

TO COLLEGE THEY GO: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF
SEVEN HOMESCHOOLED GRADUATES' TRANSITION FROM HOME TO COLLEGE

by

Shellie R. Fink-Glass

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore and capture how Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates transitioned from their homeschooled academic environment to a collegiate one. This research was founded on the need for further research addressing homeschoolers and their transition into college. Existing literature falls short which not only documents the first-hand, personal experiences taken directly from homeschooled graduates, but from their mothers, as well. Five research questions were developed to guide this study. Questionnaires and oral interviews were used to capture the unique personal experiences from both the students and their mothers. During the analysis phase, five recurring themes were identified and were explored in further detail. These five themes include: (a) Why homeschool? (b) Pre-college experiences, (c) Transition from home to college, (d) College experiences, and, (e) Post-college reflections and personal changes. Each of the seven individual cases addresses the five research questions, as well as, expands the themes and experiences. Finally, recommendations for further study are provided and designed to encourage further exploration of homeschool related topics.

Keywords: homeschooling, home schooling, homeschooled, college transition, college application, college acceptance, multiple case study, college challenges

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Dedication

I would like to thank both my mom and dad, Kate V. and Dr. Marlyn R. Fink, who placed a high regard, and an even higher standard, on the value of education. It is with their humble beginnings, that they not only furthered their own education, but they encouraged each of their children to complete their college degrees, as well. I promised my dad years ago, that eventually I would have the “DR” in front of my name. Even though neither of you are here to see the fruits of your labor, I hope you both are looking down from heaven with pride when I place my graduation picture and copy of my diploma at your final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery.

And to my children, Seth and Caela, thank you for your encouragement and support. Remember my words when I was homeschooling you, “They can take away your car, your home, your dignity, but once you have your education, they can never take that away. It is something you can always count on to get you through.” I love you more than you can ever fathom.

“Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”
(Isaiah 41:10, New King James Version)

Acknowledgments

Finishing this long-term goal of mine has seen many tears, frustrations, trials, but also triumphs. It was certainly a collaborative effort lead by my Committee Chair, Dr. Kathy Morgan. She has not only been faithful to the end, but kept pressing and encouraging me onward, even when I wanted to give up. To her I am forever thankful and grateful and count it a blessing to have her as part of my team.

I also tip my hat to my two committee members, Drs. Dale Clemente and. Thank you so much for hanging in there with me and for your steadfast dedication, commitment, and valuable input into every manuscript version

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List of Abbreviations

American Council on Education (ACE)

America College Testing (ACT)

Christian Homeschooling Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP)

Distance Learning (DL)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)

The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC)

National Center for Home Education (NCHE)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE)

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Homeschooling is legal in all 50 United States; however, homeschooling laws vary from state to state. States such as Illinois, Texas, and Virginia are considered as having very homeschool friendly laws. Other states, such as Pennsylvania, are viewed by many homeschooling families, as well as homeschool legal and subject matter experts, as having one of the most restrictive and governmentally intrusive homeschooling laws in the United States (Home School Legal Defense Association [HSLDA] [website], 2011, State Laws section).

Across the United States, families are homeschooling their children through their preadolescent and teen years (Lavoie, 2006), and many home-educate their youths throughout high school (Ray, 2004), resulting in more children homeschooled through their entire educational experience. Upon high school completion, homeschooled graduates are entering the job market, attending local vocational-technical schools, enlisting in the military, having families of their own, or pursuing other interests. Not surprisingly, there are an ever-increasing number who also elect to attend colleges and universities. Consequently, college admission officers across the United States “grapple with how to address the growing population of newly graduated homeschooled students knocking at college doors for admission” (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004b, p. 13). Admission officers are particularly concerned since many homeschooled applicants

- may not have transcripts, school counselor references, and/or state issued high school diplomas that are traditionally required by colleges,
- may not have taken the same high school courses that publicly schooled students were required to take,

- may not have been afforded the same pre-college preparation opportunities as traditionally schooled students were given (i.e., guidance counselor assistance, college placement test preparation, or college recruiting fairs), or
- may not be as socially adept as their traditionally educated high school graduate counterparts. Studies showed homeschoolers were academically, emotionally, and socially successful in college environments (Prue, 1997). However, very little research was conducted which actually addressed how homeschooled students transitioned from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one.

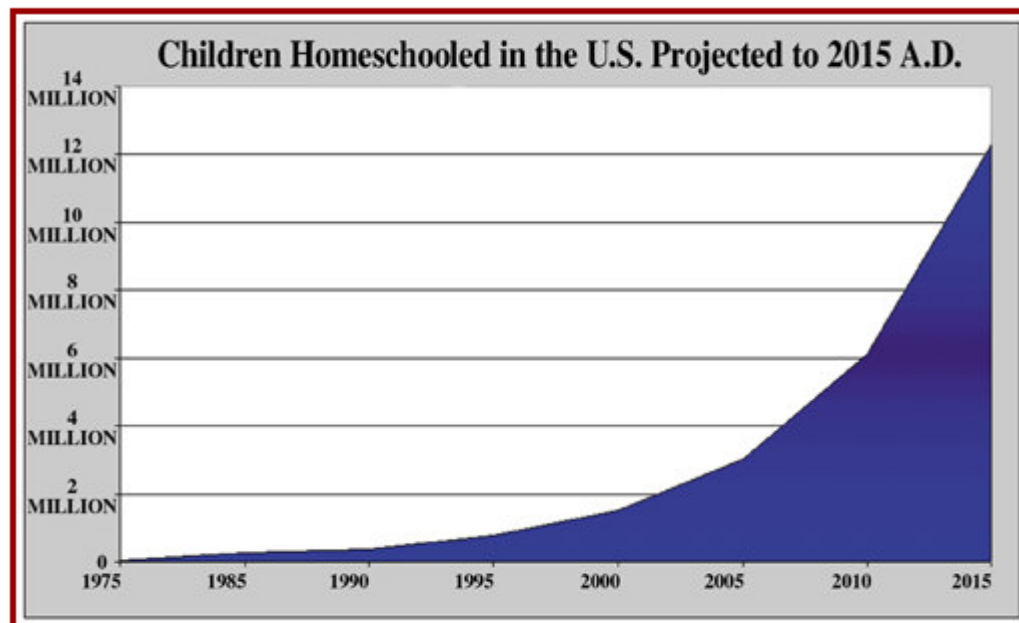
Additionally, very limited research was uncovered which presented this material as a multiple case study using first-hand experiences and perceptions taken from the homeschoolers' viewpoint. I conducted this study in order to fill this gap and add to the body of knowledge addressing homeschooling issues. More specifically, my research explored homeschooled graduates' personal reflections and their college transition experiences.

Background

The number of American homeschooling students continues to grow as a viable and legal educational alternative. Jones and Gloeckner (2004b) estimated the American K-12 grade homeschool population to be as high as 1.6 million students. In 2007 the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) conservatively estimated almost 1.7 million children were homeschooled. Between 2007 and 2010 that number increased by an estimated 7 percent (DoE, 2011, Homeschooling section) and Ray (2011) conservatively estimated the number to be as high as 2 million students in 2010. Ray (2014) updated his estimate to 2.3 million children were being homeschooled in the U.S. Thomas R. Orr (n.d.) further predicted the numbers would continue to rise to over 12 million (Figure1).

Figure 1

Projected Number of Children Homeschooled in the U.S.



Note. Graph depicts the projected numbers of children who will be homeschooled in the U.S. From *The legal side of homeschooling: An overview of the legal risks and their solutions* by T.R. Orr, n.d. Reprinted with permission by the copyright holder, Patrick Carmack, *ClassicalHomeschooling*, AcademyBookstore@aol.com.

While homeschooling is legal throughout the United States, each state has its own set of laws governing homeschooling. The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA [website], 2011, State Laws section) evaluated each state and developed a pictorial map (Appendix A) indicating which states were considered homeschool friendly (i.e., Alaska, Illinois, Texas) and which were not (i.e., Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York). Likewise, HSLDA's National Center for Home Education (NCHE) (2004) created a unique rating system for post-secondary schools. This rating system was structured using tiers based on how friendly the institution's admissions policy was to home-schooled students:

- Tier I schools were the most receptive to home-schooled students, followed by Tier II and III in that order.
- Tier I schools' admission policies were similar to the National Center for Home Education's Recommended College Admission Policies which "typically required a parent's transcript, general standardized achievement testing, and/or the review of a portfolio of the potential student's materials in place of an accredited diploma" (p. 1).

In 2006 Karl M. Bundy developed an extensive list of "homeschool friendly" colleges (Appendix B). Finally, HSLDA (2012) also conducted their own research and discovered the majority of United States homeschooled graduates tended to either apply to "homeschool friendly" colleges or applied as a freshman to community colleges and later transferred to 4-year bachelor's degree granting colleges/universities.

Homeschoolers Attend Postsecondary Institutions

As early as the 1980s, college admission officers began receiving college admission and application inquiries from homeschooled students. Since that time, Ivy League schools, such as Brown University (RI), Harvard (MA), Princeton (NJ), Yale (CT) (Romanowski, 2006), Dartmouth College (NH), and University of PA (PA) (Bunday, 2006, College List section), as well as, other prestigious schools including: Georgetown (Washington, DC), the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (NY), Massachusetts Institute of Technology-MIT (MA), Carnegie Mellon Institute (PA), Boston College University of California at Berkeley, University of Michigan, and Notre Dame (IN) (Bunday, 2006, College List section; Romanowski, 2006) have actively recruited homeschooled students. Romanowski (2006) also found that part of their marketing plan included assisting homeschooling families in pre-collegiate preparation training venues by offering:

homeschool conferences to talk with students and parents, and admission departments advertise in homeschool publications, communicate with state-wide homeschool organizations, conduct workshops for homeschoolers and their parents to help them plan for college admission and tuition costs, and even offer special scholarships for homeschooled students. (p. 127)

College admission officers were not the only ones working to change attitudes towards homeschooled applicants. Beginning in 1997 Senior Counsel and homeschool expert, Chris Klicka from the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), also began changing the mindset of state and federal education officials. His efforts resulted in several major homeschool milestones; two of which directly affected college-bound homeschooled students:

- 1) Changes in State Laws - Such states as New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, Montana, Illinois, and Texas implemented state laws and regulations as early as 1997 prohibiting discrimination against home-educated graduates in the college application and acceptance process (Klicka, 2007). This milestone assisted in reducing challenges homeschoolers faced when they applied to colleges and universities. This was of importance to those homeschoolers who were schooled in “governmentally challenging” states such as Pennsylvania.

- 2) Changes in Federal Financial Aid - The Higher Education Act was changed to recognize homeschoolers as authorized users of federal financial assistance to attend college. Once colleges received homeschool acceptance guidelines and clarification in the *2002-2003 Federal Student Aid Handbook*, 40% of colleges and universities reported an increase in homeschool applications (The National Association of College Admission Counselors [NACAC], 2003, Homeschooled Students section). Seventy percent of colleges and universities

developed and implemented formal evaluation policies for homeschooled applicants (Goff, 2004). This number continued to climb until it reached 85% by 2004 (Wasley, 2007).

Homeschoolers Transition from Home to College

Whether Christian, agnostic, atheist, Buddhist, Jew, Mormon, Muslim, or New Ager (Ray, 2004), homeschooling families are accustomed to smaller, more intimate learning environments (Mason, 2004) comprised of family members of all ages – reminiscent of a one-room-schoolhouse - where parents typically selected their children’s curriculum and delivered it in a flexible and highly individualized manner (Ray, 2004). This venue was ideal for homeschooling parents seeking the flexibility to tailor curriculum instruction and choices designed around the particular interests of their children. However, this type of family, self-contained learning environment may - or may not - equip the homeschooled graduate prepare to transition and face the challenges associated with college attendance.

Duggan (2010a) identified two distinct experiences associated with college preparation and transition: a student’s cognitive and non-cognitive experiences.

- Cognitive experiences include
 - a student’s critical thinking and communication skills.
- Non-cognitive experiences include
 - a student’s attitudes, abilities, skills, self-esteem, behaviors, academic, and social integration;
 - a student’s ability to balance employment with classes;
 - pre-college experiences such as college enrollment choices, aptitude and college readiness, family and peer support, the student’s motivation to learn (Kuh, Kinzie, Burckley, Bridges, & Hayet, 2006);

- emotional and psychological preparation to transition from a parent led high school program to a more traditional collegiate classroom environment filled with professors and students having different viewpoints from that of the homeschooled student;
- financial and emotional challenges;
- balancing dual enrollment status (i.e., attending high school and college simultaneously or attending multiple colleges);
- religious challenges for those students homeschooled based on their family's religious convictions; and/or
- spiritual convictions, particularly if they attended a liberal or nonreligious based postsecondary institution.

Of particular interest, Duggan's research addressed how a student's cognitive and non-cognitive traits may have long term affects and influences on the homeschooled student once he or she transitioned into a college program.

