling also played a role when setting an actual interview date, leaving some interviews to be conducted after graduation during the summer months at the student's request and convenience.

I introduced the study at the beginning of each interview to establish a relationship with the participant to generate thoughtful, meaningful responses. I explained the subject consent form, confidentiality procedures, security of documents, and ability to withdraw from the study at any time and obtained the student's signature consenting to participate. The following open-ended questions were drafted and executed to reduce bias on the part of the researcher and allow students to express their perceptions of experiences freely. Table 14 provides specifications for interview questions directed at answering each research question.

Table 14. Table of Specifications

Research Question	Interview Question
<p>Research Question 1: How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Question 1: Tell me about your homeschool experience. Question 2: What academic and/or social characteristics can you attribute to your homeschool experience? Question 3: What extracurricular activities did you experience as a homeschool student and how did these activities influence your academic and/or social integration?</p>
<p>Research Question 2: What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Question 1: Tell me about your first week on campus your freshmen year. Question 2: What did you bring from the homeschool experience that helped you transition to the college experience?</p>
<p>Research Question 3: How do homeschool experiences serve as obstacles for academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Question 1: What advice would you give if you were asked to meet with a dean, RA, or instructor to make recommendations, which would be used to increase academic and social integration of homeschool students?</p>
<p>Research Question 4: How do homeschool experiences serve as opportunities for academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Question 1: Tell me about your college experience. Question 2: Can you recall an occasion when the skills you developed as a homeschool student contributed to a group project? Question 3: How does your homeschool experience influence interaction with faculty? staff? peers? Question 4: How did your homeschool experience influence your institutional choice? Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to share with me?</p>

The researcher provided neutral prompting as necessary to encourage discussion of topics. Description of environment, verbal responses, and non-verbal behaviors of the student, and thoughts and feelings of the researcher were documented. Immediately after the interview, handwritten notes were reviewed to clarify any questionable comments. I completed verbatim transcription of interviews as soon as possible to avoid memory lapse on my part. I kept daily field notes, which contributed to analysis of the study through my personal insights and interpretations. I provided each student with pseudonyms immediately following the initial interviews and labeled as such for the entirety of the study. All recordings, notes, and information were kept in a locked file cabinet located in my office in which no one else had a key.

Data Storage

Completed interviews were transcribed in digital form and saved in electronic format. Each level of coding and analysis was saved according to stage of research and original raw data was not altered at any time in case of electronic malfunction to increase reliability of results. All documents were backed up on two external hard drives and e-mailed to myself on a regular basis. Names of participants were kept only on an original hard copy list and stored with recordings, field notes, and copies of interviews in a locked cabinet in my office. All other references were conducted using pseudo names. Any information with the possibility of breaching confidentiality was not entered in electronic data for final analysis. Confidential information was kept secure for one year following dissertation approval and then destroyed.

Data Analysis Strategies

According to Patton (2002), analysis of phenomenological data must be done without judgment. In everyday experiences, knowledge is treated judgmentally, as if what we perceive is actually what takes place. Viewing experiences in an epoch manner; those judgments and understandings are set aside and phenomena are viewed with a clear lens for what actually happened. I recognized possible bias, prejudice, assumptions, and preconceptions about the homeschool experience in all stages of the study to view the experiences for their true value.

Once all bias and preconceptions were identified, I began the process of conducting an audit of raw data including: field notes, recordings, handwritten interview notes, and demographic documents provided by registrars (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reduction and analysis of data included verbatim transcription of interviews and field notes according to question. Transcriptions were color coded according to student and summarized leaving pertinent information in place. Using summary documents and maintaining color coding, answers from all students were organized by question into a composite summary by dissecting data into its basic elements, defining, and analyzing themes without preconceived meanings (Patton, 2002). Theoretical notes and hunches were also documented as the process developed.

Data reconstruction and synthesis began with highlighting key words and phrases for each question in the summary document. Key words and phrases related to the phenomenon were interpreted in relation to the study and examined for reoccurrence across subjects. Each question was entered as an Excel spreadsheet and key words or

phrases entered in row one of the sheet as possible developing themes. Interview number, college, gender, and homeschool, private, and public school experience were placed in columns A, B, C, D, E, and F respectfully on each spreadsheet. Themes were then compared according to student and themes. Results were condensed and placed into a framework matrix. These structural themes provided a deeper understanding of the students and how they experience their lives (Patton, 2002). Finally, themes were integrated and descriptions given to provide meaning through a clear lens free of bias and preconceived notions.

To gain a richer understanding of each student's experience, I attempted to triangulate findings to an audit of students' Facebook postings. Few participants granted permission to access their Facebook accounts and most students providing access had minimal account activity. A series of expert validity checks were conducted with homeschool students not involved in the original study. Experts were asked to validate results and provide feedback on consistencies and inconsistencies to their own experiences to support the findings.

Dependability, Trustworthiness, and Transferability of the Design

Dependability or credibility of this qualitative study was reliant upon rigorousness of the sample, design, and interview methods to provide rich information for study. Institution selection, criterion sampling method, and systematic process of inquiry demonstrated in sample and instrumentation sections of this study aim at gaining dependable, descriptive interviews.

Trustworthiness was based on my prior experience with homeschool students and inquiry through a pilot study of homeschool students at a small two-year institution. This bias was acknowledged and taken into consideration to assure fairness and impartiality. Trustworthiness was strengthened by conducting the study on another campus in addition to my own institution to reduce the halo effect of interviewing students enrolled in my classes, possibly inhibiting honest expression. Building a familiar relationship began with the initial student contact and continued through the interview process to relieve anxiety and increase dependability of information. The research method and interview questions were reviewed by my doctoral committee as part of the proposal process and presented to the human subject research board at State University and approved by the president of Community College.

Researcher Positionality

I was first introduced to homeschool education when my daughter was entering school. Just legalized in the United States, the idea was new to me. We did not choose to homeschool because as an only child, we felt she needed social integration a public or private school could provide. Since that time, I have worked with homeschool students on a daily basis on my home campus. Students enroll in courses as early as sixteen in areas their homeschool education cannot deliver. One of these areas is music performance. Many register for only one or two courses without academic advice from campus faculty or staff and navigate the college experience on their own. This can become problematic when they enroll full-time and courses necessary for transfer are not

on their transcripts. As more homeschool students enrolled in my courses and became part of the music community, I witnessed strengths and limitations of the population through informal observations contributing to the college experience of the students

I am aware of possible personal bias due to past teaching experience with homeschool students and potential for bias to affect the research. Campus characteristics appeal to a specific taxonomy of students, including those homeschooled. To remain true to the study, I not only interviewed students on my campus, but State University, a four-year institution for which I had no direct connection to students or past history as their instructor. I was not a homeschool parent, nor did I have any bias toward or against homeschooling. My objective was to remain impartial during all aspects of the study to provide a clear, honest depiction of student's experiences, perceptions, and interpretations.

Conclusion

This study examined how homeschool experience contributed to academic and social integration of students in higher education using Bowen's indicators of student success within the goals of cognitive skills, moral and emotional development, and practical competence. Using these outcomes as guiding themes for interview questions, information was gleaned from face-to-face interviews seeking perceived homeschool and college academic and social experience. A conceptual framework was designed integrating homeschool experience into Astin's input element of his Theory of Student Development and Bowen's indicators of student success within the environment element

of academic and social integration to gain a rich description of how the homeschool experience contributed to the output of college experience. Two unique campuses were chosen to provide a broad continuum of students according to homeschool association theology in each of these communities. Students who completed at least one semester of study were chosen to allow opportunity for academic and social integration.

Triangulation with expert validity checks allowed research to draw from multiple viewpoints and enhance the accuracy of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

K-12 homeschool enrollment in the United States steadily increased following the 1993 legalization of the practice in all 50 states and establishment of the first standards in 1999 (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Growing from 11,994 in 1993 to an estimated two million in 2010, higher education has taken notice of the potential source of incoming students and their contributions to campus. Initial external opinion of the homeschool population provided a picture of socially stunted students taught by their mothers with limited access to the outside world (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). The contemporary homeschool model evolved with advancement of technology, resources, networking, and program development. As more home educated students enter college with potentially diverse K-12 education experiences in comparison to most public and private school students, it becomes increasingly important for members of higher education to gain an understanding of what the population brings to campus. This study examines experiences from the lens of nine community college homeschool students and 11 students enrolled at a four-year campus to gain a personal view of homeschool education and its contribution to their college experience. The following research questions guided one-on-one interviews to develop an understanding of the homeschool experience:

1. How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?
2. What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?
3. How do homeschool experiences serve as an obstacle for academic and social integration?
4. How do homeschool experiences serve as an opportunity for academic and social integration?

Findings

Chapter Four analyzes data gained from interview responses to research questions focused on personal perceptions of students detailing their academic and social integration in college as a result of their homeschool experience and personal characteristics. Four key areas emerged through the transition process from homeschool to college integration: homeschool platform, student learning characteristics, social capital, and academic and social integration. Although student perceptions of home education were unique to their situation, homeschool experience and student learning characteristics revealed similar themes for a majority of participants and contributed to building of capital and academic and social integration in college. Table 15 identifies themes and subthemes gleaned from participant interviews focused on personal perceptions of homeschool experience and its contributions to academic and social integration.

Table 15. Conceptual Framework Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes
Homeschool Experience	Homeschool Platform One-on-one instruction Online instruction Self-instruction Student Learning Characteristics Memorization Organization Self-discipline Independent Respect
Social Capital	Bonding Similar Relationships Church Co-op Homeschool Athletics Homeschool Music Groups Early Start Building Diverse Relationships Early Start Athletics Music Clubs
Academic Integration	Self-discipline Organization Independent Respect Sense of Belonging
Social Integration	Respect Sense of Belonging

The following sections are organized according to major themes and subthemes providing a picture of how students perceived their homeschool experience contributing to academic and social integration in college. Themes were consistent for students across local, state, and out-of-state homeschool associations. The first section examines homeschool platform and student learning characteristics as subthemes of homeschool

experience. The second theme explores how these elements contribute to bonding and building social capital. Finally, an examination of how homeschool experience, student learning characteristics, and social capital contribute to academic and social integration.

Homeschool Experience

This section examines thematic elements of the homeschool experience students viewed as contributing to college integration: homeschool platform and student learning characteristics.

Homeschool Platform

Parents began homeschooling on their own and added education platforms as students progressed in age and academic difficulty. Formal and informal curricula built on diverse philosophical and religious orientations were woven within method of instruction to meet student and family needs. Advancement of technology and networking of homeschool families provided vast resources in developing curriculum and instruction method unique to each individual.

Students predominantly experienced homeschool method of instruction as one-on-one, online, and self-taught instruction depending on stage of education. Students identified one-on-one instruction as a positive element of their education, allowing focus on specific interests, difficult subjects and skills, personal instruction, and ability to progress through the curriculum at an individual pace. Sixty-five percent of the sample became less reliant on their parents as teachers as they matured and progressively implemented more technological curricula and methods of instruction. Technology

contributed to advancements in programming, resources, online opportunities, assessment, and direct feedback from learning platforms allowing families to broaden the scope and complexity of course offerings outside parental expertise. With maturation and experience, students advanced to self-instruction with parents functioning as tutors when necessary. Students of all ages identified as self-taught, but sample participation in technological curricula was related to age with younger students in the early stages of college relying more on technological resources when home educated. Jane's experience provides a prime example of homeschool platform transition.

I started homeschool preschool at 2 because my sisters were homeschooling and started kindergarten at three. I did that with my mother and sisters through sixth grade. Seventh through tenth grade I learned using DVDs from the A Beka Academy in Florida. I got stuff done right away and don't procrastinate. Maybe it is part of my personality. Once I got to junior high I had to have more responsibility to do things on my own. I was covering material my parents didn't always know. There is not much difference between homeschool, college, and work.

Families chose one or more curricula and method of instruction in conjunction with homeschool organizations, early start programs, and co-op participation to create an academic program specific to each individual student. A short description of packaged curricula is given in Table 16, including: A Beka Academy (A Beka), Bob Jones (BJU Press), Hewitt Homeschooling Resources (Hewitt), Saxon Math (Saxon), Omnibus, Apologia Educational Ministries (Apologia), Singapore Math (Singapore), Charlotte Mason, K-12 Pennsylvania online program, Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), and parent(s). Table 16 provides a brief description of curricula and method implemented by participants and the frequency of choice according to campus.

Table 16. Homeschool Curricula and Method

Curricula and Method	Two-year campus	Four-year campus	Total	Percent
A Beka Academy K-12 curriculum Fundamentalist Christian Viewpoint	6	6	12	60
Bob Jones (BJU Press) Began 1973 from homeschool movement in Evangelical Christian Perspective	1	3	4	20
Hewitt Homeschooling Resources (Hewitt) Non-profit began in 1963 Like-minded individuals concerned with developments in health, welfare, education, and family	1	0	1	5
Saxon Math Linear mathematic approach Used by school districts and homeschools	2	2	4	20
Omnibus History, literature, theology from a biblical worldview Unity of knowledge mission	0	1	1	5
Apologia Educational Ministries (formerly Jay Wyles) Biblical, creation-based science curriculum Online courses, books, homeschooling tools, parent retreats, and missions	1	1	2	10

Table 16. Homeschool Curricula and Method Continued

Curricula and Method	Two-year campus	Four-year campus	Total	Percent
Singapore Math Established in 1998 by Jeffery and Dawn Thomas in reaction to dissatisfaction with American math curriculum compared to Singapore	1	0	1	5
Charlotte Mason Students learn in many ways, including the great books, nature, written and oral communication, everyday experiences, and learning for the sake of learning	0	1	1	5
K-12 Pennsylvania Online Program Free online program for Pennsylvania residents	1	0	1	5
Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) Accredited academy Administrates K-12 home education with digital curriculum and interactive, virtual education	1	0	1	5
Teacher				
Parent(s) only	1	1	2	10
Parent(s) with method	8	10	18	90
Mom	7	4	11	55
Dad	4	1	5	25
Both Parents	3	1	4	20

The following examples illustrate the capability of families to create unique academic programs for each student combining curricula, method, technology, and other resources.

Jackie identified a combination of curriculum sources, “I studied botany and chemistry through Wyles at the same time and I also used the Omnibus book for two class periods, history and literature.” Michael was taught by both parents with combined curricula, “I used Bob Jones through satellite, Mom helped with English, and Dad with math and science. It made me accountable. I would read, research, and then ask my parents if I needed help.”

Debbie’s family implemented multiple resources for their curricula:

Where I live, you can enroll independently in public school for two classes a year. I always chose band and one other. Mom taught us at home using A Beka, Bob Jones for social studies, Saxon for math, and she taught us Spanish.

The overall choice of curricula by 60% of the families was A Beka, a program providing resources in the form of textbooks, DVD video, live streaming, assessment, and accreditation to homeschool families. Forty percent of families implemented A Beka as their only curricula. The video opportunity of the program allowed students flexibility to complete lessons at any time and place, repeat sections for thorough understanding, and set their own academic pace. Virtual video classroom and streaming elements allowed parents freedom to act as facilitators or tutors while carrying on daily household activities or teach other children.

As students matured, 65% became less reliant on their parents as teachers and began self-instructing using their adopted curriculum. Technology contributed to advancements in programming, resources, online opportunities, assessment, and direct feedback from learning platforms, allowing families to broaden scope and complexity of course offerings outside parental expertise and develop self-instruction skills. Students of

all ages identified as being self-taught, but participation in technological curricula was related to age, with younger students more likely to rely on parents and technological resources.

Jane said, “I did homeschool with my mom and sisters through 6th grade. From seventh grade on, I learned with DVDs and then from the A Beka Academy in Florida on my own.”

Homeschooling because of his father’s military profession, Kyle self-instructed using A Beka. “I used A Beka. My Mom gave homework, I looked up the answers, and turned them into A Beka for assessment.” Rebecca was instructed by her mother in conjunction with a packaged curriculum from inception of her home education, “I used A Beka in the beginning, but the older I got, I used less videos and taught myself more on my own. Basically, I taught myself with my mom as a tutor.”

Student Learning Characteristics

Examination of Astin’s Student Involvement Theory in Chapter Two stressed importance of pre-entry characteristics and experiences for student involvement and success. Students were hesitant to identify characteristics as products of their education experience, as homeschool and family life were too closely connected to differentiate influence, but felt they contributed to student integration. Jackie admitted the correlation made it difficult to discern, “I treat everyone with respect but I don’t know if that is an attribute of homeschool or my personality or my friends.” Also unclear was connection of characteristics to homeschool platform. The tightly woven nature of homeschool

education and normal family life made it difficult to determine if method of instruction or curricula developed certain characteristics or if they were a product of nature or environment.

Twenty-one student learning characteristics perceived as products of homeschooling and contributors to college were identified by students, of which five were thematic: ability to memorize, organization, self-discipline, respect, and independence. Table 17 identifies five thematic student learning characteristics and their frequency of identification by participants. The following sections provide student experiences linked to each of the thematic student learning characteristics.

Table 17. Student Learning Characteristics

Characteristic	Two-year Institution	Four-year Institution	Total
Independence	1	5	6
Ability to memorize	1	4	5
Self-Discipline	1	3	4
Organization	0	3	3
Respect	1	2	3

Memorization

Ability to memorize emerged as the characteristic or skill most directly associated with homeschooling. Competitions such as bible quizzes and spelling bees, music, and theater developed the skill of memorization for students. Students discussed how memorization contributed to competition, study skills, and ability to self-instruct.

Music and studying for the spelling bee improved Debbie's memory. "I did a lot of music and had to memorize. Oh, I even won the state spelling bee one year."

Memorization was instrumental in developing the ability to compete as a sibling in a large family of homeschool students for Sophie.

I think as a homeschool student I studied more on my own so it made memorization easier. Bible Quiz made memorizing easier for sure. We had to memorize books and bible passages and compete with each other. It really helped when I went to college.

Independence, Organization, Self-Discipline

Transition from one-on-one instruction, online, and self-instruction through maturation contributed to the flexibility of homeschooling, and in turn, developed independence, organization, and self-discipline of participants. A majority of students identified at least one of these characteristics as contributing to self-instruction as they matured within the homeschool experience and an advantage in academic integration in college.

Independence

The sample viewed independence as ability to work independently. None of the students used the term in the personal sense as living independently from parents, family, or homeschool circles. Descriptions of independence related to self-instruction, dislike for group work, pulling your own weight, and ability to schedule curriculum according to interests. A majority valued the characteristic as a contribution to success. Limited reference to independence as autonomy surfaced during interviews with only twenty percent living in campus housing, primarily student athletes. The remainder of participants commuted from home. The characteristic related to interdependence as students enrolled in college courses with family and friends, programs with strong

homeschool representation, and online providing students confidence to integrate outside homeschool circles.

Kendra's experience revealed, "Independence and self-discipline were the main homeschool skills I used as I came to college. I knew how to learn the material on my own and find the things on my own." Joe valued his ability to be independent, "I learned to be independent and teach myself from a book. I did that pretty much with chemistry when I went to college."

Homeschool structure developed independence for Debbie. "Academically you learn to be more independent. I read different books than public school students and then read what they were reading for fun. I could read more because I got my homework done by lunch.

For many students, independence referred to flexibility to adjust their class schedule to meet academic needs or interests, participate in homeschool and community activities, or enroll in college courses. Independence in this context is typically unavailable to public school students with strict course schedules. Kyle felt, "With the independence of homeschooling I had more free time, so everything was structured around what I needed most, not on teaching." Kendra agreed, "Because I could work independently, I could teach myself the curriculum, no timelines. I knew what I needed to do to get done and did it. I think it motivated me to finish quicker."

Jackie was thankful for the freedom to be independent. "Independence made it easier to take college courses while homeschooling. My last semester of homeschool I only took college credits. I really got a head start on my college classes." Independence

cultivated love of learning for Debbie. “Because of homeschooling, I loved learning. I was encouraged to pursue what I was interested in and it eventually became my career choice.”

Private music lessons incorporated ability to practice independently for hours, self-discipline for perfection, memorization, and organization to master quantities of music, and habits conducive to homeschool education. Working independently, music majors developed essential characteristics and skills for homeschool success. Cindy’s ability to work independently allowed her to be comfortable with requirements of a music major. “Um, I had a very good educational experience. Part of it is personality. I like to socialize but I’m ok with being by myself. Independence helped when I’m sitting alone in a practice room for hours.”

Kyle disclosed limitations of independence when homeschooling.

My homeschooling was messed up. It was quite unstructured, unproductive. It taught me to be independent, but I didn’t learn anything. Mom gave me homework, I’d look up the answers in the answer key and turn it into A Beka so I could hurry and go to my job.

Self-Discipline

Self-discipline was an element of academic, athletic, and moral domains. Students also felt self-discipline contributed to respect gained from faculty, staff, and peers. When asked to identify characteristics developed from her homeschool experience, Dotty cited her experience in homeschool athletics as nurturing self-discipline. “Sports helped me develop conflict resolution and self-discipline; how to get things done.” Athletics also contributed to developing self-discipline for Kendra, “For me, to be in Taekwondo I had to keep up my grades. It taught me self-discipline in my personal life.”

Joe stressed the importance of self-discipline for online projects.

Online group projects are different, they are done mostly through e-mail and keep up with the instructor's schedule. It goes back to my mom a lot and how she taught me in homeschool. I still try to self-discipline myself and get assignments done a week in advance or I feel guilty.

Ability to self-discipline was identified as a contributing factor for cognitive learning. "You have the mindset of knowing this or that needs to be done and self-discipline to complete the project," said Kyle. "Pulling your own weight helps you learn more."

Organization

Students identified organization as a product of homeschool platform evolution to self-instruction through increased responsibility of tracking assignment details, deadlines, and academic and social calendars. This skill contributed to college integration as a whole, but was essential to new experiences with college group projects. Students identified college group projects with diverse populations as environments that necessitated organization. Limited experience working with diverse individuals, students with perceived lack of motivation, and varied academic goals, homeschoolers took organizing roles in projects to guarantee prompt completion with high academic standards. The role of organization in academic and social integration contributed to further discussion of integration within group projects.

Kendra said she was organized and self-selected as primary leader in group projects. "I used my organizational skills to get a project ready and follow through."

Cindy said, "I didn't get my organization skills from homeschool. I am not sure where I got it."

Jack preferred to work independently, but used organization in group projects.

Members of a group aren't up to my high standards, motivation, and drive to get it done. I would rather work independently, but I can use my organizational skills to get a project ready and lead groups on the project.

Respect

Students exhibited difficulty distinguishing between homeschool, church, and family contribution to learning the skill of respect. Fifteen percent identified respect as a characteristic of homeschooling, while 90% perceived it as contributing to academic and social relationships with faculty, staff, and peers. Treating adults with respect facilitated the same in return, as most were raised to respect adults and people of authority. Sarah said, "I was raised to respect others, even my peers, as human beings."

Carly spoke from her college experience.

I think because in homeschool you are used to being a family unit, working with all the kids, grandparents, and really being involved. I am use to dealing with everyone with respect, peers, teacher, staff, everyone. It was natural for me to respect my professors.

Isabella bestowed and acquired respect in relationships, "If you show respect and get it done and nothing is late, you are respected in return." Similarly, Cindy said, "If you take schooling seriously and work hard, your professors respect you in return."

Respect was not as easily given when it came to peers for Joe.

Respect, I guess. I am respectful and politely ask questions and earn a teacher's respect. When it comes to peers, I try to be respectful. I look at their background and heritage to see if that is influencing them. It takes about a semester for me to get to know them and give respect because it was just my mom and my brother and me in homeschool.

Jackie was not sure if she could credit homeschool for developing the characteristic of respect, “I think it may be my personality, not homeschool. Flexibility breaks through age barriers. Treat everyone with respect, you will get respect.”

This section examined the collective view of learning characteristics students described as influenced by homeschool education. Twenty-one traits surfaced, but five traditionally identified left-brain characteristics were observed as thematic: ability to memorize, independence, self-discipline, organization, and respect. Characteristics were seen as positive contributors to integration, but upon further investigation, several meanings emerged for traits depending on student and experience. Students also exhibited difficulty in delineating homeschool, family, and church influence, making it problematic to ascertain homeschooling as significant to the development of these learning characteristics.

Social Capital

Flexibility afforded by the nature of home education allowed the population to cultivate social capital outside the classroom with similar and diverse groups through participation in co-op activities within the homeschool circle, curricular and extracurricular groups outside the homeschool realm, and early start programs. Chapter Two identified social capital in two ways: bonding with similar populations and bridging with diverse populations to gain resources, connections, engagement, trust, economic productivity, and growth (Putnam, 2000).

This section will discuss the perceived relationships developed by participation in both types of groups. Discussion in further sections will demonstrate how capital contributed to college integration.