Situation to Self

As a Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator and homeschooling parent, I became interested in following a number of homeschooled young people as they progressed from elementary school, through high school, and were then faced with their own question, "I want to go to college, but how do I do that?" I knew first-hand how difficult and restrictive Pennsylvania homeschooling laws were on homeschooling families - to include my own. Of course, there was the college application and acceptance process both student and parent had to work through, but I was more interested in how these homeschooled students transitioned from their homeschooling environment into a collegiate one. I wanted to hear and capture their first-hand, personal

experiences and see what challenges each of them faced as they entered the next stage of their academic endeavors. I used Stake's (1995) and Yin's (2003) constructivist theory as a foundation since I wanted each participant to be able to tell his or her own story, based on their own experiences, interpretations, and just as importantly, their perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Problem Statement

The numbers of homeschoolers graduating from a homeschool program and pursuing a college education has risen. The 1995 monograph, *What is home schooling?* purported that nationwide "33% of home schoolers attend a four-year college; over 17% go on to a two-year college; 17% attend college after waiting a year; 12% are engaged in full-time employment." Blair (2000) claimed, "more than 200,000 students who participated in home schooling are enrolled in college, a number that will likely grow to more than 1 million in the next decade" (Uncertain Qualifications section, para. 4). Dr. Brian Ray stated that of over 7,300 home schooled adults who took the survey (over 74%) had taken college-level classes as compared to 46% of the general United States population (Ray, 2004). In 2008 The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) attempted to also estimate college school attendance patterns of homeschooled students in its Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP] survey. HERI estimated there were approximately 11,500 freshman students who graduated from a homeschool (0.08 percent) and subsequently enrolled in one of the 1,693 institutions participating in the CIRP in 2008 (Pryor et al., 2008).

Over the years, homeschoolers have proved they are academically (Prue, 1997; Klicka, 2007) and socially successful (Ray, 2004). Homeschoolers felt they were prepared for college even though they may have had different social and academic pre-college experiences than their

publicly or privately schooled counterparts (Remmerde, 1997). Hann (2006) found homeschoolers were accustomed to designing their own curriculum and therefore were more likely to choose a college which allowed some flexibility and freedom in designing their college coursework. Remmerde (1997) also found homeschoolers were accustomed to following schedules and achieving goals, being involved in their community and learning independently – all traits that are strongly needed in a college environment.

However, homeschoolers may also come with some challenges as they prepare to attend college. They may face limited or non-existent pre-college counselor services, financial hardships, family separation anxiety, and/or adjusting to college dormitory life, large lecture halls, or traditional classroom sizes comprised of same-aged people. They may find they need to be prepared to reevaluate, and in some cases, defend their views and beliefs on controversial social issues such as abortion, divorce, premarital sex, and homosexuality to those who have different worldviews and ideas.

Little research had been conducted which actually addressed how homeschooled graduates transitioned from their home academic environment into a collegiate one and how they were affected by these college experiences. Smiley's 2010 study concentrated on homeschoolers who attended private, religious based colleges and included the perceptions and phenomenological experiences of homeschoolers reflecting on how their thoughts, minds, emotions, and most certainly, their futures were impacted by their college experiences. Smiley's study provided an initial foundation for my own study.

My research was conducted in order to fill a gap and add to the body of knowledge addressing issues homeschooled graduates face once they decided to attend college. This multiple case study documented the personal experiences from seven Pennsylvania

homeschooled graduates and their parents (in every case, their mother). These graduates had either applied for, were currently attending, or had attended a junior/community college or a 4-year college or university. Specific attention was given to uncover 1) how these students transitioned from their homeschooling environment into a collegiate one, 2) how their college experiences may have influenced, changed, or reshaped their lives, and 3) how the participants overcame or faced these challenges.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this multiple case study was to discover and understand how seven homeschooled graduates prepared for and transitioned from their home academic environment into a collegiate one. Equally important was to conceptualize and determine how each of the seven homeschooled graduates and his or her mother (represented as seven individual cases) confronted and resolved their unique challenges associated with attending college. The objective was to apply qualitative research methods (i.e., questionnaires and oral interviews) to each case, which would not only answer the five research questions, but would also pinpoint recurring themes and sub-themes from this specific group of homeschoolers (Table 3).

Maxwell (2005) states, “To be genuinely qualitative research, a study must take account of the theories and perspectives of those studied [emphasis added], rather than relying entirely on established theoretical views or the researcher’s perspective” (p. 53). According to Strauss (2012), the most common type of qualitative research, the case study, looks at “episodic events in a definable framework bounded by time and setting” which helps to explain “how.”

Therefore, the theory guiding this research was mainly based on exploration within the Social Cognitive theory. The major emphasis for this study was designed to uncover the personal experiences of each participant as outlined by several Social Cognitive experts such as,

Yin (2003), Stakes (1995), and Bandura (1988). The study participant's input provided their personal insights into how they learned through observing their older sibling's college application, acceptance, and attendance processes. In other situations, the participant's input supported Bandura (1988), who purported that social cognitive theory influenced people by the "kinds of choices they make, how much effort they will put forth in what they do, and how long they will persevere in the face of difficulties and setbacks" (p. 280) and how much "personal control they can exercise over things in their everyday life" (p. 288). Routinely applying the Social Cognitive theoretical framework as a foundation for each student's perseverance, aided in organizing and structuring each of their experiences as they transitioned from their home to their college environment.

Significance of the Study

Past research by Duggan (2010b) and Cogan (2010) found that college bound students benefitted from pre-college information, support, and assistance. While these services are usually available to publicly educated students, they are not always available or sought by homeschooled students. Typically, homeschooled students rely on their parents to provide pre-college support and guidance.

Consequently, Kranzow (2004) felt it "prudent and necessary to study the effects of homeschooling on the college experience" (p. 9) particularly since college experiences captured from a homeschooler's perspective "have been left out of this research" (p. 19). More recently, Smiley (2010) also understood the importance of "the effect of exposure on university culture on the culture of homeschooled students" (p. 8) and he was vigilant in including homeschooling parents' perspectives in his study. Using Smiley's study as a foundation, my study captures first-

hand accounts from a sample of seven homeschooled graduates and his or her mother by exploring their postsecondary education/collegiate experiences and challenges.

Research addressing homeschooled student's college experiences remains limited and dated. Theoretically, collectively capturing the personal experiences directly from homeschoolers and their parents, as well as presenting these experiences in a multiple case study format, will aid in expanding the empirical literature which focuses on current homeschooling issues. This study can be significant in three ways: 1) it updates Kranzow's (2004) call to "study the effects of homeschooling on the college experience" (p. 19); 2) it refines Smiley's (2010) challenge to understand how homeschooled graduates may be affected by the college culture; and 3) it goes one step further and captures and identifies recurring themes and sub-themes noted by the participants in my qualitative collective case study.

Expanding and updating the repository of literature addressing homeschooling and college attendance issues has the potential to be particularly helpful to:

- homeschooling parents as they plan and prepare their children for college;
- homeschooling legal associations as they provide legal counsel, research, and conduct speaking engagements at homeschooling conferences and conventions;
- Pennsylvania homeschool evaluators as they counsel and guide homeschooled students who are interested in attending college; and
- public, private, and cyber charter school guidance counselors during any contact they may have or support they may provide to homeschool students.

Research Questions

While many homeschooled graduates are readily accepted into postsecondary education programs and have proved they are successful in collegiate environments (Klicka, 2007; Ray,

2004; Prue, 1997), existing literature falls short which documents first-hand experiences from homeschooled graduates recalling or reflecting on their college preparation, transition, and other college attendance challenges. Equally important, when faced with these challenges, how did these seven homeschooled graduates deal with these challenges? In order to expand the literature in which to understand homeschoolers personal thoughts and experiences, five distinct research questions with additional probing, sub-questions were used as the baseline for this research:

1. *How does homeschooling impact college choice?*

Studies by Klicka (2007), Ray (2004), and Prue (1997) establish homeschoolers are successful in college. Lattibeaudiere (2000) and Kramer (2012) found homeschooled students felt they had acquired important skills during their homeschooling experience which prepared them for college life. This research question was developed to focus and to uncover how homeschoolers locate and use available resources to select, apply, and be accepted by their college of choice.

2. *How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?*

Lattibeaudiere (2000) used a number of theoretical models, to include Tinto's 1988 theory, during her research focusing on the movement of homeschooled students from home into college life. Tinto (1988) also postured that college students, as a whole, go through three stages as they move from one culture to the next: separation, transition, and incorporation. This research question was developed to update Lattibeaudiere's study.

3. *How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?*

Kramer's (2012) study captured information on parental involvement for those students leaving public school in order to begin homeschooling. This research question was developed to address and expand how homeschooling parents help their college bound children, particularly in the absence or availability of guidance counselor.

4. *What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?*

Lattibeaudiere (2000) noted "very little is known about what happens to these [homeschooled] students after they enter college" (p. 8). This research question was developed to update Lattibeaudiere's fifteen-year-old study and to ascertain if homeschoolers face the same or different challenges as found in Lattibeaudiere's study. This question was also asked in order to identify potential recurring themes and subthemes from the study participants.

5. *How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?*

Studies by Duggan (2010a); Mason (2004), and Bolle, Wessel and Mulvihill (2007) noted a variety of challenges which may impede college students' success while attending college. This research question was designed to specifically address the challenges homeschoolers face before and during college attendance.

Research Plan

This qualitative inquiry employed a multiple case study design. I chose this design to gather first-hand experiences from seven homeschooled students, who had graduated from a homeschool program. First-hand experiences were also captured from each student's mother. Questionnaires and personal interviews were conducted from all fourteen participants, specifically to discover how these seven students transitioned from their home education

environment, into a collegiate one. Although researched literature indicated homeschooled students did well academically and socially in college (Klicka, 2006; Prue, 1997), there was very limited research addressing how homeschooled students personally felt about their transition from their home academic environment into a collegiate one.

Robick (2010) recommended purposeful sampling when “the researcher solicits [individuals] with specific characteristics to participate in a research study” (p. 7). Patton (2002) also recommended purposeful sampling for studies involving people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences when they are “information rich” and “offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling, then, is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population” (p. 40). Therefore, purposeful sampling and the active solicitation of participants was employed to collect the appropriate mix of seven Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates and seven of their parents who participated in this multiple case study.

The solicitation for homeschooled participants was accomplished through a strategically placed “call for assistance” (Appendix C) using the social networking, online tool called *Facebook*. The initial “call for assistance” was sent to four homeschooled students who had expressed an interest in attending college once they completed their homeschooling program. With the help of this initial small group of homeschooled student volunteers, additional participants and their parents were subsequently added.

Robick (2010) advocated phenomenological interviews should incorporate additional qualities beyond direct perception to include “the art of reviewing individuals’ description of the process and lived experience, their ability to judge the lived experience, and the feelings that individuals may connect with the lived experience to ascertain what the real lived experience was

or meant to them” (pp. 6-7). Keeping this in mind, each homeschool participant, both student and parent, agreed to complete a questionnaire, to conduct a personal interview, and to promptly answer email correspondences in order to accurately depict and capture their college transitional processes. Questions concentrated on capturing and documenting their personal experiences, recollections, perceptions, and processes. Additionally, every effort was taken to remain unbiased and to incorporate these real-life experiences in their own words (Robick, 2010).

Therefore, the nature of this multiple case study focused on each homeschool graduates’ college preparation experiences, their transition from home to college, and challenges they faced while attending college. This study also included and supported Merriam’s (1998) three characteristics:

- 1) The case study focuses on a specific event or phenomenon (particularistic).
- 2) The case study contains rich narrative to fully describe the phenomenon (descriptive).
- 3) The case study is also presented in such a way that causes the reader to extract new meaning or extend his or her existing understanding about the phenomenon (heuristic).

Delimitations

Several criteria were used as delimitation factors. Homeschooled graduates who had not applied to, were currently attending, or who had graduated from a Pennsylvania college or university were not included in this multiple case study. Additionally, homeschooled graduates from other states attending a Pennsylvania college were not included. Each participant needed to be between the ages of 17 and 24 years old; however, neither sex, race, nationality, nor religion were factors when choosing participants. Finally, students whose parent could not participate, were not included in this study.

Definitions

The following definitions and terms are used in the course of the study. Where applicable, the definitions are taken directly for a primary, cited resource,

America College Testing (ACT) - A standardized test used for high school achievement and college admissions in the United States which assesses a student's knowledge in English, math, reading, sciences, and writing (act.org, 2011).

Challenges - For the purposes of this study, challenges included four areas: academic (i.e., biased professors and fellow students, course load, course selection, taking too many classes, taking courses they like or dislike; required college admission forms and test scores); financial (ability to pay, affordable tuition and fees, student aid availability); social (peer pressures, peer views on controversial social issues, alcohol or drugs, school environment, roommates, student activities and support services), and psychological impact affecting and impacting long-term personal life-changes.

Christian Homeschool Association in Pennsylvania (CHAP) - A homeschooling support service in Pennsylvania. CHAP sponsors a yearly homeschooling convention typically held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (PA), monitors PA homeschooling laws and initiatives, and informs its members on political and social issues. Further information on CHAP may be found at <http://chaponline.com>

Cognitive Characteristics and Experiences – Includes a student's critical thinking and communication skills (Duggan, 2010a). See also "Non-cognitive Characteristics and Experiences."

College/University - For this research, the term '*college*' was used to designate a 4-year bachelor's degree granting institution, regardless whether it is a college or a university.

Distance Education - Also known as “distance learning.” Distance education is defined as “institution-based formal education where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources, and instructors” (Schlosser & Simonson, 2009, p. 1). Distance education also focuses on the “andragogy and pedagogy, instructional systems, and technology which endeavor to deliver an education to students who are not physically in a classroom or campus setting” (Cassell, 2011, para. 1). Historically distance education included correspondence courses. However today, distance education means earning a degree, whether in whole or in part, entirely online. This allows for more flexibility for the student in terms of time and can be delivered virtually anywhere.

Facebook - A popular social networking website founded in 2004 which allows friends to “connect with your friends and with your friends’ friends” (NCTech4Good, 2010), make new connections with other people who may share common interests, or it can be used to expand a personal network.

General Educational Diploma (GED) - Also known as the "General Equivalency Development" or "General Education(al) Diploma." The GED tests, developed by the American Council on Education, are a group of five subject tests which (when passed) certify the taker has American or Canadian high school-level academic skills.

Created in 1942 to support World War II soldiers, the GED Tests offered thousands of veterans a chance at assimilating back into civilian life and an opportunity to attend a college or university. First accepted as a high school equivalency credential in New York State, credentials are now awarded in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and insular areas, Canada and internationally. The GED credential-whether

called a diploma, certificate, or degree-is the most widely accepted and respected high school equivalency credential. (American Council on Education [ACE], 2008)

High School Diploma - A document that bears record of the completion of a course of study (Home School Legal Defense Association [HSLDA] [website], 2009, "*Homeschooling Through High School*"). According to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of the Inspector General (2010), there "are no specific regulations regarding the definition of a high school diploma." Generally, however, a high school diploma is the basic qualification awarded to students who graduate from a state or private secondary school, usually after completing 12 years of formal instruction. Home school students may or may not be issued a diploma depending on state policy and parental preference (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, Homeschooling section). See also the definition for "Homeschool State Approved Diplomas."

High School Evaluation - Per Pennsylvania Home Education Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq., each homeschooled student must be independently evaluated each year to determine if a progression of learning took place. This evaluation may be performed by a licensed clinical or school psychologist, a teacher certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or by a nonpublic school teacher or administrator.

Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) - A Virginia based legal organization comprised of lawyers, serving homeschooling families throughout the nation, which specializes in homeschool related legal issues. HSLDA represents member homeschooling families in state or district court cases, lobbies the United States Congress on homeschool related issues, and when needed, represents homeschool families to the United States Supreme Court. Further information on HSLDA may be found at <http://www.hslda.org>

Homeschool (also written as “Home school”) - “Instruction and learning that takes place primarily in the home with the parent(s) or guardian(s) acting as the instructor(s)” (Lines, 1991). Homeschooling is a nationwide academic alternative method of educating/schooling. Depending on the source, it is also known as home-based education, home education, unschooling, deschooling, or alternative education (National Home Education Research Institute [NHERI], 2009). Other forms may include: homeschooling, homeschooled, or homeschooler. For the purposes of this research the word “homeschool” will be written as one word.

Homeschool Evaluations – Pennsylvania - Pennsylvania’s Homeschooling Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq., states that a Pennsylvania certified homeschool evaluator must perform yearly evaluations on each homeschooled student to determine whether or not a “progression of learning” took place during the school year. This evaluation report is then submitted by the homeschooling parent, guardian, or administrator to their local servicing school superintendent.

Homeschool Graduate – Pennsylvania - According to the Pennsylvania Home Education Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq. (signed into law Dec 21, 1988), a homeschooler may graduate (a) by completing and passing the General Educational Diploma (GED) test or (b) by completing a minimum of four years of English, three years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social studies, and two years of arts and humanities in grades nine through twelve (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Pennsylvania Home Education Law section). The high school diploma can also be issued by the parent or guardian. A full version of the Pennsylvania home education law can be found at http://www.pde.state.pa.us/home_education/site/default.asp. Additionally, a complete list of other state homeschool laws can be found on the Home School Legal Defense Association website at <http://www.hsllda.org>.

Homeschooling expert, Dr. Brian Ray (personal communication, September 2009) defines a homeschooled graduate as any student who completed a high school level academic program in a home environment where the curriculum instruction was typically conducted by their parent or guardian.

Homeschool State Approved Diplomas – Pennsylvania - The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) (2011) recognized a number of options for receiving a Pennsylvania state endorsed home education high school diploma. While the list of approved organizations changes, the current list of “Approved Home Ed Diploma-Granting” organizations includes: Bridgeway Academy (a division of Essential Learning Institute), Valley Forge Baptist Home Education Association, Buxmont Christian Educational Institute Inc., Uppattinas School and Resource Center, Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency, Erie County Homeschoolers (Erie County Homeschoolers Diploma Association), Mason Dixon Homeschoolers Association, The Lancaster Center for Classical Studies (The Classical Foundation of Lancaster), and Susquehanna Valley Homeschool Diploma Program, Inc.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) - IRBs must approve proposed non-exempt research before involvement of human subjects may begin (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.). The IRB is “a committee that exists in every university to protect the rights and welfare of human participants in research studies. The Liberty [University] IRB consists of faculty members from various departments, as well as one member from outside the university, who review research proposals with the express purpose to ensure the privacy, anonymity and, above all, safety of research volunteers” (Liberty University, 2012).

Multiple Case Study - A robust research method that focuses on understanding the dynamics of two or more observations, involves a deeper understanding of specific instances of a phenomenon, and is easier to replicate (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing Liao, 2004).

Non-cognitive Characteristics and Experiences - Includes a student's attitudes, abilities, skills, self-esteem, balancing employment with classes, academic and social integration, and behaviors (Duggan, 2010a). See also "Cognitive Characteristics and Experiences."

Parent-Generated Diploma - A high school diploma is a document that bears record of the completion of a course of study (HSLDA [website], 2012). Therefore, a parent-generated diploma would be one where the parent, with guidance found in state homeschooling laws, prescribes their child's course of study and presents a diploma that indicates the student successfully completed the requirements for their prescribed course of study.

Pennsylvania Homeschool Evaluator - Per Pennsylvania Home Education Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq., (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008) a homeschool evaluator must be either a licensed clinical or school psychologist, a teacher certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or a nonpublic school teacher or administrator with certain teaching experience. The homeschool evaluator performs a yearly evaluation on the homeschooled student and provides a copy of that evaluation directly to the family, who then submits the signed evaluation form to their school district. This evaluation is only one form that is part of the homeschooled student's portfolio submission at the end of each academic year.

Pennsylvania Private State-Aided Institutions - Although considered private institutions of higher learning, these colleges and universities receive consistent Pennsylvania state support through an annual non-preferred appropriation. Universities in this system are under independent, private control rather than that of the state and may also include institutions

specializing in the medical fields (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Colleges and Universities section).

Pennsylvania State Related Commonwealth University System - Pennsylvania colleges and universities are referred as “State related or State funded” institutions throughout this paper. These institutions receive state funding and support and are commonly referred to as “instrumentalities of the Commonwealth.” The four institutions are: The Pennsylvania State University (PennState), Temple University, University of Pittsburgh (PITT), and Lincoln University (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Colleges and Universities section).

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) – State Funded Universities - Fourteen Pennsylvania private state-aided Institutions “are designated as ‘state-aided’ institutions. They have been granted their status through the offering of programs that have been deemed to meet the ‘public interest’ and are not being met by a State-supported institution...Presently these institutions emphasize certain medical, technological and arts specialties” (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Programs section).

Pennsylvania State-funded College or University - as of 2009, there are 14 colleges and universities with satellite campuses and four “state-related universities”, which are considered state universities and receive Pennsylvania state funds (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Colleges and Universities section).

Phenomenology - The use of incorporating the lived experiences of individuals in an effort to capture the direct perceptual experience of that individual (Robick, 2010).

Postsecondary Education - An advanced level of academic instruction following high school, often referred to as college or university. Postsecondary education can include academic

(Associates, Bachelor's or Master's degrees), career-oriented (professional certification or licensing), and/or continuing professional (Master's) purposes (Education.com, 2011).

Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) - A standardized college entrance or admission test which includes three subject areas: critical reading, mathematics, and writing. The SAT is designed to measure critical thinking and problem solving skills that are essential for success in college (Grove, 2012) as well as, to assess academic readiness for college (College Board, 2013). Prior to 1993 the test was known as the SAT Reasoning Test (or SAT I) and was renamed in 1993 as the SAT Subject Tests (or SAT II) (eduers.com, 2009).

Social Networking Tools. See also **Facebook** - An online, web-based capability where users connect with other users based on their shared interests, political views, activities, common language, or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites may vary based on how it incorporates new information with collaboration or communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, tweeting, and photo/video-sharing. Boyd and Ellison (2007) further indicated that a social network may (a) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (b) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (c) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Social Network Sites: A Definition section, para. 1). The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. Examples of social media tools include: Facebook, My Space, and Ning.

Triangulation - A term often used to indicate that more than two methods or approaches were used in a study or a research question in order to validate the data or to “enhance the confidence in the ensuing findings” (Bryman, n.d.). Triangulation is also referred by Cheng (2005, p. 72) as "cross examination".

University - For the purpose of this research, the term '*college*' was used synonymously to designate a 4-year degree granting (typically a bachelor's degree) institution whether it is a college or a university.

Summary

Although homeschooling is legal in all 50 of the United States, homeschooling laws vary from state to state. Some states, such as Illinois, Texas, and Virginia, are considered very homeschool friendly, while others, such as Pennsylvania, are not. Many homeschooled students complete their high school program and elect to attend colleges and universities.

This multiple case study was designed to capture the personal experiences from seven Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates and their parents (in every case, their mother) who had either applied for, were currently attending, or had attended a junior/community college or a 4-year college or university. Specific attention was given to uncover 1) how these students transitioned from their homeschooling environment into a collegiate one, 2) how their college experiences may have influenced, changed, or reshaped their lives, and 3) how the participants overcame or faced these challenges.

Five research questions were used as the baseline for this research:

1. How does homeschooling impact college choice?
2. How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?
3. How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?
4. What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?
5. How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?

Chapter One introduces the problem statement and research questions that were developed to develop the multiple case study as it relates to the transition of homeschooled graduates from their home academic environment into a collegiate one. Chapter Two contains a review of existing literature pertaining to multiple case study methodologies and theories, as well as, homeschooler's college preparation as part of their transition processes. Chapter Three continues with a detailed summary of the methods that were used to complete this multiple case study. Chapter Four develops the results and recurring themes that were derived from data analyses of the questionnaires and oral interviews conducted with the seven students and their mothers. And finally, Chapter Five provides conclusions, discussions, and recommendations for further study derived from this multiple case study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

Since the founding of America, parents have educated their own children at home. In the majority of American colonies, “education was in the English tradition, i.e., voluntary parental education, with the only public schools being those established for poor families free to make use of the facilities” (Rothbard, 2006, p. 22). While this system originated in the Middle and Southern colonies, the crucial exception was New England, when on June 14, 1642 the Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted the first compulsory literacy law for all children. This was followed with the establishment of public schools in 1647. Other states followed Massachusetts’ example until the Revolutionary War disrupted the entire public education system, and the “independent states were ready to begin anew” (Rothbard, 2006, p. 23).

In 1838 Taylor (as cited in Olsen, 2009, p. 416) believed home education “increased family happiness; thus, there was a reciprocal relationship between family and education in that education increased family happiness, and family success was necessary for home education.” Further, Olsen advocated, “The history of home education in America reveals that moral and religious convictions have long been part of choosing home education” (p. 415). Since America was founded on Christian ideals, most families during Puritan and Colonial times used the Holy Bible to teach their children. Families of the elite class could typically afford to hire a teacher or tutor to teach the children in the home. A headmaster could earn a living by tutoring students for a fee (DiStefano, Rudestam & Silverman, 2004).

By the early 1800s, however, America’s view on education shifted from being family focused to being nationally and governmentally focused. In 1805 Connecticut enacted a law requiring all parents to educate their children. Later in 1842 Connecticut required all employed

children under 15 to attend school for three months during a year, thus adding compulsory schooling to its general elementary compulsory education, or literacy laws (Rothbard, 2006). Massachusetts soon followed and passed its first compulsory public school attendance law in 1852. Over the next one hundred years, public school attendance steadily increased throughout the United States until the end of the 1960s when the idea of “a national mission for public schooling had disappeared” (Olsen, 2009, p. 417) and parents began looking, investigating, and choosing other sources for educating their children - to include private, as well as, homeschooling options.