Bonding Capital

Students brought social capital to campus gained from the homeschool experience by bonding with those sharing common attributes, such as ethnicity, religion, values, and family (Putnam, 2000). Co-ops, sports, church, homeschool athletic and music groups, and early start programs were identified by students as social opportunities prior to attending college. Curriculum and involvement outside the home contributed to contact with church members, homeschool organizations, and non-family members. Church, co-op, and homeschool music and athletic participation provided primary opportunity for bonding capital of students enrolled on both campuses providing support for interaction in diverse groups. Literature from Chapter Two tells us one motivation for homeschooling children is religious or moral beliefs (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Since church groups and co-ops are comprised of individuals with similar values and morals, participants developed social capital with others much like themselves. Thirty-five percent of participants built limited peer capital outside the homeschool circle prior to college admission through community athletic teams, music groups, and club membership. Table 18 identifies campus frequency for each self-discovery experience, which are described in greater detail in the following sections.

Table 18. Bonding Capital

Activity	Two-year campus	Four-year campus	Total
Church	5	9	14
Co-op participation	2	8	10
Homeschool Music	3	3	6
Homeschool Athletics	2	2	4
Early Start Program	3	8	11

Church

Chapter Two discussed lack of opinion and population diversity as a limitation identified by those viewing homeschool from outside the population. Families within homeschool education value interaction with people of common beliefs and backgrounds, which can be difficult to achieve in public school situations (Sieg, 2011). Families homeschooling for ideological reasons implement moral and religious education as part of children's education and participate in homeschool and church organizations with individuals with similar values (Hanna, 2012).

Church activities were identified as a primary opportunity for social or academic interaction for over half of students. Males were more likely to participate in athletics outside the home education circle, while females found church associated activities as the primary opportunity to connect with friends.

Debbie bonded with non-family members by participating in church activities, "Church was my main social connection, whether I would be in public or homeschool. I still saw my best friends at least two times a week." Rebecca also bonded with her peers through church activities, "Of course, I socialized at church every Sunday and with kids my age." Michael compared interacting with capital developed from church and relationships with public school students, "There was a different attitude between

homeschool and public school kids; their value and moral systems are different. We were church oriented. There was a little conflict between church groups because of the lack of conflict of interest.”

Students discussed the benefit of communicating with people of all ages between the church and homeschool communities. Carly felt building capital in homeschool was an advantage in college. “I think because in homeschool you are used to being a family unit, going to church, working with all the kids, parents, and grandparents and really being involved. It carries through to college.”

Michael experienced difficulty balancing family values and the outside world.

Socially it was more challenging. I didn't have much interaction with peers because in homeschool you work with people of mixed ages. That's why I don't do well with my peers. I think when you compare homeschool to public school, its morals and values that are different. It is more church oriented, so there is less conflict of interest and easier to make friends.

Co-op Organizations

Supplemental resources provided by co-op organizations were key opportunities for students to interact with peers and adults, parental interaction, and networking. Programs afforded to students included: classroom group activities, field trips, resource access, music lessons and group ensembles, athletic organizations, outreach, and social opportunities. Participation provided opportunity for interaction within the homeschool community and others who shared similar values and interests. Lack of diversity within these relationships socially stunted some students, but offered more opportunities than students not participating in co-op activities and primarily interacting with family and friends. Sixty percent of students not participating in co-op activities felt they were

socially limited and delayed in developing relationships, while only twenty percent engaging in co-op activities identified social limitations.

Homeschool families participated in co-op organizations for social and academic reasons. Participation and organization focus varied according to local resources, which enhanced or provided opportunities not available or conducive to home education. Four-year students were more likely to participate in co-op experiences than those of the two-year campus, in all probability, due to the larger overall population and opportunities available in the area. According to interviews, over 400 families comprise the larger homeschool community and 45 families participated in the smaller community. Students felt their younger siblings were more involved due to the rapid development of co-op organizations. Co-op participation is displayed in Table 19 according to institution participation.

Table 19. Co-op Participation

Institution	Co-op Participation	Sample Size
2-year Institution	2	9
4-year Institution	8	11
Total	10	20

Jill said she was involved in co-ops since the third grade, “I started with my mother as a teacher until I got to advanced study. Mom wanted the Christian Home Educator’s (CHE) Co-op because it was more advanced. We did immersion days, like the Civil War.”

Dottie’s parents participated with other parents in a co-op, “My parents did co-op. For me, it was mostly athletic association because my mom had a lot of homeschool

parent friends.” Isabella did not have the opportunity to participate in co-ops except for athletics. “My little brother is part of a co-op where parents come in and teach special subjects. They didn’t have them when I homeschooled. I wish they did. My brother likes it because he has a chance to make friends.”

Desiree and her sister used a co-op as their social outlet, “We belonged to a homeschool co-op group. We did activities and tours together with other homeschool students. It was a chance to get people out and about, just doing ordinary things, like hobbies.” Contrarily, Joe did not participate in co-op activities and felt he was disadvantaged socially, “Socially, I wasn’t as good as public or private school students for at least five or six years.”

Early Start Participation

Flexibility of home education schedules and ability to dual enroll at a local campus provided students the ability to take college courses difficult to teach at home, too advanced for home study, participate in group or private music courses, and jump start their college education at a reduced cost. Program enrollment provided opportunity for initial academic and social integration with diverse groups of students outside the homeschool community or comfort of enrolling with family and other homeschool students.

Those fortunate to live in or near communities with campuses offering early start programs eased into the college experience, learning to navigate public and private systems while they were still at home and members of familiar groups. Students at the four-year college enrolled in early start programs at more than twice the rate of the two-

year campus and course load varied from a handful of classes to earning enough credits to graduate from college a semester after high school completion. Public and private colleges in the larger community allowed three students to dual enroll on both campuses, determine institution of choice for full-time enrollment, and earn higher priced private credits at a reduced cost. Several found it difficult to determine whether enrollment in these programs increased capital or their level of academic and social integration. Early start participation is displayed in Table 20 according to institution participation.

Table 20. Homeschool Early Start Participation

Institution	Early Start Participation	Sample Size
2-year Institution	3	9
4-year Institution	8	11
Total	11	20

Eleven students developed social capital as members of early start programs enrolling with family and friends, non-traditional students, online, and one-on-one with an instructor. Students built limited capital beyond their instructor when enrolled in one-on-one college music lessons while still in high school. Several students took courses with friends; two students attended a smaller, two-year institution with non-traditional students prior to enrolling at the four-year college, and one enrolled entirely online.

For Kendra, transition to enroll in two college early start programs was eased by taking courses with friends.

I enrolled in the connections program at both the public and private college at the same time. I took Italian, public speaking and algebra. I took some classes with a friend. It was nice to not have to do it alone.

While enrolling with friends facilitated course enrollment within an early start program, it also limited diverse relationships for Jackie.

I had my friend (James) with me for algebra and Italian, I think it was Italian, and A & P. It was so good we had each other. It's weird, it wasn't super monumental. You hear about kids going out of state. Especially with the connections program, you get a gentle introduction to college. I'm still living at home, so you don't freak out quite so much.

Ninety-five percent of students participated in at least one organization, bonding relationships with those sharing similar interests, beliefs, or values, including church, co-ops, music and athletic organizations, and early start programs. Sixty percent of participants not involved in co-ops found peer relationships challenging, while only twenty percent of those engaged in co-ops experienced similar challenges. These relationships encouraged involvement with peers sharing similar values and interests outside the immediate family and homeschool circle, including enrollment in college courses through early start programs.

Bridging Capital

As students matured and developed relationships with similar peers, confidence to participate in non-homeschool groups increased. Social capital outside the homeschool domain bridged students with groups from diverse backgrounds, some divergent to their homeschool experience. Community size and offerings available outside the homeschool community influenced student participation in activities with diverse populations. Prevalent subthemes included early start programs, music, athletics, and clubs. Table 21 identifies four self-discovery experiences in which homeschool students bridged capital with diverse individuals.

Table 21. Bridging Capital

Activity	Two-year campus	Four-year campus	Total
Early Start	3	8	11
Music	5	7	12
Athletics	3	4	7
Clubs	2	3	5

Early Start

Early start programs provided opportunity for eleven students to develop social capital, not necessarily outside the homeschool circle, enrolling with family and friends, non-traditional students, online, and one-on-one with an instructor. Thirty-six percent of students took courses with a friend, 18% attended a smaller two-year institution with non-traditional students, and one enrolled in only online courses. Discussion of early start capital by bonding is discussed in an earlier section, but some students gained relationships outside the community.

Music

Instrumental and vocal music ensemble and private lesson enrollment on and off campus as homeschool students contributed to large group and one-on-one relationships with diverse populations. Forty-five percent of early start students built limited capital beyond their instructor when enrolled in college music lessons while still in high school. Relationships with college faculty were developed by students taking lessons early in their homeschool curricula.

Cindy benefited from early start, “Because I took piano lessons through junior high and high school, I was familiar with the campus and instructors.” Rebecca knew her

private lesson instructor from early start, but when it came to other classes, she was not as comfortable. “In my writing class I was so nervous about being in class I threw up.”

Academic and emotion connections with music faculty through an early start program made a difference in Frank’s college experience.

It (college) was very formative. I was that student that respected the instructor and was always looking for more information. Peers didn’t really like it. I would pick the professors brains about how their discipline affected life. I never lacked professors giving recommendations. I have fond memories and many lasting relationships with professors. The first college I attended had an outstanding music program, but with Dr. (Jane), you are not just a number, but an investment and person. It is much less about the money, a more personal and emotional relationship.

Athletics

Seven students participated in community athletics, including swim team, basketball, Taekwondo, golf, and baseball. Males were inclined to participate in sports outside the homeschool community at a higher rate than females, as well as participating within the homeschool circle. Eighty-six percent credited athletics for cultivating conflict resolution, teamwork, diversity, and social capital, later translating into skills contributing to college. Two non-athletes realized personal limitations in conflict resolution and felt the necessity to develop the skill in college. Athletics helped Joe and his brother achieve social integration.

I developed a competitive spirit in sports. We learned to help each other; support each other. Socially it helped me develop conflict resolution, self-discipline, how to get along. Sports got me out to meet people. I don’t think I was socially as good as public school kids for at least five or six years. Sports gave us the social side, church, bible study. I think I have higher social status compared to other homeschool students who just associate with family.

Participation in community athletics played a significant role cultivating teamwork, conflict resolution, and leadership skills for 35% of students, 86% of which viewed these skills as contributing to the college experience. Participants appreciated opportunities these memberships provided for interaction with varied populations, but were honest in stating they felt socially disadvantaged compared to their public school counterparts. Joe experienced the advantages of athletic participation, but recognized his social deficiencies.

It was tough growing up to have friends. It bugged me. Sports got me out in public to meet people. Socially I'm not as good as public school kids. I lived in a small community. Me and my brother always played sports. Fellow homeschool kids went to school and games on weekends. Socially, I wasn't as good as public or private school students for at least 5-6 years.

Club Membership

Parents selected activities and organizations closely connected to homeschool, church, and groups with similar values as elements of their homeschool program. Engagement in clubs and organizations was primarily homeschool oriented, but of those participating in outside activities, five identified 4-H clubs as the major organization leading to capital development. Membership in 4-H clubs developed social capital and opportunity for academic learning, leadership development, and public speaking outside homeschool connections, easing transition to college and social and academic integration. "I was in 4-H and still have friends I know and hang out with," commented Jack.

Involvement in several non-homeschool organizations contributed to academic and social capital for Kendra.

Belonging to 4-H helped a lot with leadership, public speaking, and managing money. I also had to maintain my grades for me to be in Taekwondo. It taught me discipline in my personal life. I also belonged to a library team book club, which helped academically.

Debbie experienced difficulty as a club member with peers. “It’s easier to talk to little kids and adults, those outside my peer group. Kids my age are just at a different place.” Rebecca experienced some of the same feelings about peers. “I don’t know how to handle working with peers.”

Bonding with similar individuals provided support for students to engage in early start programs outside the homeschool environment, opportunity to meet peers, and interact with faculty, staff, and other diverse populations. One-on-one music lessons granted initial contact with campus and faculty as early as junior high and relationships continued throughout college. Contact developed familiarity with campus, led to degree choice, and full-time enrollment upon homeschool graduation. Community sports and club membership promoted peer and adult relationships students saw as contributing to the opportunity to attend college. These diverse interactions bridged homeschool education to college.

Academic and Social Integration

Integration into the college experience was largely connected to chosen curricula and method of the overall homeschool platform implemented by parents. Experience transitioned students from one-on-one instruction to using technological resources for online instruction. Through maturation, students began to self-instruct, contributing to flexibility for students to participate in activities within and outside home education

leading to bonding of similar and building of diverse capital. Transition through homeschooling also developed thematic student learning characteristics, which contributed to academic and social integration. The following sections will examine college transition and integration into college experience for homeschoolers.

College Transition

Transition from home education to college varied according to homeschool platform, individual characteristics, and social capital prior to attending college. Students cultivated capital during homeschooling by bonding with people with similar values and interests and building capital with people from diverse class, race, faith, and social populations.

Relationships gained through bonding within the homeschool community, engaging in church organizations, co-ops, athletics, and music eased transition into college when enrolling in early start courses, team membership, and music participation with friends and relatives. Capital development proved to be as unique as the homeschool experience itself.

Jill took math and psychology class with her sister as part of an early start program. “I’m certainly glad I had her in those two classes. There was a lot of hands on work, so it was pretty easy going with the help of my sister.”

Enrolled in college as a result of capital built from participation in homeschool association volleyball, Dottie reflected on social capital contributing to college enrollment. “They (homeschool) didn’t really promote college much. I didn’t think I

could play volleyball, but coach contacted me. He saw me playing homeschool volleyball. It opened things up. That is the only way I was able to attend college.”

Living at home allowed students to maintain church and homeschool connections when enrolling in college and for some, continued throughout their entire college experience, limiting diverse capital development. Cindy connected with friends from church and homeschool early in her college transition. “The first week I met some friends I knew through Intersarsity Christian Fellowship and formed some really good friendships through that.”

Relationships built outside home education participating in early start programs, community sports and music, and club memberships eased transition with diverse populations. Students had little difficulty developing relationships outside the homeschool community with faculty, staff, and non-traditional students due to a mixed generation experience of home education, an extended family unit, and family value of respecting those older than themselves.

Seven students enrolled in music lessons prior to attending college, building capital with their instructor. Transitioning from homeschool to college was seamless for Rebecca who majored in music, “One of my friends from homeschool choir ended up coming to the same college. It was nice to know somebody.”

Social relationships gained through athletic participation varied according to homeschool association or public sport team participation, such as American Legion baseball, golf, Taekwondo, swim team, or city league sports. Male participants were

more likely to be members of teams outside the homeschool association when compared to women, but became collegiate athletes at the same rate.

Student perceptions of integration in college were thematic in revealing positive experiences, as well as limitations. Each experience was unique and dependent on capital, characteristics developed as homeschool students, and individual personality. Many students, however, could not distinguish between homeschool and family influence in developing characteristics. It was equally difficult to separate academic and social integration for some themes in relation to each individual student. The following sections will examine thematic, perceived contributions to integration and influence on the college experience: Homeschool platform, student learning characteristics, group projects, and sense of belonging.

Homeschool Platform

One question, which spurs conversation about homeschool students is, “How do they transition to college?” As discussed in Chapter Two, studies have been conducted on the topic, but primarily in the quantitative realm. This section will examine how homeschool students applied skills learned from their homeschool platform and curriculum to their transition to college.

Expansion of technology, homeschool networks, commercial platforms, and online instruction have changed the homeschool approach to education. It is no longer the picture of a mother in front of a row of her children teaching in rural schoolhouse fashion. Families in this study chose at least one virtual classroom, either as a single platform or in a combination with other resources to provide home education to their

children. Comfort working with an online platform steered students to take online courses, research, and self-instruction. Many chose not to participate in group study sessions. Students were unsure of teaching practices public school students have used since kindergarten. One student commented, “I feel like it is a waste of time to sit through lectures so everyone understands, take notes on material, which is in the book, and follow a schedule that is not my schedule.”

Joe took his college courses online while living in the dorms and competing in collegiate sports.

I think it was easier for me to do it that way. I was used to doing classes online, working independently, and it makes traveling for sports a lot easier to keep up in school. I spend a lot of time in computer lab as an online student. I need to get out and meet people, go to the caf, things like that.

Rebecca learned chemistry in college due to skills she learned self-instructing as a homeschool student. “Basically, I taught myself in homeschool with mom as a tutor. I started out with A Beka, but the older I got, the less videos I used, and the more I taught myself.”

Jane commented, “There really isn’t any difference between homeschool, college, and a job. You have your assignment and you do it. A two-year school was good because I was homeschooled; I was used to having siblings and working alone.”

Cindy modeled her college experience after her online homeschool platform. “I would go to lectures, take some notes, then go home and look everything up myself. Then I would do my homework. I never go to study sessions, I just get it done on my own.”

Practices and expectations taken for granted by public school students entering higher education were unfamiliar to homeschool students. Homeschool curricula and

teaching method contributed to lack of experience with lectures, note taking, course and academic schedules, textbooks, and grade criteria causing anxiety for many students.

When institutions addressed transition concerns early in the college experience, students were successful. If students did not communicate frustrations verbally or non-verbally, integration was limited. Michael struggled communicating his concerns with instructors.

“If I don’t get the required information to comprehend, I just do it by gutting it out. I don’t ask questions.”

Frank was very open about challenges he faced with college instruction methods.

It was quite the experience, a large shift for me, huge. I lacked most in the skill of note taking. I got to class the first day an hour early and literally started transcribing everything she said. It all seemed redundant to me, taking notes that are the same in the book. I was not use to a person up in front talking and telling me what I needed to know. She asked me to stay after class after that and explained to me what I needed to write.

Isabella also lacked note taking skills, “In homeschool, we use textbooks. I didn’t know how to take notes and study without a book.”

College schedule caused concern for Carly. “At home we didn’t have scheduled classes. In college you had to keep up with your schedule. The hardest part of a set college schedule is that it is not my schedule.”

Students valued characteristics, which contributed to academic excellence but Debbie was unsure of expectations for grading. “I had difficulty understanding the criteria for grades and time, which became exhausting and overwhelming.”

Respect

Eighteen students agreed respect earned capital for academic and social integration in distinct ways. Students overall felt respect contributed to faculty relationships, six considered respect a characteristic, which established friendships, and four developed relationships with staff. Students could not confirm characteristics came from homeschooling or family upbringing due to the interdependent role each faction plays in their lives.

Faculty Relationships

Relationships with faculty were regarded as primary means to academic integration. One-on-one instruction, multi-generation interaction within family, homeschool organizations, church populations, and respect given to others, provided students confidence to approach faculty, ask questions, and state their opinion. Building capital with faculty proved to be instrumental to student academic and social integration in college.

Respect was a common attribute facilitating capital gains with faculty, staff, and peers. Students felt relationships developed through respect of others stemmed from homeschooling and family upbringing.

Sophie learned to respect others from her childhood.

In our house, large value is set on respecting people older than you. I think I gain respect from faculty because of how I treat them. It makes it easier to ask questions. It's like asking my parents a question. I not timid in asking as some kids are. I ask faculty questions almost every day. I just get to the bush and ask.

Dottie had similar experiences with faculty relationships and academic integration.

Faculty, I think I've always been...a lot of teachers and peers really like me. I only had mom and a few teachers, so I really wanted input. The faculty appreciates when you respect them. I developed strong relationships with faculty. They have written a lot of recommendations and gotten me into a lot of things.

On the contrary, Cindy felt public school students initially have an advantage developing relationships with faculty.

I got to college and felt the difference between homeschool and public school diminished. There are some things that are different. Public school students have spent years working with teachers, but if you show respect and take schooling seriously, work hard, your professor's respect you in return.

Peer Relationships

Bestowing respect to peers provided opportunity for cultivation of social capital. Each student was unique in their use of respect, but valued it as the primary characteristic for developing friendships. Social capital in turn transitioned homeschool education and academic and social integration within the college experience.

Isabella felt respect was reciprocal.

I respect my peers and I haven't had anybody not like me. I would be there for anybody far away from home if they needed to talk to someone. I was brought up, you respect, and do what you are told.

Joe deemed respect as a way to gain lasting friendship. "With peers, I try to be respectful, looking at their background and heritage is especially helpful. It is the way to be a friend."

Connie's experience with three siblings aided in peer relationships.

In homeschool, you learn respect. Home is school. My peer was my brother. We argue, but we live together. We have to be conscious to not hurt each other. Um, I think I'm more respectful and courteous because of

homeschool and gain many friendships because of it. When you go to college where no one knows you, you want to build your friend base.

Staff Relationships

Participants gravitated toward non-traditional students and other adults, including faculty and staff, due to the ability to earn respect and familiarity of multi-generation relationships of homeschool. For some, limited integration occurred with peers of similar age. Jack valued relationships built at a two-year technical college prior to transferring to a four-year institution, “I loved it. It was older adults, not the general college student population.”

Jane was confident in developing relationships with adults and the contribution these relationships had working with faculty and staff.

Studies show students who socialize with adults mature at a higher level and have an advantage academically. You don’t have to wait for others in the class, you can move on when you are ready. I socialized on an adult level early on because I gravitated to older students at an early age. It helps working with faculty and staff. They respect you when you are mature.

Group Projects

Capital gained from group projects contributed to positive and negative integration with peers throughout college. Working with peers in group projects was not ideal for homeschoolers. Homeschool platform of one-on-one learning with parents, online, and self-teaching developed independence, organization, and self-discipline contributing positively to working alone or privately with an instructor or staff member, but many times made group work with peers uncomfortable.

Frank was instrumental in developing a cohort of classmates to pass calculus. His experience collaborating with a similar cohort of self-selected participants was contrary to those assigned diverse groups. From his perspective, group projects contributed positively to academic and social integration.

I had calculus. I, we, were in a group project in a course taught by a very brilliant man, I think he was from Poland, not always the best at teaching. For a group of us, our grades were important and we worked together. Using homeschool skills of being self-taught, to teach many. We wouldn't have passed the class without working together. To this day, we are still friends. I met one of the girls in Wal-Mart and we both remembered working together on that project.

Jack incorporated organization, self-discipline, independence, and technological skills developed from homeschool to supervise a construction project.

I guess the best example of working with a group would be constructing a new house in Baja, Mexico. I used my skills and past experience from homeschooling to organize and complete the project with a crew under my supervision. It was a positive learning and social experience.

Limitations

Working independently provided opportunity for academic integration, but potentially hindered peer relationships when working on graded group projects. This section illustrates how valued characteristics of homeschool contributed to aversion to group projects.

Characteristics considered positive for academic integration were not entirely transferable to successful social integration in group project participation. Eight students self-selected to act as group leader in college projects due to strength in self-discipline, independence, and organization. As a whole, students felt the necessity to lead projects to assure completion with high standards. Students took on the position of leader, assigned

roles, set deadlines, kept members on track, and served as final editor, but in the end, preferred to work independently. Projects served students well academically, but few viewed group projects as an opportunity to develop social capital.

Students overwhelmingly felt the need to be in charge of group projects from their homeschool experience of self-instruction. Losing control of a project, distrust of the quality of work produced by group members, and perceived limited group participation limited capital gain from group project participation. Most said they would rather complete the project themselves. From their vantage point, controlling the project was a characteristic of leadership. “It was hard to lose that responsibility and let group evolve without controlling everything. It was really hard to adjust to working with others on an assignment after doing it all yourself through homeschool.”

Chosen as project leader because of her self-discipline, Melissa took on responsibility for group projects.

I was in charge of keeping everyone on track and was the final editor. I did several projects in college and I had to make sure they had discipline to follow through. I eventually learned it wasn't a one man show. Peers don't necessarily like it when you take over.

Dottie was upfront with group project challenges. “I wasn't used to working with others, so it was hard to lose that responsibility and let the group evolve without controlling everything. It was really hard to adjust.”

Carly had similar experiences when engaging in college group projects.

Most of the time I ended up being in charge because I was used to doing it all. I usually assigned, organized and made sure everyone had their parts

and knew what to do. I think in homeschool you are used to doing things on your own and in a group, you feel not everybody cares about a grade as much as you do.

“I can remember having to do all the work because of a bunch of dead beats,” said Dottie. “So, I really don’t like group projects. They (students) aren’t all up to my high standards, motivation and drive to get it done.”

Jane questioned the need for group projects in college.

From my job experience, you don’t work together. You have a task and get it done on your own. In group projects, I would rather do it on my own. I take the lead and initiative to get it done. They don’t really prepare you for real life.

Sense of Belonging

Close knit relationships of the homeschool community played a factor in the need for a place to belong. Students living at home while attending college continued to socialize and attend functions with homeschool and church friends limiting new capital. On the other hand, competing in collegiate sports and music group involvement provided a sense of belonging and ability to gain capital. Joe said, “Socially, you need to get involved. It helps you come out of your shell. I won the leadership award for my floor. It gives you an identity that you lacked being homeschooled.”