Home education actually became a national “movement” in the 1970s when Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy, also known as the “grandparents of homeschooling,” (Klipsch, 1995, para. 6) encouraged parents to teach their children in the privacy of their own homes, thus completing the pendulum’s swing from home education to public education and back to home education. The modern home education movement, more commonly known as ‘homeschooling’, provides a rich opportunity for researchers to discover, explore, question, and even challenge the validity and reasons why parents educate their own children.

Since the 1970s, homeschooling has become legal in all 50 of the United States. Each state has its own unique set of laws governing homeschooling and homeschoolers. Some states, such as Illinois, Connecticut, Idaho, and Texas have no state mandates requiring parents to initiate any contact with local public school officials of their intent to homeschool. Other states, such as North Dakota, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania have high state reporting requirements or mandates on homeschooling families/students (HSLDA [website], 2008).

Although adequate research was available addressing the United States homeschooling movement and also on homeschooled graduates attending college, there was very limited

research addressing how homeschoolers transitioned from their home academic environment into a collegiate one. Therefore, capturing first-hand experiences, recollections, and perceptions from Pennsylvania's homeschooled graduates, who prepared for and transitioned into a Pennsylvania collegiate environment, was of particular importance and interest to me.

Currently, Pennsylvania is considered by many homeschooling families, experts, and legal representatives as having one of the most restrictive set of homeschooling laws and regulations in the entire United States (HSLDA [website], 2008). With the passing of Pennsylvania Education [Homeschooling] Law 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq. (signed into law Dec 21, 1988), homeschoolers can use public school textbooks. However, the law did not mandate that public schools must provide counseling services, college scholarship assistance, college or higher education application support, college admissions testing (i.e., SAT or ACT tests), or any other college transitional services to homeschooled students (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PDE], 2008, Pennsylvania Home Education Law section).

Consequently, each year homeschooling parents attend the annual Pennsylvania Homeschooling Convention held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and sponsored by Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP). Each year CHAP typically invites homeschool curriculum vendors and special speakers to participate in the convention. With the increase in homeschooling families electing to homeschool their children throughout high school, CHAP now routinely invites college representatives and other speakers to present topics focusing on the college application process, preparation for college entrance testing, establishing a high school transcript or portfolio, as well as, locating and applying for college funding, scholarships, or loans. An example of CHAP convention topics is presented in Appendix D (Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania [CHAP], 2008). These topics and others

may begin to satisfy the need of the growing numbers of Pennsylvania homeschooled students who are graduating from their homeschool program and for those who are applying, being accepted, and are transitioning into colleges and universities.

For this study, only homeschooled graduates who had either attended or were currently attending one of Pennsylvania's degree granting colleges were included. Table 1 displays the distribution of Pennsylvania colleges and universities as identified on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website (PDE, 2008, Colleges and Universities section). Accurate definitions for the first five post-secondary categories (identified with *) were defined by Dr. David Tandberg (personal email correspondence, May 14, 2009), from the Pennsylvania State Department of Education (PDE) and are found in the "Definitions" Section in Chapter One.

Theoretical Framework

The use of a theoretical framework provides a structure in which to guide, frame, organize, structure, or provide a base for comprehensive research. The framework "introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists" (Swansen, 2013). Additionally, the chosen theory "should depend on its appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory power" (University of Southern California, n.d.). The framework for this study was founded on a selection of theories.

Table 1

Pennsylvania Colleges and Universities Categories (*definitions provided in Chapter One)

Number of colleges	Category
14	State Universities*
4	State-Related Universities*
8	Private State-Aided Colleges and Universities*
14	Community Colleges*
86	Private Colleges and Universities*
18	Theological Seminaries
8	Private Two-Year Colleges
1	College of Technology

Note. A listing of all Pennsylvania colleges and universities arranged by category. Also included are the numbers of schools by category. Adapted from “Colleges and Universities” found through the Pennsylvania Department of Education website.

Constructivist Theory

This study was founded on the constructivist paradigm theory approach developed by Stake (1995) and Yin (2003). Their constructivist theory is based on the principle that the participant is able to tell stories about their experiences. These experiences are not only real, but they are descriptive and built on the individual’s personal interpretation of those experiences. Shkedi (2005) goes further by explaining that constructivist researchers “seek to understand a situation as it is constructed by the participants” (p. 5). Baxter and Jack (2008) also stated that the constructivist approach is appropriate when “truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s

perspective” (p. 545). Creswell (2013) also proposed the view that qualitative research is “to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation” (p. 24).

Ecological Theory - Macrosystems

Delving further, this case study applied Bronfenbrenner’s Macrosystems concept within the Ecological Theory as grounds for more in-depth discovery. Bronfenbrenner’s Macrosystem treats an individual’s development as a pattern of cultural characteristics which encompass “particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Certain aspect of this Macrosystem concept, such as belief systems, customs and life-styles, opportunities, and life course options, ultimately played a factor into this study.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory experts such as, Yin (2003), Stakes (1995), and Bandura (1988) propose that people’s experiences reflect a learning-through-observation type cycle. Through observations, each person makes choices that affect or impact their future decision-making processes. These choices impact learning from the experience. By routinely applying the Social Cognitive theoretical framework as the foundation for each student’s transitional perseverance, I was better able to capture, organize, and structure each participant’s experiences as they transitioned from their home to their college environment.

Related Literature

An extensive literature research review was conducted to understand the various aspects addressing how homeschooled students transition from home to college. Online library databases (such as ProQuest, EbscoHost, and ERIC), public and academic library catalogues and

collections, and The Internet were perused. Peer reviewed journals, newsletters, and trade magazines were also explored which addressed homeschooling, the college application and attendance processes, and the college transitioning trends of homeschool graduates. Additional research was conducted with homeschool organizations such as the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) and Pennsylvania's Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP). Online resources within the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website were also reviewed and personal interviews were conducted with PDE officials.

Very limited research was found which directly addresses the personal experiences homeschooled graduates faced as they transition from home to college. For this study, the historical literature is presented in four categories:

Category 1 - Homeschool Demographics and Testing,

Category 2 - Changes in the Federal Law Affecting Financial Aid for Homeschoolers,

Category 3 - College Application and Acceptance Processes, and

Category 4 - Transitioning From Home to a College Environment.

Category 1 - Homeschool Demographics and Testing

In 1998, HSLDA (as cited in Farris & Woodruff, 2000, p. 250) released a report indicating 717 colleges had accepted homeschoolers into their programs. Five years later Morgan and Burd (2003) found these numbers had increased even more as greater numbers of the country's 850,000 homeschoolers entered college (para. 8). This growth was expected once the Higher Education Act of 2002 was revised to include federal student aid to homeschoolers.

Also, in the late 1990s, the Home School Legal Defense Association contracted Lawrence M. Rudner, Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation, to conduct an independent research titled, "The Scholastic Achievement and Demographic

Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998.” This research, published March 23, 1999 in the *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, was considered as the “largest study of home school students ever undertaken” (Farris & Woodruff, 2000, Home Schoolers’ Academic Achievements section, para. 2). It not only captured demographics and nation-wide information on American homeschooling parents, but it also included: the educational level of those parents who homeschooled their children in the United States, family dynamics (i.e., family size, marital status of parents, family income), daily television viewing characteristics (i.e., television stars and figures who were watched), and the amount of money homeschooling families spent yearly on curriculum (HSLDA [website], 2008; Rudner, 1999).

Additionally, in 1999 Rudner’s study included such areas as socialization, the effects of family income (or the lack thereof) on scholastic achievement, standardized testing, and academic achievement. However, his research did not study nor capture statistics on homeschooled graduates, their higher educational pursuits, or homeschooled student’s success or unsuccessful rates of completion in higher education programs.

Of particular interest were the tables showing standardized testing scores of homeschooled students in Grades 9 through 12 who were administered *The Tests of Achievement and Proficiency*. Overwhelming, this range of homeschooled students scored higher than the national norm in the tested areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Rudner (1999) stated, “students who are homeschooled for their entire academic life do better than students who have been home schooled for only a few years” (p. 20). Additionally, Rudner stated, [homeschooled students] “have higher scholastic achievement test scores than students who have also attended other educational programs...They had an average ACT composite score of 22.8, which is .38 standard deviations above the national ACT average of

21.0 (Rudner, 1999). This places the average home school student in the 65th percentile of all ACT test takers” (pp. 28-29). Rudner (1999) cautioned however, that his study only “shows that those parents choosing to make a commitment to home schooling are able to provide a very successful academic environment” (p. 29). This commitment to academic achievement may prove to be the foundation of homeschooled graduates successfully applying and entering colleges and universities even without the traditional transcripts, references, and other documents that are typically required for college application.

Dr. Patricia Lines (2000) prepared a comprehensive report on homeschoolers. At the time, Lines considered the rise of homeschooling as the “most significant social trends of the past half century” (para. 1). Additionally, she stated

- In 1985 the estimated number of American homeschooled students was roughly 50,000 children. This figure jumped to 250,000 to 355,000 children in 1990 and within five additional years had tripled to over 700,000. The largest growth in homeschooling numbers was anticipated to be within ethnic minority families.
- Parents were losing faith in the American classroom, and homeschooling was a serious (and growing) alternative to public education. Even Christian and private schools had lost students to the homeschooling movement.
- Homeschooling started in the late fifties or early sixties as a liberal alternative to the public school system using the philosophy of unstructured curriculum and pursuing the interests of each child. Gradually more conservative families began homeschooling in the 1980s.

- Although homeschooling became legal throughout the United States, there were still some families who remained “underground” in their homeschooling endeavors out of fear of legal or regulatory changes.
- Many states allowed homeschoolers to participate in certain public school activities, classes, and resource or instructional support.
- Gathering accurate and thorough profile information on homeschoolers and their families can be difficult since they tended not to participate in surveys and studies.
- College admission officers
 - would accept standardized admission test scores along with supportive material describing the subjects studied and other relevant experience... Most admissions officers guessed that they had admitted as many as one percent of their undergraduates on this basis. Most also thought that some homeschoolers had slipped in unnoticed, submitting a high-school transcript obtained through a special program or a correspondence school. (p. 82)
- Homeschoolers are well adjusted socially. While “nonhomeschooled” children may be able to better resolve interpersonal problems with other children, the homeschooled children had fewer behavioral problems.
- Homeschool families tended to be active politically, civilly, and socially within their communities.

Category 2 - Changes in the Federal Law Affecting Financial Aid for Homeschoolers

The admission of homeschooled students to colleges and universities has been a topic of interest among colleges across the country. Although homeschooling is legal today in all 50 states, prior to 1994 many colleges and universities were reluctant in accepting homeschooled

graduates and other non-traditionally educated students believing they would lose their federal government grants and other financial aid monies.

Homeschool graduates can thank Senior Counsel Chris Klicka from the Home School Legal Defense Agency (HSLDA) for two major endeavors which have advanced the acceptance rates of homeschoolers into colleges. First, beginning in 1997-98, Klicka worked diligently with the Congressional Education and Workforce Committee to amend the Higher Education Act (Pub. L. No. 89-329) in order to offer homeschoolers federal financial aid solely on the basis of having a homeschool high school diploma (Klicka, 2008). The U.S. Department of Education subsequently issued a formal letter in 2002 to all universities clarifying admission rules of homeschooled students to colleges (HSLDA [website], 2003), as well as, financial aid protection in order to “smooth the transition process facing homeschoolers” (Callaway, 2004, p. 27). This endeavor resulted in changes included in the *2002-2003 Federal Student Aid Handbook* and sent to colleges throughout the United States. *The Handbook* reassured colleges they would not lose federal aid money if they accepted non-traditional and homeschooled students, regardless of the student’s age, into their college. Additionally, *The Handbook* stated that homeschooled students were eligible for personal financial aid to attend college. (NOTE: A copy of the instructional letter is located at the U.S. Department of Education’s financial aid website at <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN0211.html>). According to The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) (2003), once colleges and universities received this clarification, 40% of colleges and universities reported an increase in applications from homeschoolers. Also beginning in 2003, 77% of colleges and universities began developing and implementing formal evaluation policies for homeschoolers (Goff, 2004).

Secondly, in 1999 Klicka and National Center for Home Education (NCHE) representatives were instrumental in encouraging college officials to adjust their college admissions policies which would make it easier for homeschooled students to transition to a college campus environment. Klicka participated in several annual conventions held by the National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) and attended by thousands of admissions officers. He presented the homeschool cause and the importance of not evaluating homeschool graduates according to conventional requirements such as class ranking, accredited diplomas, or the possession of a General Educational Diploma (GED) (Klicka, 2008). Additionally, Klicka and the NCHE representatives recommended several specific changes for consideration. (NOTE: Some of the ‘subsequent results’ of their actions are included directly below the changes):

- Home educated applicants should not be required to submit an accredited diploma or GED.

SUBSEQUENT RESULTS: Thanks to Klicka and the National Center for Home Education, requirements for homeschoolers to obtain a GED or take the federal Ability to Benefits Test as part of the college entrance process were dropped. Consequently, to the dismay of the many testing agencies, many colleges de-emphasized the GED and college entrance scores in favor of a multivariate selection matrix that included grades, co-curricular activities, portfolios, and interviews (Texley, 2007). Klicka helped add congressional record language which stated the importance of colleges admitting homeschoolers without requiring accredited diplomas, the GED, or evaluating class rank (Klicka, 1999). He also spent additional

time and informed thousands of American college admissions directors and counselors of these new developments.

- Colleges should provide choices of formats that can be used to document completed coursework in lieu of a transcript (Klicka, 1999). Documentation can be in the form of a portfolio containing writing samples, examples of internships, and travel experiences (Bond, n.d.), a parent generated transcript (Blair, 2000), or even student prepared “life” experiential journal entries.

SUBSEQUENT RESULTS: Today, while most colleges realize homeschool graduates may not have typical diplomas, transcripts with grades, or counselor recommendations, these same colleges are viewing transcripts and high school diplomas in a different light (Homeschool.com [website], 2008). College admission officers are accepting portfolios of the [homeschooled] student’s completed high school assignments, college entrance exam scores, dual high school and college enrollment documents, logbooks of volunteer and extracurricular work (Evans & Hadad, 2008), as well as, recommendation letters from homeschool coop instructors, pastors, extracurricular coordinators, certified homeschool evaluators (as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania), and even scout leaders in the place of high school counselor reference letters.

- Parents should be recognized as capable of evaluating their student’s academic competence in letters of recommendation.
- Homeschooled students should not be required to have higher scores on national SAT or ACT tests than their public-school counterparts as a prerequisite for college admission consideration.

- Homeschooled graduates should not be discriminated against by schools demanding they take mandatory SAT II testing.
- A bibliography of high school literature and an essay are two admission criteria which accurately evaluate a student's life experience and thinking skills.
- Interviews and a review of extracurricular activities are two ways to determine overall student proficiency and leadership qualities (Klicka, 1999).

Colleges are adapting to the non-traditional application package submitted by homeschoolers. According to a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, by 2000 fifty-two percent (52%) of colleges had written policies addressing the question on how to evaluate homeschooled candidates. By 2004, approximately 83% (The Washington Post, 2007) to 85% (Wasley, 2007) claimed they had written policies. Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania, for example, strongly encouraged homeschooled applicants to come to the campus for an entrance interview (Wasley, 2007) which helped the admissions counselor work around the need for a high school transcript with grades. Other colleges have a uniform Common Application with an added supplemental form for homeschoolers to fill out (Wasley, 2007) while still others, like the University of California at Riverside (UC Riverside) offer a separate "admissions track" (Yi, 2005, para. 9).

Category 3 - College Application and Acceptance Processes

One of the first college transitional stages a college bound student faces is determining which school offers a degree program of interest, followed by working through the college application and acceptance process. Once the admission package is submitted, college and university admission officers then apply their college's established entrance requirements to each application package. Prior to Klicka's previously mentioned historically significant work, one of

the first studies addressing homeschool college students was in 1986 by Barnebey. In 1986 few homeschoolers were home educated throughout high school, much less attended college. However, those students who desired to attend college faced several challenges during the college application and acceptance process. Barnebey (1986) stated:

... many parents who removed their children from elementary and secondary schools expected their children to enter colleges and universities. This posed a problem for parents, students, and university admissions officers because an application for enrollment from a home schooled student lacked the traditional supporting documentation typically required for evaluation by the admissions office of the universities. ...These students did not have conventional high school diplomas or transcripts. The question of how four-year universities across the United States considered such applications was of interest to the parents and students who were pursuing alternative means for pre-collegiate education and was also of interest to admissions officers in the four year universities. (p. 2)

Typically, the “traditional supporting” documents that most colleges requested during the college application process was a “conventional” high school diploma or transcript, coupled with college entrance examination scores. Most home schooled graduates may not have had a transcript listing the courses that were taken, much less any grades associated with each completed course. Bunday indicated that Harvard College and Stanford University did not require high school diplomas in order to be considered for admittance. He also referenced the changing attitude of the United States military and their Academies’ application and acceptance procedures for homeschooled students.

Barnebey (1986) used the 1984 admission requirements of 210 four-year public and private colleges and universities to conduct her research. The schools were selected by the “Carnegie Catalog Study” which had been conducted by Arthur Levine in 1978. Barnebey sought to uncover whether 1) there were any significant differences among the schools who accepted or did not accept homeschooled applicants, 2) there were any significant differences in the types or numbers of documents required by the schools who accepted or did not accept homeschooled applicants, and 3) whether the college admissions officers held any bias or attitudes for or against homeschooled applicants.

Barnebey (1986) found only 20.8% of the surveyed schools accepted homeschooled students and the majority (73.3%) of the schools had received less than five homeschooled applicants. When comparing the schools which had accepted homeschooled applicants, there were no differences in the types or numbers of documents requested, or in the admission officer’s attitudes toward homeschooled applicants. However, there were significant differences when comparing those schools which had accepted homeschoolers to those which had not accepted homeschoolers into their programs.

Barnebey (1986) also found that 91.4% of colleges and universities did not have any formal admissions policy in place for homeschool applicants. Barnebey further stated that most homeschoolers attending college were more likely to be accepted by larger, research-based schools rather than smaller, liberal arts based universities.

Barnebey (1986) recommended homeschooled students be prepared to supply additional documents (i.e., essays, references, and other test scores) with their college applications and he concluded colleges and universities needed to develop and publish formal homeschool

admissions policies. Additionally, she recommended that additional research on this topic was needed to include:

- A study to determine the number of students being taught at home and to determine their goals for, or interest in, higher education.
- A study to determine the success rate of home schooled students accepted at colleges and universities (p. 147).

In 1988 the Wisconsin Parents Association published an information paper titled “High School at Home and What Comes After – A Look at Alternatives.” This information was specifically designed for homeschooling parents and offered advice about the college admission process. It stated:

In applying for admissions, be up front and positive about home schooling; it can be presented as an advantage. Generally, applicants are more likely to gain admissions if they meet a college’s requirements in their own way by getting their experiences into the colleges/categories than if they ignore requirements or ask that they be waived. (p. 3)

Although few homeschoolers were attending colleges in the 1980s and early 1990s, the admission of homeschooled students to colleges and universities was a topic of interest among college admissions professionals across the country. Since 1995, sessions on homeschooled applicants have been presented at the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) conferences. Proceedings of one such session stated, “everyone in attendance had some contact with homeschooled students, but few felt that they had a good handle on the situation” (Jenkins, 1998, p. 11)

In *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, Shea (1996) completed a short article titled “From Home to College: Admissions Officers Grapple With How to Evaluate Applicants

Educated Outside School.” Shea found by the mid-1990s more colleges, to include Ivy League schools, were receiving increasing numbers of college applications from homeschooled graduates. To determine whether or not to consider these homeschooled students for admittance, some colleges treated homeschooled students as high school dropouts, while others, such as Johns Hopkins University, classified and treated the homeschoolers applicants in the same category as that of a foreign student. Shea further quoted Iowa State's Mr. Caffrey who commented “it can take half a day to evaluate a home-schooled student ...when most Iowa State applications get no more than a cursory look, to see if students have met grade-point-average and test-score requirements.”

At the time there did not appear to be any uniformity in considering homeschooled applicants for admission. For example, Georgia’s public colleges required homeschooled students to have possession of a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, as well as, “take five standardized tests in academic subjects to demonstrate their proficiency” (p. A-32).

Shea (1996) ultimately implied colleges should be prepared to see a variety of admissions packages from homeschooled students. These packages could include essays and other writings, transcripts with no grades or class rankings, portfolios of field trips or experiential learning activities, and extensive reading lists. Therefore, colleges should be prepared to have alternate methods for evaluating these homeschool applications.

In 1996, the Home School Legal Defense Association’s (HSLDA) National Center for Home Education (NCHE) conducted a nationwide survey sampling the homeschool admissions policies in all 50 states. The survey revealed that while approximately 44% of colleges had a verbal or written policy in place and readily accepted homeschooled graduates; many more did not have established formulated policies addressing homeschool admission (Klicka, 2007,

HSLDA. National Center for Home Education, 2006). Hundreds of colleges and universities now have either a dedicated homeschool admissions officer or a homeschool admissions policy” and “they often actively pursue homeschooled students” (HSLDA. National Center for Home Education [website], 2006).

HSLDA’s website (2006) provided a list of recommendations that should be included in the college’s admission policy. Some of these recommendations are included below:

- Homeschooled students should be required to take and submit either the SAT or the ACT college entrance examinations, but should not be required to score higher than publicly or privately schooled graduates nor should they be required to take additional SAT II exams.
- Homeschoolers should be able to provide a transcript which indicates high school completion based on credit hours completed.
- Parent issued high school diplomas should be recognized by colleges and universities. Additionally, the passing of a GED should not be a condition for college acceptance.
- A bibliography of high school level literature or an essay composed by the student should provide accurate documentation for thinking skills.
- A listing of extra-curricular activities and interviews conducted by college officials should provide focus on student proficiency and leadership qualities (HSLDA. National Center for Home Education [website], 2006).

Ultimately, HSLDA began maintaining a listing of homeschool friendly colleges and universities. As an added feature, each school was classified in a three-tiered scale to enable homeschooling families to evaluate which school might be the best choices for which to apply.

As her dissertation research topic, Dr. Irene Prue (1997), the Assistant Director of Admission of Georgia Southern University, conducted and published her nationwide survey which ascertained the biases, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences of college admissions personnel toward home-educated applicants. She emailed her survey to 1,289 members of the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) organization. In analyzing the 210 returned responses (a 16% response rate), she reported:

- Based on input from college admissions personnel, homeschoolers were academically, emotionally, and socially prepared to succeed in college. However, Prue questioned why policies were not developed or why other mechanisms were not in place to more exactly track other phases of a homeschoolers (i.e., spiritually, psychosocially, etc.) or to determine retention and attrition rates, academic success, developmental progress, or other intervention systems that homeschooled student may need (p. 58).
- Parental motivations and involvement were in the best interest of their children. Prue found that admissions personnel believed parents had many rights such as the right to educate their children as they saw fit, to decide which values to instill in their children, and to be able to separate their children from undesirable peer groups. Additionally, the respondents indicated that high school students can be successfully and adequately schooled at home; that the homeschool movement will continue to grow and impact higher education; and finally, that admissions officers and other college employee's attitudes will become more positive as they interact more with homeschooled students and their families (p. 61).

- Documentation and evaluation of homeschooled applicants was problematic, but not insurmountable (also cited in Klicka, 2007). Prue confessed the survey return rate was very small. However, a variety of school demographics was represented (size, location, public vs. private college, 2-year vs. 4-year schools, and seasoned vs. entry level college admissions personnel.) Prue admitted consternation how the survey respondents were able to retrieve information requested on the survey and to the hostility expressed or lack of follow-up taken by respondents when Prue repeatedly tried to obtain more detailed information to her survey questions. However, Prue stated the results of her study “did indicate that admissions personnel are interacting with homeschooled students” (p. 57).

Prue (1997) proposed many college personnel held a variety of biases towards homeschooled students and therefore may not be able to have consistent, nor informed information about homeschoolers. She recommended that college staff and personnel should look at entire “diverse campus populations” (p. 5). She felt this diversity went beyond age, race, and gender of students attending the college; but rather should include those students applying to colleges who have attended alternative schooling and who have a variety of educational backgrounds.

As a result of her research, Prue advocated that uniform policies be developed which would lend themselves to assisting college admission officers. These policies would provide informed and consistent decision making processes when responding to homeschooled applicants. She also recommended that further study be done on 1) the criteria used to develop any and all policy affecting homeschool applicants, 2) the causes, effects, and results of unsuccessful homeschooling experiences, and 3) the impact homeschoolers have on colleges and

colleges have on homeschoolers as homeschoolers transition from home life to college life (i.e., how they adapt to large classroom sizes, living in dorms, and their intellectual, emotional, social, and psychosocial development). Finally, she criticized using comparative studies when researching homeschoolers since this type of study compares homeschooled students to “national standardized norms and averages (that is numbers as opposed to other students)” (p. 12).

Of particular interest to me were the frustrations and insights Prue shared on her experience in emailing her survey, which was a novel research approach at the time, versus sending it through conventional mail systems. Several years have passed since Prue conducted her email survey and although email is no longer considered “a new innovation” (p. 65), many of her reservations and implications in using email for survey and questionnaire administration was experienced by me. By administering an online questionnaire (which was introduced in the initial email to each homeschooled participant), I also saved time, money, paper, travel, and postage expenses. Additional time was saved when repeated inquiries were necessary scheduling and conducting individual interviews and in returning/receiving the reviewed participant’s transcriptions.