Students were forthright when discussing social integration in college. Kyle related this connection to a place of belonging, “Academically we don’t have a problem. Homeschool students just need to have a place where they feel they belong. More of a social gathering.”

Frank felt a sense of belonging within the music department. “It (college) is a wonderful experience. I liken it to a family and attribute it to the music program, which has extended periods of interaction and self-expression.”

Students group membership does not mean you are integrated into the group. Rebecca shared her group experience. “Because of my age, I was academically more ahead than socially. Being in a group does not equal socializing. Now I realize I can be in the same room with a group and not be socializing with them.” Joe experienced isolation within his athletic team. “Athletics are ok. Some team members are hard to get along with. Sometimes I feel like an island on the team.”

Sense of belonging did not come as easily in divergent groups. Lack of diverse athletic team and club involvement limited student experience with conflict resolution and two students felt the skill should be taught in college. Students were more comfortable discussing opinions within homogenous groups sharing similar values, morals, and interests than groups outside the homeschool population. Interacting with diverse college populations hindered thought expression when their opinion differed from a college group.

Jane’s experience with group projects left her uncomfortable when working with diverse populations.

In a group, you can interact with those you like. You can get to know who you like. I was always involved in something I would enjoy so I could gravitate to others like me. That isn’t always the case when a teacher chooses the group.

Summary

Chapter Four illustrates homeschool student perceptions of their journey from homeschool experience to college integration. Consistency of themes and subtheme identified by students who homeschooled across a broad spectrum of in-state communities and in four additional states was noteworthy.

Transition of one-on-one curricula to online learning through maturation to self-instruct contributed to engagement in similar and diverse groups building social capital and developing five thematic student learning characteristics: self-discipline, memorization, organization, respect, and independence. Homeschool platform, student learning characteristics, and sense of belonging were positive and limiting factors in college integration.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how students perceived their homeschool experiences contributing to their social and academic integration in college. The research examined experiences of 20 homeschool students enrolled on two campuses through personal, face-to-face interviews designed to gain insight into the lived experiences of home education and its contribution to their college experience. Nine two-year community college and eleven state university students with homeschool experience in five states provided a broad perspective of experiences.

Analysis of interview data revealed two themes of the homeschool experience influencing academic and social capital development with similar and diverse populations: homeschool platform and student learning characteristics. Homeschool platform manifested in three stages: one-on-one instruction, online learning, and self-instruction, contributing to engagement in self-discovery activities conducive to bonding and bridging of capital, which facilitated transition to college. Subthemes of student learning characteristics included: self-discipline, memorization, organization, respect, and independence, influencing academic and social integration. Themes and subthemes nurtured and limited academic and social integration in college.

Problem and Purpose

K-12 homeschool enrollment in the United States steadily increased following the 1993 legalization of the practice in all 50 states and establishment of the first standards in 1999 (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Growing from 11,994 in 1993 to an estimated two million in 2010, higher education is taking notice of the potential source of incoming students and their contribution to campus. Initial external opinion of the homeschool population provided a picture of socially stunted students taught by their mothers with limited access to the outside world (Cooper & Sureau, 2007). The contemporary homeschool model evolved with advancement of technology, resources, networking, and program development. As more home educated students enter college with potentially diverse K-12 education experiences in comparison to most public and private school students, it becomes increasingly important for members of higher education to gain an understanding of what the population brings to campus.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore how students perceive their homeschool experience contributing to their social and academic integration on the college campus. To align with data reports of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), this study defined students schooled at home by parents or guardians at least part-time and not enrolled academically in a public or private school more than 25 hours per week were considered homeschool students (Staklis, 2010). The research examines experiences from the lens of nine community college homeschool

students and eleven students enrolled at a four-year campus to gain a personal view of homeschool education and its contribution to their college experience.

Research Questions

1. How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?
2. What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?
3. How do homeschool experiences serve as obstacles for academic and social integration?
4. How do homeschool experiences serve as opportunities for academic and social integration?

This chapter discusses findings from data analysis in Chapter Four detailing student perceptions of their personal homeschool experience and their contribution to college through interpretation of themes and subthemes in relation to research questions. The chapter subsequently discusses conclusions of the study as they relate to theoretical frameworks, limitations, implications, and suggestions for further study.

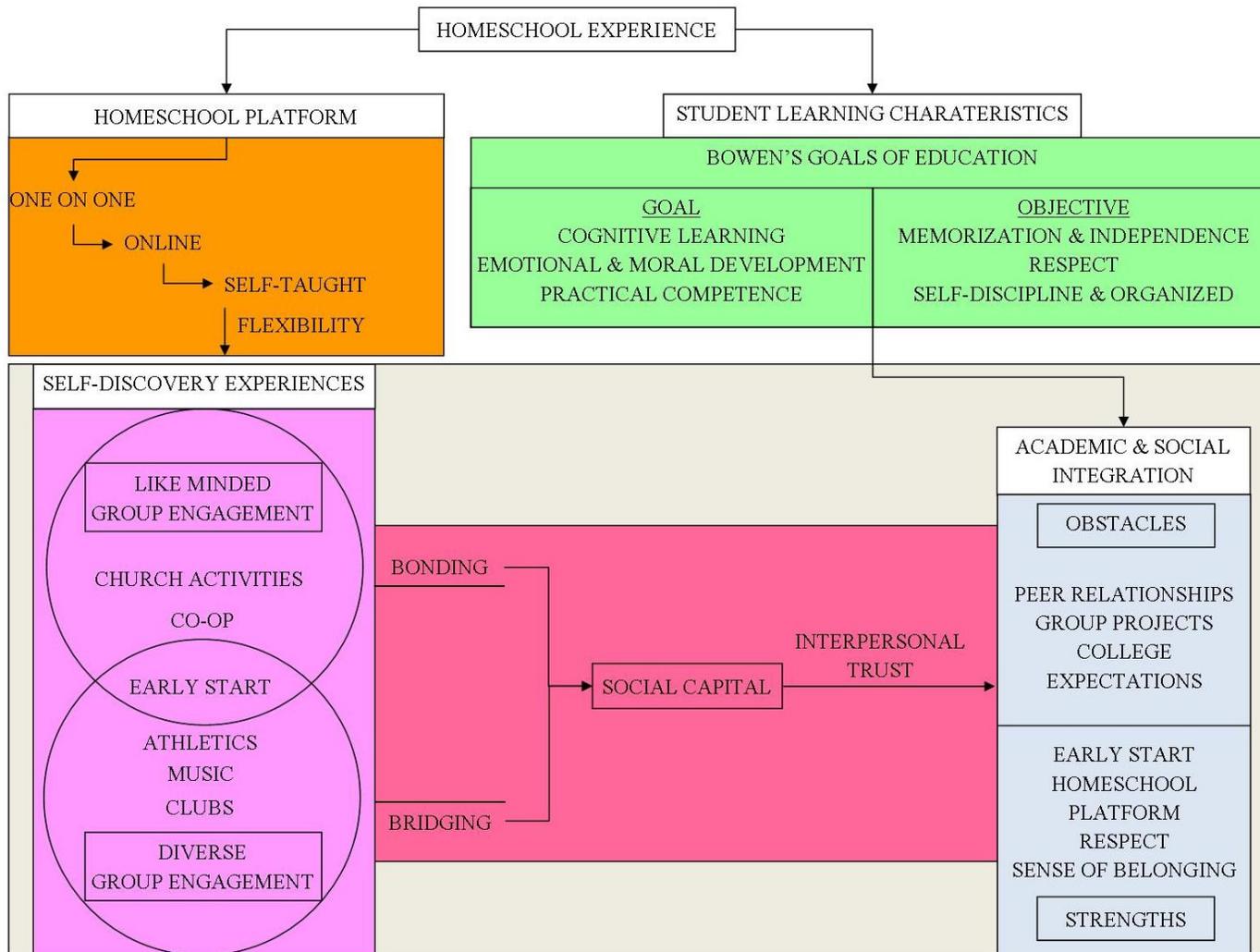
The color coded diagram, Figure 2, illustrates the conceptual framework developed from data collected through student interviews to gain a personal perspective of their homeschool experiences and influence on academic and social integration in college. Drawing from participant responses to research questions, homeschool platform and student learning characteristics emerged as themes and subsequent subthemes

relating to Bowen's goals of education, bonding and bridging capital, and academic and social integration as they relate to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (I-E-O).

As one of the most robust college impact models, Astin maintains college outcomes are products of the three elements (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Input (I) of family and demographic characteristics and academic and social experiences students bring to campus directly and indirectly influence the change process and engagement in the campus environment (E). Interaction with elements of the environment on and off campus leads to student growth or outcomes (O) of the college experience. Input of characteristics and experiences students bring to college upon enrollment may directly affect outcomes, but also indirectly influence the college experience according to choices students make engaging academically and socially within the campus setting. Exposure to programs and experiences through encounters with faculty, staff, and peers within the environment of the institution result in outcomes of the college experience.

Implementing themes and subthemes from the data, homeschool platform and student characteristics relating to Bowen's Goals for Student Success became elements of Astin's input domain of the Student Involvement Theory. Flexibility of homeschool platform allows students to engage within the environment of self-discovery experiences, influencing bonding and bridging capital to build interpersonal trust with faculty, staff, and peers. Input and environment shape academic and social integration as outcomes of academic and social integration within the college experience.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Diagram



Homeschool Contribution to College Experience

The first research question posed to participating homeschool students sought to answer the following: *How do students' homeschool experiences contribute to their academic and social integration?* The following section examines how homeschool experience contributed to the development of student learning characteristics, their role in college, and how they contributed to academic and social integration.

Homeschool Platform and Student Learning Characteristics

Homeschool platform and student learning characteristics manifested within Astin's input domain in the form of platform evolution to self-instruction and Bowen's student learning characteristics: memorization, organization, self-discipline, respect, and independence. Student engagement in self-discovery experiences exhibited within the environment of church and co-op activities, early start enrollment, athletics, music, and club membership developed homogeneous and heterogeneous capital for transition to academic and social integration in college. The red area in Figure 2 displays the process of homeschool experience evolution and engagement in self-discovery experiences. The area in blue illustrates the relationship between student learning characteristics and Bowen's (1977) goals and objectives for student success. Bowen's cognitive learning objective, learn how to learn, nurtured through the practice of self-instruction, equipping students with skills to read, research, and solve problems in the quest for cognitive learning, allocate time according to assignment needs, choose subjects of interest, and organize course schedules for social and academic engagement. Entering college

equipped with these skills and characteristics provided students confidence in their ability to effectively complete college work and consequently, played an integral role in ease of transition. The characteristic of independence was not in and of itself equivalent to self-instruction, but rather an element of the skill. Students viewed independence as a characteristic of self-instruction affording capability to work alone for hours in music rehearsal, sports practice, or completing homework. Lattibeaudiere found similar results relating elements of homeschool self-instruction and positive correlation to college transition (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007). Stages of the homeschool platform displayed in the orange section of Figure 2 represent evolution of instruction method leading to self-discovery experiences in the purple section of the figure. The grey section of the conceptual framework illustrates environmental interaction within self-discovery experiences relating to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, bonding and bridging capital, and interpersonal trust as students transitioned to college. Interactions contributed to peer relationships, group projects, college expectations, early start, homeschool platform, respect, and sense of belonging as students integrated academically and socially in college.

Homeschool platform provided self-discovery experiences as a result of schedule adaptability and opportunities to organize daily agenda enabling investigation of subjects and activities of interest while completing required course work. Flexibility presented opportunity to participate during traditional school hours in church, co-op, and community activities unattainable for most public school students due to strict schedules. Membership in community orchestra, opera, choir, private music lessons, individual and

team sports, co-op activities, volunteer work, clubs, and early start programs contributed to development of student learning characteristics, cognitive development, and sense of belonging within similar and diverse groups. Bowen (1977) identified the importance of self-discovery by college students as an outcome of emotional and moral development, including course selection, talents and interests, choice of majors and career, and personal philosophy of life.