Jenkins (1998) researched community college admission requirements and practices for homeschooled applicants in several states. In her study, she included the performance of freshman homeschooled students enrolled at Texas community colleges, as well as, the attitudes toward homeschooled applicants by Michigan, Oregon, and Texas community college admission officers. She was also interested in determining what documents were required of homeschooled students by community colleges.

Jenkins (1998) conducted her research in three phases: 1) identifying community college that admitted homeschooled students, 2) collecting information regarding the community college

admission policies pertaining to homeschooled applicants using a validated survey tool, and 3) collecting performance data on homeschooled students at community colleges. She fashioned her questionnaire from Barnebey's 1986 survey. While Barnebey concentrated on 4-year colleges and universities, Jenkins targeted only community college admission officers' practices and attitudes as her refined, studied population.

After validating her survey with four individuals, she considered her "panel of experts" (p. 16) and who represented selected community colleges, Jenkins sent her questionnaire to 63 Texas, 29 Michigan, and 13 Oregon community college admission officers who were identified in the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) directory and the *1996 hep Higher Education Directory*. As part of her questionnaire, she requested homeschooled students' transcripts, student birth dates, and grade point averages of a select group of freshman college students who had been homeschooled. In order to guarantee confidentiality, she requested that all names and other personal identifying information be removed from the requested documents. After making additional requests for the questionnaires to be answered and returned, Jenkins achieved a 76.2% overall return rate on her questionnaire.

Jenkins (1998) found only "47% of the community college admissions officers surveyed had an official admissions policy for homeschool students, yet 87% accepted homeschooled students into their programs" (p. 140). Additionally, of interest to me, Jenkins found that many of the surveyed community colleges required a variety of documents as part of the application process to include SAT (scores ranging from 800 to 1180) or ACT (scores ranging from 18-29) college entrance examination score reports, 15% required letters of recommendation, and 17% of the respondents required GED diplomas. Other required documents included a type of transcript or listing of courses taken, additional standardized test scores to assess proficiency in math and

English, and in some cases, psychological test results particularly if the homeschooled applicant was younger than 18 years of age.

Jenkins (1998) recommended four additional opportunities for further research and study. Of importance to this research is Jenkins fourth recommendation to explore how homeschooled college students recall their college experiences:

1. A longitudinal study to determine how home schooled students fair professionally and personally later in life.
2. A national sample of community colleges to determine if factors such as geographic location, enrollment, or state laws affect the enrollment of home schooled students or the admission policies for home schooled students.
3. A study of college students who were home schooled to determine the instructional methodologies and curriculum used and their level of preparation for college.
4. A study of college students who were home schooled to determine their experiences with the admissions processes and with college in general. (p. 147)

Jones and Gloeckner (2004b) wanted to understand the attitudes and perceptions that college admission personnel carried towards homeschooled graduates. They surveyed admission officers representing four-year college institutions in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming (the entire western and rocky mountain regions of the United States.) Each admission officer was sent an electronic survey which was modeled after Dr. Tony Jenkins' 1998 survey and contained 15 question items in three different areas:

1. Institutional characteristics (type of school to include whether it was state-supported, private, or church-affiliated, size, campus setting, and the Carnegie classification type).
2. Home School admission policies of the four-year institution.
3. Attitudes and perceptions the admission officers held towards homeschooled graduates.

A total of 55 surveys were received (a 35% return rate). For my purposes, only those responses pertaining to home school transitioning factors were of interest (i.e., the number of credit hours the homeschoolers earned their first year, how homeschoolers were anticipated to cope socially, and whether homeschooled students were successful transitioning into college.) Jones and Gloeckner (2004b) results concluded schools required a variety of application documents such as ACT or SAT Test Scores (considered the most important to have), SAT II (Subject Tests) scores, essays, personal interviews, a copy of the applicant's GED, Letters of Recommendation, and/or a complete portfolio of student work. In some cases, the Admission Officer indicated they would request a copy of the homeschooler's transcript.

In some cases, Jones and Gloeckner (2004b) also found "admission officers might require homeschooled graduates jump through more admission hoops than traditional high school graduates" (Discussion section, para. 8). This may have actually resulted in more homeschoolers applying and attending local community colleges before transitioning to four-year degree granting schools. On a more positive note, however, the overall attitudes and perceptions of admission officers included an expectation that the homeschooled graduate would transition and be successful in a college environment. Jones and Gloeckner concluded, "doctoral (85 percent), state (80 percent) and church-affiliated institutions (80 percent), those with enrollments which

fall between 10,000-19,999 (92%), or in rural (86.7 percent) settings seemed more favorable to the homeschool applicants” (Discussion section, para. 8).

Their research recommended colleges and universities should: 1) reevaluate their homeschool admission and application policies and remove unnecessary barriers in order for homeschooled students to transition to college, 2) apply admission criteria uniformly to all applicants – to include homeschooled students, and 3) be prepared for homeschool graduates to attend other institutions which are more homeschool friendly and “miss admitting a large, and often highly successful, percentage of the student population” (Conclusion section, para. 2).

In 2005 Rebecca Ashford surveyed 94 Florida colleges and universities to determine their admissions policies for accepting homeschooled applicants, as well as, to compare the standardized test scores and grade point averages of home school and public school students. Ashford had 46 colleges respond to her survey – almost a 50% return rate. Her ultimate purpose was to compare her findings with those of the Home School Legal Defense Association’s (HSLDA) 1996 survey to determine “if any policies have changed since the 2002 U.S. Department of Education letter which informed colleges they could admit home school students without losing their eligibility for federal financial aid. Also, the policies were compared to the National Center for Home Education’s (NCHE) recommended admission policies for home school students” (p. 3). (NOTE: NCHE recommendations and subsequent updated improvements are found later in this chapter). Ashford was just as interested in testing scores as a college transitional tool.

Ashford (2005) began by modeling her survey research tool after the HSLDA 1996 survey. She then sent the electronic survey, using *Zoomerang*, an online survey service, to the selected Florida institutions. One reminder was emailed to those who had not responded to the

survey after two months. Once the surveys were completed, Ashford used the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) Graduate Pack version 11.5 to tabulate the survey statistics.

She found Florida's public colleges and universities had less stringent application processes and testing requirements than private colleges which also resulted in 96% of the responding colleges accepting homeschooled applicants versus only four percent of private colleges not accepting homeschooled students. There were no uniform application or admission processes among the responding colleges. Each college evaluated homeschool applicants using their own set of criteria which may have included: conducting interviews; requiring copies of transcripts a homeschooled evaluation in lieu of a transcript or proof of GED completion; higher standardized test scores; a signed affidavit stating that their child had met all high school graduation requirements; an essay, and others.

Ashford (2005) also compared the standardized test scores and grade point averages of home school and public school students enrolled in Florida's public community colleges. She found homeschooled students had higher scores in writing and verbal test scores, but found relatively no difference in math or reading scores. Additionally, she found that both homeschool and public school graduates perform equally as well in the classes taken in a community college environment. Her recommendations included:

- Colleges should readily accept home school students into their institutions additional or higher standardized test scores should not be required from homeschooled students if it not required from other students.
- GEDs should not be required for college admission.
- Homeschool advocates should push for uniform homeschool admission policies.

Colleges should actively recruit homeschooled students to attend their institution, particularly since it has been proven homeschoolers perform as well, if not better, than public schooled students.

Bunday (2006), who had been homeschooled in Minnesota, performed his study and found the number of schools of higher education accepting homeschooled students had not only jumped to more than 1,000 colleges, but many colleges and universities were actively recruiting homeschoolers. Bunday's website provides an extensive listing of those colleges which were homeschool friendly in 2006, as well as, those schools which had established acceptance policies for homeschooled applicants.

Bunday (2006) found the acceptance rate of homeschoolers had further expanded to such Ivy League schools as Harvard (MA), Princeton (NJ), Dartmouth College (NH), Pennsylvania State University (PA), Brown University (RI), Carnegie Mellon Institute (PA), as well as, a host of state universities. Additionally, he noted on his website http://learninfreedom.org/colleges_4_hmsc.html that those "students who prepared thoroughly can be admitted with full scholarships at those selective colleges" (para. 1).

Category 4 - Transitioning From Home Into College Environments

It is difficult to determine how many homeschooled graduates actually enroll as college freshmen. Each year The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) conducts a survey as part of its Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). In 1991 a question was included which asked the respondent to indicate the type of high school from which they graduated. This question has been included in the CIRP instrument eight of the past 18 years (2008, 2007, 2005, 2004, 2001, 1998, 1993, and 1991). In 2008 HERI estimated there were "approximately 11,500 freshman students who graduated from a homeschool program (0.08 percent), enrolled, [and

subsequently transitioned] into one of the 1,693 institutions participating in the CIRP” (Cogan, 2010, Introduction section, para. 2).

Research addressing transitional experiences of homeschoolers into college is limited, at best. This Category 4 section includes one study conducted by Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvihill (2007), two articles by Duggan (2010a), and dissertations by Lattibeaudiere (2000), Kranzow (2004), and Smiley (2010). Each mentions the need for further research concerning homeschoolers and their transition into college.

In 2007, Bolle et al. completed a qualitative (QL) study which examined the transitional experiences of six homeschooled students during their first year college attendance. A QL approach was chosen so each of the study participants would have the opportunity to describe their experiences. The researchers used personal interviews which were designed around Lattibeaudiere’s 2000 study.

Bolle et al. (2007) then compared these experiences with Tinto’s theories of 1988 and 1993. They found no evidence that homeschooled student’s transitional experiences were significantly different from those of traditionally educated students. Both populations experienced very similar challenges of “loneliness, meeting others with different values, and dealing with greater independence” (p. 637).

While Bolle et al. admitted many college authorities “are still concerned about homeschooled students entering college” (p. 639), they also believed this could be due, in part, to homeschooled students not having a “broad view of the real world and that homeschooling leads to a sheltered existence without exposure to different people and views”

(p. 639). Therefore, they concluded, regardless how a student completed high school, a combination of aptitude, social skills, and physical activity helped to prepare students for college.

Bolle et al. (2007) recommended further study addressing transitional issues homeschooled students encounter as they enter into college, as well as, gathering these insights from other resources, to include parents:

There are several modifications that could be made to the study's design...Only the students themselves were interviewed in the study. For more depth, interviews could be conducted with parents, siblings, roommates, professors, RAs, or any number of persons who have interaction with the students in order to obtain more observations on their transitional issues... researchers could obtain a richer understanding of the transitional issues encountered by college students who were homeschooled in high school. This understanding would be helpful in designing programs and initiatives to help such students adjust and persist in college. (p. 653)

Lattibeaudiere's (2000) study began by admitting "very little research has been conducted about the experiences of these [homeschooled] students in college" (p. 8). Although she included historical and background information on the homeschooling movement in the United States, her research described the experiences of home schooled students as they made the transition from the home school environment into the college culture. She also wanted to determine how they adjusted to college life.

Lattibeaudiere (2000) interviewed twenty-five former home schooled students, who attended a religiously affiliated college or a public state university, as well as 22 faculty and staff members who were able to speak to the student's college experiences. Lattibeaudiere

concentrated, in part, on the feelings and emotions of the homeschooled students as they adjusted to living on a college campus. She found this group of student participants felt their parent's support was crucial in adapting to being away from home. She also found those homeschooled students who had traveled with the families, were more prepared for being separated from their home, family, or their high school/homeschool friends. This adjustment period ranged "from a few weeks to the beginning of the second semester off their freshmen year" (p. 195).

Lattibeaudiere (2000) concluded this group of homeschooled students were well prepared for college and they performed and adjusted well in college the longer they were home schooled (p. vi). She further found that input from the faculty supported a "successful transition to college life by the end of their first year" (p. 196), as well.

Lattibeaudiere (2000) recommended additional research be conducted "to study the performance and adjustment experiences of former homeschooled students" (p. 197) and to "get a more comprehensive and representative picture of the performances and adjustment experiences of former home schooled students in college" (p. 299). Although Lattibeaudiere's study was not used as a model for my own research, her findings and recommendations for further study compliment and support my own research scope and methodology.

Kranzow (2004) conducted a qualitative study which "attempted to build a better understanding of the experiences of university students who were homeschooled" (p. 4). She also wanted to determine how institutions recruited homeschoolers. She admitted to the limited amount of research and data available from which to base her own research, particularly data that "spoke to personal experience ...In fact, with little or no research done on this subject, locating or creating an appropriate instrument for a quantitative study which asked the best questions would have been unwise if not impossible" (p. 49). She utilized interviews consisting of open-

ended questions which promoted flexibility and discussion during her interviews with eighteen students and six college administrators. While Kranzow had hoped to interview more administrators or counselors, she “discovered that most of those who periodically work with homeschooled students are not aware when they are working with them versus any other student” (p. 56).