Student Learning Characteristics

Evolution of homeschool platform from one-on-one to self-instruction was instrumental in development of 21 student learning characteristics viewed as factors in academic and social integration. Five were thematic and identified with objectives related to Bowen's (1977) goal of practical competence: independence, ability to memorize, organization, self-discipline, and respect, as seen in the green section of Figure 2, which function within Astin's input domain. Primary learning characteristics were viewed as a product of homeschooling through transition to self-instruction and essential to learning, academic success, and capital development. Students were hesitant to credit characteristics solely to home education due to the close relationship of homeschool, church, and family life. Also unclear was connection of characteristics to instruction method or curricula. The tightly woven nature of homeschool education and normal family life made it complicated to determine whether homeschool platform developed certain characteristics or if they were a product of nurture or environment. The strong relationship between homeschool experience and family life appeared to contribute to students' academic competence as characterized by Bowen (1977). A primary reason for

choosing homeschool education was family beliefs, morals, and values, which became cornerstone objectives of their education program. Students definitively described homeschooling and family values as interrelated. Jane summed up statements of other participants, “Home is school and school is home. It is based on your home, your belief system and morals.”

Early Start Programs

Early start program enrollment revealed environmental conditions for self-discovery and capital development with similar and diverse populations. These relationships proved instrumental in transitioning capital from homeschool to college. Peer relationships, group projects, college expectations, early start, homeschool platform, respect, and sense of belonging manifested as outcomes of academic and social integration within Astin's Theory of Student Development.

Platform flexibility afforded opportunity for self-discovery within homeschool and community activities. As an objective of Bowen's (1977) goal of emotional and moral development, self-discovery cultivated interests and talents contributing to relationships with similar and diverse populations. These relationships provided emotional and academic support to homeschool students enrolling in early start courses and reduced anxiety of college transition as they moved from bonding with similar individuals to relationships that are more heterogeneous. Familiarity with campus, programs, instructors, and college expectations from early start participation eased transition to full-time enrollment. Findings were consistent with Mechur Karp's (2012) study expanding the influence of dual enrollment in high school and college to include

social and academic role rehearsal for future full-time college enrollment. Her study discusses benefits of engaging in early start and dual enrollment courses as role playing exercises developing appropriate academic and social behaviors. This was especially true for homeschool students who lacked experience with college expectations, classroom requirements, and interaction with diverse ideas and populations.

Early start experiences cultivated relationships with faculty through one-on-one private music instruction and engagement in classroom environments contributing to implementation of self-instruction and student learning characteristics. Eighty-five percent of students perceived stronger faculty relationships resulted from characteristics and skills brought to campus from homeschool education. Participants enrolling in early start online college courses lacked face-to-face interaction with instructors, but the same characteristics and skills cultivated respect from faculty as students engaged in online research, analysis, synthesis, and creation of academic works to collegiate level standards. These characteristics were also thematic in Holder's 2001 study of academic and social performance of homeschool students (Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvihill, 2007).

Early start programs, online instruction, and homeschool platform shared qualities that contributed to greater levels of academic and social integration, manifesting in two significant ways. First, these platforms cultivated student competencies, which subsequently contributed to their academic and social integration. Students felt organization, self-discipline, and independence of homeschool self-instruction were key characteristics for academic success, engaging in group projects, leadership roles, and structured private music lesson preparation. Second, each platform created opportunities

for student and faculty interaction, contributing to development of cultural capital with faculty thereby expanding their academic integration prior to entering college. Literature points to the importance of trust and respect in establishing a safe and secure environment for academic integration of novel ideas and orchestrating social interaction between students and faculty (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002). Faculty and student relationship development because of early start programs cultivated necessary trust with participants for transition and integration into higher education.

Homeschool Influence on College Experience

The following section examines the second question of the study: *What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?*

Homeschool Experience in Creating Academic and Social Capital

Participants achieved capital during home education by bonding with similar individuals and bridging relationships with diverse populations through engagement in homeschool and community activities. Flexibility afforded through the homeschool platform of self-instruction granted opportunity for students to participate in curricular and non-curricular activities building relationships with members of the church, co-op, music organizations, and athletics. The grey area of Figure 2 demonstrates how environmental interactions with groups valuing similar beliefs and interests through self-

discovery experiences developed capital through bonding, while community group engagement bridged capital with those of diverse beliefs and interests.

Framework for social capital encapsulating work by Putnam identifies two dimensions of relationships: bonding and building capital (Beaudoin, 2011). Bonding with individuals within similar groups provided access to internal resources, while bridging with heterogeneous groups increased access to external resources, which in turn, influenced academic and social capital.

Contradictory morals and values of public schools contribute to the decision of a majority of families to homeschool their students and hesitancy to bridge relationships outside homeschool circles (Gaither, 2009). Fear of conflicting moral influences led sample parents to restrict interaction outside church and homeschool environments. Results from the Lea and Putnam (2010) study using data from the Faith Matters survey confirmed and advanced previous studies finding a positive relationship between religion and life satisfaction. Social networks built through religious affiliation provide a structure, which provides a sense of belonging, identified by Maslow as a basic human need. Religious affiliation served as an extension of homeschooling and offered participants opportunity to engage with homogeneous groups sharing similar beliefs, values, morals, and a sense of belonging. Students with limited interaction outside of the homeschool experiences valued contact with peers from church at least two times per week reinforcing moral and religious family values. Student athletes credited these strong family beliefs, values, and morals for avoidance of inappropriate behavior and essential to respect given by team members and college classmates. Church environment provided

access to internal resources through youth group activities, worship team music, field trip activities, and community volunteer work. Opportunities not only provided social interaction, but development of Bowen's (1977) objectives for higher education by cultivating music skills in worship teams; leadership, organization, self-discipline, construction, and computer skills in youth group Habitat for Humanity projects; and empathy by helping elderly neighbors in need.

Homeschool co-op groups organized by parents to supplement students' academic and social interests provided key opportunities for homogeneous internal resource networking with peers, adults, parents, and other individuals within the homeschool community who share similar values and interests. Programs afforded access to internal resources for students through classroom group activities, field trips, music lessons, group ensembles, athletics, church, and social opportunities.

Limited opportunity for membership in public school athletic teams and music ensembles led parents to organize comparable groups within homeschool communities allowing student interaction with peers sharing similar interests, values, and beliefs. Groups provided opportunity for self-discovery of talents and interests previously unavailable with homogeneous factions. Lack of diversity within these relationships socially limited some students, but offered more opportunities than those not participating and interacting only with family and friends. Bonding within familiar groups developed internal resources of emotional and academic support leading to engagement with heterogeneous groups and external resources as described in the subsequent section.

Beaudoin (2011) points to literature supporting importance of bridging with dissimilar groups to broaden networks of individuals and resources with diverse ideas. From his findings, weak relationships built through bridging are more important than strong homogeneous relationships because of the opportunity to broaden individual perspective with ideas diverse to their normal homogeneous group. This being said, some participants valued the ability to develop selective social circles in college with people sharing their values, beliefs, and interests. Students valued membership in music organizations consisting of substantial homeschool population. Student athletes accessed internal resources based on a team membership contributing to institutional choice. The confidence provided by engaging with homogeneous core groups in college allowed confidence for initial bridging of capital with heterogeneous individuals broadening perspective to diverse ideas.

Participants identified bridging relationships through community athletic teams, music groups, club organizations, and early start programs as advantages for developing diverse capital contributing to college academic and social integration. Students accessed external music resources through community orchestra and opera, choral ensembles, and private music lessons. Participation cultivated student learning characteristics valued as contributing to integration in college aligning with Bowen's (1977) education goals: memorization, independence, self-discipline, and organization. These characteristics were instrumental in group project engagement, sense of belonging, and individual academic achievement. Capital gained from interaction with private music faculty and music

ensembles served as introductions to diversity of public education expectations, eased transition to campus, and bridged heterogeneous relationships.

Athletic team membership developed relationship skills outside the family, transitioning to community teams, college integration, and for some, collegiate athletics. American Legion baseball, swim team, soccer, Taekwondo, and Amateur Athletic Union teams provided external resources for athletic engagement and capital contributing to collegiate team membership and participation in college intramural sports. Parental decisions to allow participation in heterogeneous groups varied according to comfort level and appropriateness of the activity. Involvement provided opportunity for participants to work with peers in larger groups, develop teamwork skills, engage in talent and interest self-discovery, and cultivate conflict resolution not always necessary in teams of similar values, beliefs, and morals. Student athletes attributed homeschool experience to the development of conflict resolution skills to a greater degree than those not participating in sports. Participants lacking the skill, struggled working within groups and suggested colleges include it as an objective in course work.

Parents were selective distinguishing appropriate diverse organizations essential to homeschool platform. One organization integrated into the homeschool platform of many families was membership in 4-H clubs, which provided access to external resources, developed skills aligning with Bowen's third goal, practical competence, and influenced academic and social integration. Involvement in 4-H clubs allowed students to gain external capital preparing them for college transition in the form of leadership, communication, money management, public speaking, and project completion, provided

interaction with heterogeneous groups, and development of Bowen's (1977) cognitive and practical skills. Interaction within diverse organizations established environmental conditions encouraging bridging of capital with heterogeneous individuals to develop interpersonal trust necessary for smooth college integration. Astin (1993) stresses the importance of environmental influences on change and development as students integrate within the college experience.

Homeschool Experience as an Obstacle for Integration

The third research question posed to homeschool students sought to answer the following: *How do homeschool experiences serve as obstacles for academic and social integration?*

Students perceived peer relationships, group projects, and college expectations as areas within their homeschool experience serving as obstacles for integration. Describing relationships with heterogeneous peers came with hesitation, but final responses presented a paradox: Despite little difficulty building capital, homeschool students found relationships challenging. Students experiencing little difficulty developing diverse capital identified employment, organization membership, and family upbringing as primary contributors to peer relationships. Participants recognized peers granted respect due to values, beliefs, and morals developed as homeschool students, but stated it took time to develop reciprocating relationships or interpersonal trust. Putnam identifies interpersonal trust as one form of social capital, "the lubricant of the inevitable frictions of social life," and a means to gain beneficial resources (Beaudoin, 2011, p. 157).

Interpersonal trust in diverse relationships was challenging as participants felt homeschooling provided a different perspective of college compared to public school students, limited opportunity for diverse interaction, and minimum contact with the world outside family and homeschool community prior to college. For example, two sisters hid in store aisles to avoid fellow students, two years of college experience was necessary for one female to build diverse capital, and a male student took one year to develop trust for friendship. Other students stated it was difficult to interact with peers engaging in behaviors contradictory to their own.

Lack of diverse athletic team and club involvement limited student experience with conflict resolution. Students identified this skill as important within the college experience. Students were more comfortable working with older and younger populations and discussing opinions within homogenous groups sharing similar values, morals, and interests than groups outside the homeschool circle due to their limited experience working these populations. For example, students found it easier to express their opinion in homeschool athletic teams compared to interactions with diverse team members.

Overall difficulty developing relationships with peers stemmed from initial reasons for homeschooling: religious beliefs, values, and morals. Parents chose to limit interaction with populations demonstrating beliefs outside family teachings. In turn, they sheltered them from exposure to influences that could be detrimental to their children. Homeschool families developed co-ops, music and athletic associations, and church activities to fill academic and social needs for their children in controlled environments. Students ultimately lacked experience working with people of different views and values,

choosing to continue engaging with similar rather than diverse populations in college. Beaudoin (2011) references the principle of homophily in discussions of bonding and bridging capital as propensity to connect with individuals sharing similar characteristics and interests. Participants demonstrated a predisposition for value or religious homophily in alignment with original reasons for homeschooling and felt comfortable bonding capital within homeschool circles and individuals of similar interest in college leading to the peer relationship paradox: Despite little difficulty building capital, homeschool students found relationships challenging.

This paradox transferred to working in groups. Homeschool platform of online learning, one-on-one with a parent, and self-teaching contributed positively to working alone and privately with an instructor or staff member, but made group work with peers challenging. Students took the role of leader, assigned roles, set deadlines, kept members on track, and served as final editor of group projects, but in the end, preferred to work independently. Projects served students well academically, but few perceived the experiences as opportunities to develop lasting social capital.

Students demonstrated three of Bowen's objectives working in group projects: self-discipline, organization, and independence (Bowen, 1977). From self-instruction of homeschooling, students could look ahead and organize project details, but were hesitant to allow contribution from group members. One student said it was difficult for her to let the project evolve with input from other students. Others said they laid out the project and controlled all aspects until completion. The skill of self-instruction outweighed direction to complete the project as a group. In the end, highly motivated students did not

appreciate group work when carrying a shared project grade. If required to work in groups, they executed as much control as possible over the project, contributing negatively to academic and social integration. Due to limited experience working in groups during home education, the result for a majority of students was aversion to group projects.