Kranzow (2004) categorized her findings into three different stages following Tinto’s 1993 Model:

- Separation - Each student was asked about separating from their family and friends, as well as, whether their relationship with their parents had changed in any way. She found homeschooled students felt they had just as much contact with family and friends while at college, as before they entered college. Kranzow also found “parents continued to influence students’ lives, even when students are out of the home” (p. 127).
- Transition – Kranzow found this stage to be less traumatic since homeschoolers felt they could continue to “reach out to people from back home” (p. 127).
- Incorporation - Homeschooled students were able to adjust to their college environment and to different values held by their peers. The participating homeschooled students indicated they felt they could “rely on their family and previous friends to provide a sense of acceptance and approval --as opposed to relying on institutional peers” (p. 127).

Kranzow (2004) admitted her study had limitations which included time and money. She states, “It would have been beneficial to do a longitudinal study and find out how students felt as they graduated. Did they feel any different about their homeschool experiences looking back a bit farther?” (p. 140). She recommended additional research be conducted to investigate the college transition and adjustment process of homeschoolers. Kranzow’s study was not used as a

baseline or model for my own research, but her findings and recommendations for further study certainly complimented and supported my own research.

Duggan's two articles published in 2010 addressed preparation and attendance in community college, while Smiley's dissertation included a limited number of phenomenological insights by homeschooled students as they prepared to transition to a college campus environment.

Duggan's first article, "Are Community Colleges Homeschool Friendly?" (2010a), was a content analysis study. This study included information gathered from 105 community college admission officers and involved a checklist for evaluating each community college's website. Duggan also interviewed five homeschooled students attending a variety of community colleges. Specific questions were asked pertaining to the "friendliness" of the college's website, as well as, to the community college's admissions policies.

Duggan (2010a) advocated homeschoolers enrollments and attendance in college was escalating. However, community colleges may actually hinder homeschooled students from attending their school because of their websites. Homeschooled students tended to adapt to computer technology and used the Internet almost exclusively for their school research and information searches. Since high school or college counselors were not readily available to homeschooled students, college websites were heavily relied on to provide needed information to determine which college(s) may meet their needs.

Duggan (2010a) found that while most community colleges did not have a uniform admissions policy for homeschoolers, they tended to be more homeschool friendly than their websites portrayed them to be. Additionally, Duggan found community college websites did not always provide the specific information homeschooled students thought was essential.

However, Duggan suggested the websites should provide a “clearly defined ‘doorway’” or landing page leading visitors to information specific to home-schooled applicants (pp. 59-60) just as links are provided for transfer, new students, and returning students. She also suggested that YouTube type videos, text messaging, or live online chat rooms could be attached to the webpage which features homeschooled students’ interaction.

Duggan’s second article, “Is All College Preparation Equal?” (2010b), implied many high school graduates were ill-prepared for the “rigor and challenges of a college education” (p. 26). She explored how college bound students prepared to attend community colleges. She looked at three different groups of high school graduates: public schooled, private schooled, and home schooled using a descriptive cross-sectional pilot study. A large community college provided a smaller sample of 1,171 students as potential candidates to participate in the study. Duggan asserted, “precollege preparation is linked to college persistence”¹ (p. 27). Email invitations were sent to each student asking them to complete a survey. A total of 121 respondents (or 10%), comprised of 11 homeschooled and 9 privately schooled students, actually completed the survey.

Certain demographics were extrapolated from the survey for all three population groups. Of special interest to me was the homeschooling demographics to include how the student felt about being homeschooled (what they liked best and least), outside activities in which they participated, reasons for being homeschooled, and the various methods they completed high school credits (i.e., solely from their parents, dual high school and community college, attendance, community support groups or associations, and/or correspondence courses).

¹ Persistence is defined by Duggan (2010b) as how successful a student is in actually continuing and graduating from college.

The study found homeschooled students felt they were above average and even in the top 10% academically. Homeschooled students also indicated they had higher ambitions to achieve both academically and in leadership roles. However, the study also showed there was a gap in pre-college preparation among the three population groups. These included the availability of college recruitment fairs, counselor advising and intervention, the lack of personalizing college websites to meet the needs of non-public school graduates, designing and providing workshops or guiding students to college level courses that would directly impact their future, as well as, barriers that could impede students from achieving their academic goals.

Duggan (2010b) felt further exploration could be done by adding charter and magnet school graduates into a more detailed longitudinal study which would explore degree completion, barriers colleges may have in understanding the various types of high school graduates, student adjustment to college, and actual student experiences while attending college.

In 2010 Smiley conducted a multi-case, comparative study by interviewing and observing five homeschooled students who attended a variety of post-secondary, public institutions in Southern states. He also interviewed three sets of parents. Small portions of those interviews were inserted in his Chapter Four – Results. Smiley's dissertation concentrated on the beliefs, values, and worldviews of homeschooled students attending public four-year colleges and universities. These unique experiences may have implications for institutions of higher education, professors, student peer groups, as well as for themselves. Smiley was concerned if these experiences would affect those values that homeschooled students had been taught at home or if homeschooling parents had adequately prepared their child to encounter and adapt themselves to new or different information.

Smiley (2010) found parents chose to homeschool their children for a variety of reasons: they felt they could better education their children at home, for religious, and for moral reasons. The methodology for homeschooling is just as varied: from structured and formal to unplanned and incidental. He found many homeschooling families supplemented their curriculum with field trips and/or partnered with local public school districts for extracurricular or other support (i.e., sports, driver education, computer courses, text books, testing services, etc.).

In his own study, Smiley (2010) referenced three researchers: Knowles (1993), Lines (2000), and Medlin (2000). Each of these researchers suggested that homeschoolers are generally satisfied with their homeschooling experiences and would choose to be homeschooled again. Additionally, Smiley quoted “different kinds of students respond differently to their college experiences” (p. 50). However, he admitted there was a gap in the literature which directly addressed the effects of college experiences on the homeschooled student.

Smiley (2010) recommended homeschooled students should become more actively involved with fellow college classmates in order to appreciate their “cultural identity” (p. 121), as well as becoming more involved in student activities and leadership roles. He recommended professors should be aware that homeschooled students may seek a platonic relationship with their professors and may have a hard time keeping deadlines.

Although this was the only study found which actually included phenomenological insights from homeschooled students and their parents, the majority of the research paper was spent, not on the actual experiences of the homeschooled student, but rather on the history and other demographics of homeschooling.

Summary

Many homeschooled graduates have been readily accepted into postsecondary education programs and have proven they are successful in a collegiate academic environment (Klicka, 2006; Ray, 2004; Prue, 1997). However, existing literature fell short which documents first-hand and personal experiences taken directly from homeschooled graduates recalling or reflecting on those experiences and challenges transitioning into a collegiate environment. Equally important, when faced with these challenges, research was limited which explored exactly how homeschooled graduates dealt with these challenges.

The reviewed literature was grouped into four different categories based upon information gleaned during the questionnaire and interview stage of this research. These four categories are: Homeschool Demographics and Testing, Changes in the Federal Law Affecting Financial Aid for Homeschoolers, College Application and Acceptance Processes, and Transitioning From Home to a College Environment.

Foundational literature and background information were acquired through research and review of peer reviewed articles found in online library databases (such as ProQuest, EbscoHost, and ERIC), public and academic library catalogues and collections, and The Internet. Journals, newsletters, and homeschooling trade magazines (i.e., *The Teaching Home*, *Homeschooling Today*, and *Practical Homeschooling*) were also explored. The websites for Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), Pennsylvania's Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP), and Pennsylvania's Department of Education (PDE) were researched and each organization was contacted for specific information. This multiple case study was conducted and is intended to add to the body of knowledge addressing homeschooling issues.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Overview

For my research, I was interested in understanding how homeschooled graduates transition from their home academic environment into a collegiate one. Research conducted by Lattibeaudiere (2000), Kranzow (2004), and Bolle et al. (2007) recommended further study would be beneficial by addressing homeschooled students and their college transition. Although their studies touched on a variety of college transition issues, none of these studies captured or presented the homeschooler's, or his or her parent's personal experiences, during the college transition in a qualitative, multiple case study format.

Robick (2010) advocates using qualitative research techniques which employ exploration or discovery (p. 44), as well as, incorporating personal emersion into specific experiences. Robick's research approach "focuses on the nature of the lived experience in an effort to complete descriptions and provides the foundational background for reflective structural analysis indicating the exact essence and nature of that experience" (p. 44). Therefore, I recognized conducting qualitative research would be more appropriate than quantitative research, particularly since I wanted to "hear" how each homeschooler experienced their college transition.

Using Robick's qualitative research techniques as a foundation, my study was further structured as a multiple-case study. The case study approach was selected since it provides the most effective and efficient means to gather details descriptions, details, and facts (Stake, 1995). It also allows the researcher to ultimately be able to predict similar, as well as, contrasting results within each case (Yin, 2003). In his later work, Yin (2014) also advocated using 'pattern

matching' to identify recurring themes which may surface from the participants' interview inputs.

In structuring multiple case studies, Stake (1995) offers three categories for consideration by the researcher when determining which type of case study is best to use:

Intrinsic – to research a unique situation where the researcher wants to better understand a certain phenomenon even though it may have limited transferability.

Instrumental – to gain insight and understanding of a certain experience or situation

Collective – to collect and study more than one case at a time.

Ultimately, I fashioned each of the seven cases combining Stake's 'instrumental' and 'collective' premises. By using the instrument-collective case study approach, I was able to gather full and rich details, descriptions, and facts recalled by each participant. This was accomplished through the use of peer reviewed and IRB approved questionnaires and interview questions, by utilizing such methods as purposeful sampling techniques (Johnson & Christenson, 2008, Table 12.1), personal interviews, face-to-face contact, telephonic or email conversations, observations, historical research, questionnaires, and/or surveys. These tools were used during the research gathering process with each of the seven homeschooled graduates and one of his or her parents (in each case, the mother.) Additionally, I could capture and note the unique challenges each participant faced during their transition from home to college. Finally, I could understand, categorize, and visualize, through cross case analysis, the similarities and differences that were experiences across the entire group of study participants and that affected each, individual study participant.

While it was important to capture the experiences, recollections, and perceptions of each participant, it was equally important to organize these experiences as individual cases. By using

cross case analysis and structuring each of the seven cases around the five research questions, similarities and differences, as well as recurring themes, emerged across each case.

During the course of each interview, I ensured every effort was made to promote open and honest communication by each participant and that no preconceived judgment was made towards the participants as they gave their actual recollections, perceptions, or experiences of their college transition. The final step that I took was to journal the interview process, the environment, and note specifics of each interview and interviewee.

Design

Research can be divided into qualitative (QL) or quantitative (QN) methodologies. Both have their own merits. While QL studies may lack a set of structural or statistical factors used to answer questions about a condition or to explore the meaning of a condition through interviews, observations, and material analysis (Kramer, 2012), the researcher of a QL study tends to explore the “what is” more so than the “what could be” of a research topic (pp. 18-19). Furthermore, case studies, which fall under the QL category, are used to develop scientific examination of situations when little research exists (Creswell, 2007).

Therefore, this research employed a qualitative, multiple case study which captures the first-hand, personal experiences from seven Pennsylvanian homeschooled graduates who had applied to at least one of Pennsylvania’s community colleges or 4-year, degree granting schools. Likewise, personal experiences were captured from at least one parent of each homeschooled graduate (NOTE: in every case, the mother volunteered to participate in this case study.) This information was captured using questionnaires and interviews administered to seven homeschooled students and to each of their mothers. By capturing the mothers’ perspectives, the homeschooled student’s recollections were supplemented, enhanced, or supported by their

mother's recollection of the same college transitional events/experiences. These personal recollections were then used to determine if any reoccurring themes may have surfaced which were significant roles of the college transition phenomenon.

In this multiple case study, there are seven distinct cases. Each case is comprised of one homeschooled graduate and his or her mother. Each of the seven cases is presented in Chapter Four and consists of a description of each student and their family composition; reflections on their homeschooling, pre-college, and transitional college attendance experiences; challenges they faced before/during college; how they resolved these challenges; information on their future plans; and finally a conclusion statement. The majority of the information contained in each case was obtained directly from qualitative resources such as questionnaires and interviews conducted with the members of each case. The interviews concentrated on discovering more in-depth experiences, recollections, and perceptions of each participant as they prepared for and transitioned from his or her home academic environment into a collegiate one.

Research Questions

Not only are there a variety of motivational factors which affect the reasons why homeschoolers decide to pursue their education beyond high school, but there is also a plethora of scenarios by which homeschool graduates proceed and progress through their transition from home to college. Based on the review of existing literature, and in order to explore college transition by homeschooled graduates, five research questions were developed to define this research:

1. How does homeschooling impact college choice?
2. How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?

3. How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?
4. What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?
5. How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?