Findings of participant dissatisfaction with group projects align with literature from Bowen (1997), Putnam (2000), and the social loafing phenomenon (Robbins, 1995). Students brought necessary skills to research and complete projects on their own from their homeschool experience of self-instruction: self-discipline, organization, and independence, aligning with objectives of Bowen's goals for higher education. Lack of diverse group experience during homeschool education led to delayed interpersonal trust of diverse group members (Putnam, 2000) and hesitancy of students to believe individuals would complete projects satisfactorily. According to Swaray (2012), the 'sucker effect' or social loafing (p. 287) leads to aggravation of the conscientious students. In this case, homeschool students completed a majority of projects themselves and developed resentment for group members and projects. These findings contradicted that of Robbins (1995) discussion on social loafing suggesting students will loaf if they perceive others will do the same. Participants did not engage in social loafing, rather, they worked harder to assure project completion, even though they felt lack of contribution by other members.

Not only were diverse group projects novel to participants, but practices and expectations taken for granted by public and private school students were also unfamiliar

to homeschool students. Homeschool curricula and teaching method contributed to lack of experience with lectures, note taking, course and academic schedules, textbook use, and grade criteria caused uncertainty in college. Homeschoolers were accustomed to locating resources, problem solving, and learning on their own, but lacked experience with college method of instruction. Time and level of student adaptability determined college integration. Homeschool students educate under the guidance of their parents while public school students adjust to different instructors and course expectations for every course. Higher education and public schools have a long history of alignment in relation to course and instruction expectations, but most homeschoolers faced new expectations upon entering college. Classroom integration was limited if frustrations were not verbally or non-verbally communicated to instructors. Institutions addressing transition concerns early in the college experience led to student success. Comfort working with on online platform steered students to take online courses, research, and self-instruction to accommodate for classroom inexperience. These results align with findings by Holder (2001) indicating homeschool student demonstrate strength in ability to learn, self-discipline, and flexibility of learning, but difficulties adjusting to college expectations (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007). Results from Bolle, Weese, & Mulvihill also demonstrated lack of student experience with college expectations, classroom settings, use of textbooks, and taking notes, aligning with findings of this study.

Homeschool Experience as an Opportunity for Integration

The fourth research question posed to participating homeschool students sought to answer the following: *How do homeschool experiences serve as opportunities in their academic and social integration?* Homeschool students perceived their experiences with homeschool platform, early start programs, respect, and sense of belonging as opportunities for integration in the following three stages: pre-college integration, transition, and college integration.

Pre-College Integration through Homeschool Platform

Students identified the transition of homeschool platform to self-instruction as an opportunity for integration, contributing to development of thematic student learning characteristics of independence, organization, self-discipline, and opportunities to engage in self-discovery activities enhancing bonding and bridging of social capital. Self-instruction implemented student learning skills to complete assignments and projects independently with little outside influence and transitioned positively to college earning respect from faculty and staff. Students cultivated capital through one-on-one interaction with faculty and staff within and outside the classroom.

While students attended college lectures out of respect for faculty, their learning habit of self-instruction contributed to researching and self-teaching the same information after class. The practice of college faculty directly lecturing exact information to study was redundant to participants and they felt the need to research and discover knowledge on their own. They rarely attended study sessions, preferred to do group projects alone,

but would take a controlling role to guarantee group project completion. Whether this propensity related to Bowen's rationality goal to think independently, analyze, and synthesize, ability to "learn how to learn" (Bowen, 1977, p. 35), or lack of interpersonal trust (Beaudoin, 2011) was unclear, but students perceived self-instruction as an asset for integration. Consequently, students developed faculty capital, but limited academic integration with peers. One student was insightful in the following statement, "Being in a group does not equal socializing."

Transition to College through Early Start Program

Early start programs served as opportunities for homeschool students transitioning to college and contributing to academic and social integration by providing challenging course work, gradual exposure to diverse ideas and individuals, necessary experience with college expectations, and development of Bowen's (1977) goals and objectives for higher education. Even though many students viewed financial and time savings as primary reasons for early start enrollment, participants did not identify initial reasons for participation as affordability or reduced time to degree completion. These results aligned with findings by Ozmun in 2013. Rather, students viewed early start programs as opportunities to engage in courses, which were advanced, unavailable, or impractical to teach through homeschooling, and to begin their college education.

Figure 2 of this chapter illustrates how participant engagement in activities of self-discovery, illustrated in purple, contributed to bonding and bridging of social capital as students transitioned to college, identified in the grey section of the table. These results

align with Mechur Karp's (2012) theoretical framework of dual enrollment serving as an introduction to college norms and expectations. In his model of cultural capital, Beaudoin stresses the connection between cultural capital and academic outcomes (Gaddis, 2013). Enrolling in limited early start courses allowed students to become familiar with campus, staff, and instructors, gain an understanding of college expectations and practices, and develop talents and interests contributing to career choice. According to Beaudoin's concept, cultural capital provides experience for students to navigate the education system and bridge capital with heterogeneous individuals elevating their level of cultural capital to meet that of the college environment. This coincides with Mechur Karp's results of the role of dual enrollment as a transition to full-time college attendance.

Students enrolled in early start courses with family and friends gained through homogeneous activities felt relationships led to bridging capital with heterogeneous populations. Academic and emotional support from bonded capital provided confidence to engage with diverse groups. Limited peer relationships developed for those enrolling in early start courses online or at a two-year technical college with non-traditional students. Online course enrollment was similar to homeschool platforms and familiarity working with adults in homeschool and church organizations prepared students for non-traditional capital development. Lattibeaudiere's (2000) study of homeschool student experiences with college transition supports these findings in relation to participant familiarity working with individuals of all ages (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007).

Respect within College Integration

Respect was significant in gaining academic and social capital with college faculty and staff and proved to be modestly influential developing diverse peer relationships. As a characteristic of human understanding contained in Bowen's goal for emotional and moral development, students felt providing respect through academic responsibility earned respect and developed capital with faculty and staff. Hoffman's (2014) review of literature supporting the importance of respect in positive relationships with faculty highlights the impact of human understanding between faculty and students on engagement, academic achievement, personal development, and persistence. In line with Bowen's objectives, student relationships with faculty built through respect contributed to academic and social engagement with instructors and staff due to their experience working one-on-one with parents and other adults through homeschool self-discovery experiences. These experiences afforded environmental conditions for bonding and bridging capital with faculty, staff, and peers through mutual respect revealing opportunities for relationships and sense of belonging aligning with Astin's Student Involvement Theory (1984). Participants also bridged social capital with heterogeneous peers who respected their beliefs, values, and morals. Students could not confirm this characteristic as developing from homeschooling, church, or family upbringing due to the interdependent role each faction played in their lives.

Sense of Belonging within College Integration

Students identified sense of belonging as an opportunity to gain academic and social capital. Tinto's Theory of Student Departure emphasizes importance of student involvement and integration into college to persistence and attainment (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Students entered higher education from close-knit families, homeschool organizations, and church communities with similar values and beliefs. According to Tinto, three stages of transition occur as students move closer to norms and expectations of college: separation, transition, and incorporation. Transition of participants fell into two categories: commuter and resident students. Students living in dorms felt they transitioned into the college experience at a higher level than students who commuted. Resident students were primarily athletes and developed a sense of belonging within their team environment. Commuters found a sense of belonging and developed interpersonal trust through groups of common interests, such as music and religious organizations. Group membership with peers sharing common interests or values facilitated sense of belonging and integration. Whether groups were similar or diverse, engagement was the key to integration in the college experience. Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvihill (2007) found similar experiences in their study of homeschool student transition. Students living on campus transitioned to a sense of belonging and were more likely to identify college as home. At the same time, commuter students were less engaged outside the classroom and less likely to be involved with diverse groups.

Summary

Students identified homeschool experiences as contributing to education platform and development of student learning characteristics. Homeschool platform contributed directly to student involvement in homeschool and community activities due to the flexibility of instruction and schedule and development of student learning characteristics, which influenced academic and social integration. These activities provided opportunity for talent and interest development and bonding and building of social capital. Capital came in two forms: bonding with homogeneous individuals and bridging with heterogeneous populations. Bonded relationships provided support for students to enroll in early start college courses, leading to developing capital with diverse populations as students gained interpersonal trust with others. Interpersonal trust acted as a lubricant when relationships met challenges and helped to ease the tensions within relationships. Students preferred working alone due to strength in self-instruction skills from the homeschool platform. Group projects were challenging due to lack of interpersonal trust and social loafing perceptions of working with diverse populations. Students preferred relationships outside their peer group due to homeschool and church group interaction with people of all ages. Beliefs, morals, and values were unlike those of diverse peers, consequently, students sought out similar individuals for relationship development. Students were accustomed to a sense of belonging from homeschool and church organizations, and sought out similar groups in college to move through the transition process. College expectations slowed the transition process for some students due to unfamiliarity of course and instructor expectations. Ability to communicate with

older individuals allowed students to seek assistance from faculty and staff to bridge the gaps in their classroom experience.

Review of Conceptual Frameworks

Using data from personal stories of homeschool students, the conceptual framework drew upon research from Howard Bowen stressing the importance of outcomes obtained through college experience in becoming productive members of society and their relation to Arthur Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (Braxton, 2006). This section organizes conclusions as they apply to the theoretical framework of the study and opportunities and limitations for integration of homeschool students in college.

Cognitive Learning

Students came to college with student learning skills meeting Bowen's objectives for cognitive learning including verbal, quantitative, substantive knowledge, rationality, esthetic sensibility, creativeness, intellectual integrity, wisdom, and lifelong learning. Homeschool platform of transitioning from one-on-one-instruction to online and self-instruction provided students with experience to work with faculty, discern resources, and think critically to self-instruct as they matured. Several students discussed development of diverse ideas and experiences, while others limited relationships to populations with similar values and beliefs. One student valued college due to the ability to associate with only those who share similar values, while others valued opportunities to discover diverse ideas and individuals.

Practical Competence

Through platform transition, students gained learning characteristics falling into the goal of practical competence. Students identified 21 learning characteristics corresponding with Bowen's objectives: need for achievement, future orientation, adaptability, and leadership. Thematic characteristics within these objectives included memorization, independence, organization, respect, and self-discipline, contributing to faculty and staff relationship development. Need for achievement was evident in self-discipline and high standards set for academic success. While faculty respected these characteristics, working in graded group projects was challenging. Students were highly motivated to complete work on their own to personal standards, but were limited in skills to meet Bowen's adaptability objective. Willingness to negotiate and compromise when it came to projects and potential grades led to frustrations working with other students, disdain for working in groups, and transferred to limited capital gain with diverse populations.

Emotional and Moral Development

Students gained personal self-discovery of talents and interests of Bowen's emotional and moral development goal through homeschool and community participation in activities with diverse and similar populations. Students were unique in their experiences. However, the student learning characteristic of respect was a primary connection to developing capital with faculty, staff, and in some instances, peers. Giving respect gained respect with faculty and staff and students perceived peers respected them because of their values and morals.

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement

Astin identified characteristics, demographics, and experiences students bring to campus as vital to and influenced by college environment, including academic and social integration (Hunt, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Homeschool students entered higher education from close-knit families, co-op organizations, and church communities to diverse college populations. Group membership with peers sharing common interests or values facilitated similar sense of belonging and integration felt during homeschooling as they transitioned to college. Capital gained in homeschool and community activities such as co-op organizations, athletics, music, early start programs, and club membership carried to the college experience. Talents and skills developed in home education also contributed to sense of belonging in groups of similar interests. Whether groups were similar or diverse, engagement was the key to integration in the college experience. Those with limited heterogeneous interaction as homeschool students were less likely to be involved in college groups, lived at home, and built limited capital outside homeschool and church relationships.

Limitations

The results of this study are specific to the sample drawn from a community college and four-year state university in the Mountain West and cannot be generalized to other college campuses or the homeschool population as a whole. Inability to obtain a true criterion sample, guarded nature of homeschool populations, and close relationships between sample members contributed to limitations of this study. Classification of

homeschool students varied according to institution and uniqueness of each family homeschool program made sample identification complex. Transcript development, portfolio support, and varying state regulations provided little consistency to categorize students as home educated. Participants guarded their experiences due to the short history of legalization of the practice. Given the difficulty of identifying and locating willing sample volunteers for the study, I modified sample selection to snowballing to obtain participants through local homeschool associations, potentially providing similar experiences and familial relationships. For this reason, the researcher conducted a series of expert validity checks on the final framework model with homeschool students outside the sample population.

Implications

As more home educated students enter college with potentially diverse K-12 education experiences in comparison to most public and private school students, it becomes increasingly important for members of higher education to gain an understanding of what the population brings to campus. Campus officials have the ability to increase awareness of potential obstacles and opportunities homeschool students bring to campus as knowledge of the population increases.

The body of knowledge surrounding homeschooling provides incomplete research outside the influence of homeschool circles. Limited non-biased experience and knowledge applicable to homeschool students on campus provides colleges an outdated view of the population. This study draws attention to the opportunities and obstacles

students bring to campus and contributions to academic and social experiences.

Awareness by campus officials of prior homeschool experience and diverse relationship limitations has the potential to improve academic and social integration of the population as they transition into college. With better understanding of the population, institutions may improve and develop academic and social practices to meet student needs. As homeschool student research gains momentum, student integration and satisfaction will have potential to increase along with college enrollment of the population.

Discussion in Chapter Two examined complications of enrollment in higher education due to varying state homeschool practices surrounding high school graduation, transcripts, and past application discrimination. Each institution has distinctive qualifications for categorizing homeschoolers making it difficult to identify students to address student needs or further research. Modification and standardization of policies could ease difficulty of admissions and transition to higher education as college enrollment becomes an opportunity for more students.

Students delayed college application due to limited promotion of college attendance within homeschool organizations. Bridging capital between homeschool associations, groups, and organizations and higher education would open the door for relationships and communication to educate, recruit, and enroll students. Building capital would develop interpersonal trust among students and families conveying the value of the college experience.

Recommendations for Practice

The homeschool population is a growing entity in higher education and has potential to increase as students transition to college bringing student learning characteristics and experiences for academic success and integration from homeschooling to campus. The following recommendations for practice based on the research and student comments to improve the college experience.

Administration

Participants identified difficulties understanding college expectations due to their lack of experience in classroom environments and working with instructors and classmates other than family and friends. In addition, they were hesitant to attend orientation and use tutoring services and began taking courses within early start programs with limited guidance to assure program applicability due to their history self-discovery of talents and interests and self-instruction of homeschooling.

Recommendations include developing orientation and workshop sessions designed to meet needs of homeschool students by addressing college expectations, career services, program requirements, and a permanent advisor with enrollment in the first college class. Participants involved in sports and music displayed easier transition in comparison to commuter students without group orientation. Recommendations include establishing cohorts consisting of homogeneous and heterogeneous students to ease transition to full-time enrollment, develop social capital and sense of belonging, and encourage diverse group interaction.

The second limitation of homeschool education related to administration action was lack of encouragement by parents or homeschool associations reducing or impeding college enrollment. Students recommended relationship development between homeschool families, students, and organizations with higher education promoting opportunities and benefits of college, admissions procedures, advising, and financial aid opportunities.

Faculty

Homeschool students came to college with strengths and limitations in which faculty could enhance and improve. Students displayed strong self-instruction skills and student learning characteristics identified by Bowen as goals for higher education. Understanding the strengths, limitations, and diversity of the population compared to public school students, especially working in group projects and with diverse populations, can contribute to developing academic and social experiences to ease transition into areas of limited experience and capitalize on student strengths. For example, students struggle working on group projects containing a shared grade element. Faculty may consider small group assignments to develop interpersonal trust between group members before assigning larger bodies of work. This practice may avoid the common homeschool reaction to micromanage projects due to their experience of self-instruction and perceptions of social loafing. Second, homeschool students stated group membership does not necessarily lead to integration. Most participants continued to live at home during college contributing to limited interaction with heterogeneous peers and ideas outside the academic environment. Faculty could increase opportunity for diverse

interaction by developing experiences away from the physical academic environment, such as, service learning projects within course objectives. Third, capitalize homeschool strengths of self-instruction, self-discipline, and self-discovery through capstone projects, junior and senior recital opportunities, and portfolio development to cultivate student learning skills from home education. It is necessary to develop group skills, but the ability to complete projects alone is equally beneficial in college and employment.

Students and Parents

A primary reason participants homeschooled was developing and strengthening family beliefs, values, and morals contrary to the mission of public school education. Limited experience with diverse populations and ideas influenced academic and social integration, sense of belonging, individual and group project work, and involvement in groups and activities outside homeschool circles. Bandura's social learning theory postulates individuals learn by observation (Yaffe & Kark, 2011). Homeschool students could benefit from opportunities for interaction with non-homeschool students to cultivate an understanding of teamwork with diverse individuals, college expectations, conflict resolution, and behavior patterns, which fit the social norm of public education. Non-homeschool students could benefit from homeschool students' example of self-instruction, self-discovery, self-discipline, organization, respect, and independence. Segregation of the two populations limits these opportunities and thoughtful planning is necessary to achieve results. Faculty and parents should consider opportunities for integrated social learning to achieve this goal. For example, parents may lead by example by joining diverse community groups and provide family and homeschool opportunities

to engage in group projects. Faculty may engage in group discussions in and out of the classroom environment integrating diverse topics.

Summary

Chapter Five provided an overview of the research study, conclusions based on analysis of themes and subthemes from Chapter Four, relation of conclusions to conceptual framework theories, limitations of the study, implications for further research and practice, and recommendations for colleges and universities. Twenty students homeschooled in five states provided interviews contributing to similar, yet unique, experiences leading to themes translating across all students. Validity verification conducted with students from different homeschool associations confirmed themes evolving from the research. Recommendations for further research include studies to broaden the scope of the sample, expanding data collection from personal experiences to gain a non-biased understanding of the population.

Whether homeschool students represent a unique population cannot be determined under the umbrella of this research, but participants from the demonstrated themes consistent across the sample. As higher education gains an understanding of what homeschool students bring to campus, they may then be in a position to provide support for and learn from the population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT

SUBJECT CONSENT FOR
PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

B. Project Title

The Influence of Homeschool Experience on Academic and Social Integration in Higher Education

C. Opening Sentence

You are asked to participate in a research study of how your homeschool experience influenced your academic and social integration into higher education.

D. Rationale of Research

The number of homeschool students attending college is steadily increasing. To meet the needs of the population, we must first understand how homeschool students are currently integrating academically and socially and how their homeschool experience influences this integration. As the number of homeschool students entering higher education rises, colleges become aware of the characteristics this population brings to campus. Researchers initiated collection of experiential data focusing on homeschool student enrollment in 1999 when the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) program began compiling empirical information on the population (Bielick, Chapman, & Princiotti, 2004). Limits to data can be attributed to lack of standards and illegal status of homeschooling in thirty states until 1993. Research specifically related to academic and social integration of homeschool students into higher education is lacking and much of what is available is antidotal (Postlewaite, 2004). Tinto's Interactionist Theory of College Student Departure emphasizes the relationship of student entry characteristics, academic and social integration, and institutional commitment to student retention and completion (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004). Influence of homeschool experience on social and academic integration of college could play an integral role in viewing homeschool students through a holistic lens. Through this study, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how homeschool experience influences academic and social integration of students to develop programs, which increase institutional commitment to retention and completion of the population.

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore how students perceive their homeschool experience contributing to their social and academic integration on the college campus. To be consistent with NCEES data reporting, homeschool students are those reported by parents or guardians as schooled at home at least part-time and not enrolled academically in a public or private school for more than 25 hours per week. Students homeschooled for temporary illness are not counted in this category (Staklis, 2010). Two unique campuses provided the opportunity to draw from a broad spectrum of student characteristics. I am familiar with homeschool students on the DCC campus, but realize, as with any student, campus characteristics appeal to specific taxonomy of students. For this reason, I will also include students on a larger four-year institution, MSU-B to gain a broader view of the population. Ideally, this extensive sample will provide students homeschooled in rural areas with little academic support

outside the home as well as metropolitan communities with college professors providing advanced coursework. As with any population, the perception from inside the group may be contrary to that of those looking in. This study will investigate those homeschool experiences students perceive as important in influencing their academic and social integration. The results will direct the development of a bridge program to encourage homeschool enrollment, improve advising, support, retention, and attainment of this population.

E. Why/how subject was identified as a possible subject

A criterion sample according to HS classification identified through transcript analysis conducted by the admissions offices on each of the two participating institutions, Montana State University Billings (MSU-B) and Dawson Community College (DCC), provided potential participants. Due to limited population with necessary demographics for sampling using criterion method, snowball sampling may be necessary to identify HS students. Some students receiving a HS education their entire lives choose to take their General Educational Development Test (GED) and lack HS student classification according to admissions specifications.

I will contact students meeting HS classification electronically with an invitation to participate including: details of the study, background of researcher, interview protocol, and their rights as a human subject. Students will be contacted three times or until a positive or negative response is given. Participates will self-select to contribute to the study. Interviews will target of twenty traditional aged HS students with at least five years of HS study in grades five through with a goal of equal gender in at least their second semester of undergraduate study to provide breadth and depth necessary for a qualitative study. I will conduct interviews with ten students on each campus, asking each the same questions (see attached interview protocol). Populations may be limited on both campuses due to total population with the specified demographics, thus restricting sample selection. Members of the final sample receive pseudo names to guarantee anonymity, with no identifying information used in connection to their pseudo names. The researcher will obtain written permission from the students to conduct and record interviews with a portable audio recorder to increase accuracy.

The researcher will gain permission to access to student Facebook pages to conduct an audit of social and academic interaction conducted through social media as a means to triangulate the results. Student privacy will be addressed in the same manner as with the interview protocol. The researcher will inform the students upon completion of data collection to allow re-setting of privacy settings. Students agreeing to participate will receive \$10 gift cards to their campus bookstore for their involvement in the research.

F. Procedures Involved

1. Participation is voluntary and it is your choice of answering any or all questions is at your discretion and/or you can stop the interview at anytime. Participation or non-participation will not affect the student's grade or class standing.
2. The student will participate in a face to face interview with the researcher lasting approximately twenty minutes to one hour in a quiet location approved by the student. The interview will be audio recorded with the approval of the student and copies of the recordings, field notes, and documents locked safely in a secure cabinet in the researcher's office.

G. Risk

The interviews will last between twenty minutes and one hour to decrease the risk of time loss for the participants. The researcher will arrange interviews at times convenient with the participant.

Depending on the individual homeschool experience and academic and social integration, some memories may cause stress for the participant to discuss. If at any time the interview becomes uncomfortable, the participant may choose to not answer a specific question or end the interview with no consequence to the student.

H. Benefits

The expectation of this study is to use the knowledge gained to benefit current and future homeschool student academic and social integration into the college.

I. Alternatives Available

The subject may choose at anytime to end in the study by simply informing the researcher. There will be no negative consequences placed on the student.

J. Source of Funding

N/A

K. Cost to the Subject

Cost to subject is approximately twenty minutes to one hour of their time otherwise, none.

L. Questions

Feel free to ask questions at anytime during the research process.

M. Confidentiality of Records

Pseudo names identify students when referring to research participants during the research process and in final presentation of the dissertation. The person's identity is confidential. The researcher will conduct audio recordings of the interview with the approval of the student and copies of the recordings, field notes, and documents locked safely in a secure, fire proof cabinet in the researcher's office and destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

N. Contact Information

If you have any questions concerning this research, you may contact:

Lisa Shields

43 Seven Mile Drive Glendive, MT

406.939.1633

lisa.shields@msu.montana.edu

For further questions about the rights of human subjects, they can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board,

Mark Quinn

(406) 994-4707

[mquinn@montana.edu]

O. Standard authorization statements

1. For one's own participation (required wording):

“AUTHORIZATION: I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, _____ (*name of subject*), agree to participate in this research. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Signed: _____

Witness: _____ (optional)

Investigator: _____

Date: _____.”

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<p>1. What homeschool experiences do students perceive as influencing their academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Q. 1. Tell me about your homeschool experience.</p> <p>Q. 2. What academic and/or social characteristics can you attribute to your homeschool experience?</p> <p>Q. 3. What extracurricular activities did you experience as a homeschool student and how did these activities influence your academic and/or social integration?</p>
<p>2. How do students perceive their homeschool experience as an opportunity in their academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Q. 1. Tell me about your first week on campus your freshmen year.</p> <p>Q. 2. What did you bring from the HS experience that helped you transition to the college experience?</p>
<p>3. How do students perceive their homeschool experience as an obstacle in their academic and social integration?</p>	<p>Q. 1. What advice would you give if you were asked to meet with a dean, RA, or instructor to make recommendations which would be used to increase academic and social integration of HS students?</p>

4. How does a student's experience with homeschooling contribute to their academic and social integration?

Q. 1. Tell me about your college experience.

Q. 2. Can you recall an occasion when the skills you developed as a homeschool student contributed to a group project?

Q. 3. How does your HS experience influence your interaction with faculty? staff? peers?

Q. 4. How did your homeschool experience influence your Institutional choice?

Q. 5. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?