Setting

This multiple case study focused on homeschooled students who had either applied to, were currently attending, or had attended a Pennsylvania college or university. Additionally, all students were residents of Central Pennsylvania and had completed their homeschooling program within Pennsylvania, which is considered by some homeschooling experts and homeschooling families, as having one of the most governmentally intrusive homeschooling laws in the entire United States (Home School Legal Defense Association [website], 2008).

The first group of four homeschoolers that I contacted had used me as their Pennsylvania certified homeschool evaluator since 1997 per Pennsylvania's Homeschooling Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq. According to this law a Pennsylvania certified homeschool evaluator must perform yearly evaluations on each homeschooled student to determine whether or not a "progression of learning" took place during the school year. This yearly evaluation report is then submitted by the homeschooling parent/guardian/administrator to their local servicing school superintendent.

The initial four students were initially contacted using the social network site, FACEBOOK and asked to forward my request to other homeschoolers they knew might be willing to participate in my study. Using this technique, eventually seven homeschooled graduates agreed to participate. Once the student agreed to participate in the study, they provided me with the email address for their mother. I initially contacted each mother using her

email address and asked her to participate, as well. After initial contact was made to all 14 participants, further communication was conducted through email or telephone, which provided more privacy than FACEBOOK could provide. Meeting face-to-face proved to be very challenging, particularly since I was in one state and the participants were located throughout Pennsylvania. Therefore, oral interviews were scheduled, conducted and recorded over the telephone. Every effort was taken to conduct these interviews around the schedules of each participant.

Cases and Participants

Neither the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) nor the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP) could provide statistics on the numbers of graduating homeschooled students interested in applying for, were currently attending, or had attended any of Pennsylvania's 4-year, degree granting colleges and universities. Nor could either of these organizations provide the names of Pennsylvania homeschooling support groups which could be used as a starting point to solicit potential participants for this multiple case study.

Therefore, I began by contacting four homeschoolers whom I had known through the entirety of their junior and senior high school years. Each of these students had indicated their interest in attending college during their yearly homeschool evaluations with me.

I used a number of electronic and networking tools to include FACEBOOK, telephone and cell phone contacts, and email. I knew I needed to use as many of these electronic tools as possible in order to get maximum participation, particularly from those homeschooled graduates who might no longer be living at home. This method provided rapid response from all 14 of the participants (seven homeschooled graduates and seven mothers.)

Initial Homeschooled Student Contact

Beginning with the online, social networking tool, FACEBOOK, I contacted each of the four homeschooled graduates and asked if they would volunteer and participate in this research. This initial group had either applied for, was currently attending, or had graduated from a Pennsylvania college or university. As each of them agreed to participate in this research, I also asked them to forward the “call for assistance” (Appendix C) to other homeschooled graduates they knew who may have applied for, attended, or were currently attending a Pennsylvania college. This snowball technique was used to expand the base of potential volunteers, ultimately resulting in 12 homeschooled students who indicated an interest in participating in this case study. Purposeful sampling was used to eliminate four participants due to non-response to additional email correspondence. A fifth student was later eliminated since neither of her parents could participate in this study.

Ultimately, seven volunteers agreed to participate. Three of the participants were male and four were female, ranging in age from 18-23. Six of the participants were Caucasian and one participant was biracial (Caucasian/Black). All student participants came from dual-parent families. Of the seven participants, one male had applied to a community college but had not yet attended college, two were still attending 4-year-degree granting universities (one male and one female) while the remainder had graduated from a college or university. Two of these college graduates had also completed advanced degrees (one had completed his Master of Science Degree and one female had completed her Doctorate Degree).

Each student volunteer was then sent a more detailed, introductory email which included three attachments: A Letter of Introduction (Appendix E), a Statement of Consent form (Appendix F), and a copy of the Student Questionnaire (Appendix G). The Letter of

Introduction contained detailed instructions for completing either the attached word document questionnaire or an electronic, online version of the questionnaire which was located at <<http://www.zoomerang.com>>. Instructions were given on how to complete and submit the paper version of the questionnaire using a supplied fax telephone number, an email address, or returning it by traditional mail using the researcher's home address. Instructions were also given on how to submit the electronic version of the completed questionnaire using *Zoomerang's* electronic data capturing capabilities.

Each homeschooled graduate was asked to sign the consent form (Appendix F), which they all did, and to complete either the written or the online questionnaire within 10 days. They were also asked to grant a face-to-face or telephone interview to further explain or clarify their questionnaire responses and to glean any additional personal recollections or experiences they wanted to share. In respect of privacy, each respondent was told their identity would be protected in this research by identifying them as "Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc."

Although the student participants were given a choice of taking the paper or the electronic, online version of the questionnaire, all but one participant (who returned the completed questionnaire as an email attachment) elected to take the online version accessed via <<http://www.zoomerang.com>>. Participants were able to enter the electronic questionnaire multiple times in order to complete their input, however only one completed online questionnaire per student was used for tabulation. All questionnaire entries were clear; however, their responses were verified or expanded during their personal telephonic or face-to-face interviews.

Each student volunteer was then asked whether they thought at least one of their parents would also agree to participate in this study. They were asked to provide the email address or forward my email request to their parent.

Initial Parent Contact

A similar technique was used to invite the parents of each homeschooled graduate to volunteer to participate in the research. An introductory email was sent to each parent and seven mothers agreed to participate along with their children. An eighth mother indicated her schedule did not permit her to participate which resulted in her child not participating in this study, as well. The introductory email included three attachments: A Letter of Introduction (Appendix E), a Statement of Consent form (Appendix F), and a copy of the Parent Questionnaire (Appendix H). The Letter of Introduction contained detailed instructions for completing either the attached word document questionnaire or an electronic, online version of the questionnaire located at <<http://www.zoomerang.com>>. Instructions were given on how to complete and submit the paper version of the questionnaire using either a supplied fax telephone number, an email address, or to return it by traditional mail using my home address. Instructions were also given on how to submit the electronic version of the completed questionnaire using Zoomerang's electronic data capturing capabilities.

Each homeschooling mother was asked to sign the consent form, which each did, and to complete either the written or the online questionnaire within 10 days. Each mother was also asked to grant a face-to-face or telephone interview to further explain or clarify their questionnaire responses and to glean any additional personal recollections or experiences they wanted to share. In respect of privacy, each respondent is simply identified in this research as 'Mother of Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc.' or 'Mother A, B, C, etc.' A composite of the student participants is listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Student Participant Demographics

Name	Race	Age	College Attendance Status	College Major	Future Plans
Ms. A.	Caucasian	18	Working on bachelor's degree	Performing Arts/Theater	Unknown
Ms. E.	Caucasian	24	Completed PhD	English Literature	Write and publish book
Mr. H.	Caucasian	17	Applying to Colleges	Engineering	Complete degree
Ms. L.	Caucasian	20	Completed B.S. degree	Social work	Work on master's degree
Ms. M.	Caucasian	20	Working on bachelor's degree	Graphic Arts	Unknown
Mr. N.	Caucasian	22	Completed B.S. degree	Computer Science	Grow his computer business
Mr. S.	African American	20	Completing master's degree	Biology	Get 2nd master's degree

Note. The student's age is depicted at the time of the oral interviews conducted as part of this study.

Procedures

A number of steps were used to progress through this multiple case study. While most of these steps proceeded consecutively, there were some that were done simultaneously:

1. Questionnaires and interview questions were developed, vetted through a panel of education subject matter experts, and approved by Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).
2. Various electronic and networking tools were used to solicit, gather, and communicate with study participants. Sampling was used to eliminate some of the potential participants based on refined selection criteria.
3. Letters of Introduction, consent forms, and the questionnaires were sent to each of the participants and gathered for analysis.
4. Oral interviews were scheduled, conducted, transcribed, and analyzed for recurring themes.
5. Transcriptions were sent to the participants to ensure accuracy.
6. Thank you letters were sent to each participant.
7. Recurring themes were identified and developed for inclusion in Chapter Four.

Research Tools

In order to answer the five research questions, two structured, but very similar questionnaires (Appendices G and H) were developed for use in this study; one for the homeschooled student and one for their parent. The participants were given the option to complete either the paper version or the more popular online format using *Zoomerang's* electronic data capturing capabilities located at <http://www.zoomerang.com>. The electronic

online format made for easier administration of the questionnaire which more readily accommodated the schedules of all participants.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire format was chosen due to the expansive location of not only the homeschooled students, but also of their parents. The initial questionnaire was fashioned around that used by Robick during her 2010 research addressing the transition of special education students from one academic venue to another.

The homeschooled student's questionnaire. Three distinct open-ended questions with additional probing sub-questions were used as the baseline for this research. These questions were administered to homeschooled students who had completed their Pennsylvania's homeschool program and had either applied to, were currently attending, or had graduated from a Pennsylvania college or university.

Question 1: Why were you homeschooled?

- 1a. How did the decision to be homeschooled (whether the decision was made by your parents or yourself) impact you? Were you in agreement with the decision? Were you happy/unhappy being homeschooled?
- 1b. How did you feel about it at that time as opposed to how you feel about it now?
- 1c. Were you ever given a choice of continuing or discontinuing to homeschool?

Question 2: What experiences did you have as you transitioned or once you transitioned to a postsecondary institute?

- 2a. Why did you apply to the college you ultimately attended? Are you glad you attended that school?

2b. Did you graduate?

Question 3: Did you have any experience(s) in college which changed your values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues? If yes, please describe.

3a. What were the results/outcomes of these college experiences on your life?

The homeschooling parent's questionnaire. Similar questions were asked of each of the seven participating parents (in each case the mothers volunteered to participate.).

Additionally, the information received in the questionnaire and during their interviews added valuable insight and information to this research topic, supported validated triangulation techniques, as well as, assisted in clarifying and supporting various aspects of their child's homeschooling and postsecondary institutional experiences.

Question 1: Why did you decide to homeschool?

1a. How long did you homeschool this child?

1b. How did you feel about homeschooling this child at that time as opposed to how you feel about it now?

1c. Did you ever give your child a choice of continuing or discontinuing to homeschool? What were the results?

Question 2: How did you prepare your child for the transition into college?

2a. What experiences did you have which supported your child transitioning from home to college? What were the challenges of your child attending college?

2b. Why did your child apply to the college he/she ultimately attended? How did you feel about the school he/she attended?

Question 3: Has your child shared with you any of their college experiences which may have changed their lives? What were those experiences? What advice did they ask for or did you provide at the time?

3a. In what ways do you feel your child has changed in their values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues (samples include but are not limited to: abortion, divorce, premarital sex, homosexuality) after attending college?

3b. In your opinion, what were the results/outcomes of these college experiences?

Validity. The questionnaires were viewed for content validity by three education subject matter experts consisting of one retired Pennsylvania public school superintendent, one Pennsylvania certified homeschool evaluator with over 15 years of homeschool experience, and a college administrator whose doctoral dissertation addressed homeschooling success in college situations. With input from these subject matter experts, additions and corrections were made to rectify any confusing or unclear verbiage or ambiguity with any of the questions and a second validation process was completed by the same three experts. The Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research methodology for this case study which included (a) two unique questionnaires (designed to answer the five research questions) and (b) an interview with each participant.

The Researcher's Role

I became interested in my research topic through a number of venues that I had been privileged to experience. First, I had homeschooled my two children from kindergarten through high school graduation. Each year during their high school years, I asked them what they wanted to learn, do, or experience that would help them determine and pursue their future careers. As graduation came closer, my focus transitioned from giving my children these experiences, to

what resources, scholarships, academic counseling services, test preparation programs, and school visits were available. Second, as an independent, certified Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator for fifteen years, I had a number of other Pennsylvania homeschooled students expressed their desire in attending college during their yearly homeschool evaluations. These students and their families were facing some of the same challenges my family was confronting. It was this small group of homeschooled students who I initially contacted to be part of my research. Third, since I had been an education guidance counselor, I was asked to be a guest speaker at the Christian Homeschooling Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP) Convention where I presented a number of topics on college preparation (Appendix D). Through interaction with those families attending my workshops, I gathered an even deeper understanding of the concerns other Pennsylvania homeschooling families faced, as well. And finally my master's degree thesis was used, in part, as a precursor and the foundation to this doctoral research.

I am more a 'people person' and the majority of my professional career had been spent as a teacher, counselor, or in other areas involving people, rather than data. While perhaps far more challenging and time-consuming than conducting a quantitative study, I became more convinced through my literature review that a significant gap existed in qualitative research specifically focusing on homeschooling issues. Of particular interest was the constructivist theory developed by Baxter and Jack (2008), Yin (2003), and Stake (1995) which encourages each participant to . tell their own story and to relay their own experiences based on their own interpretation and perspectives of those experiences.

Thus, during the design phase of my research, I became convinced that a qualitative format was more appropriate for use in my research. By using the words taken directly from the

study participants, I could capture the challenges, frustrations, and successes that each person directly experienced during their college transition.

Therefore, my role as the researcher was to identify, locate, and contact homeschooled graduates who met the criteria established for this research. Additionally, I needed to persuade, not only the homeschooled graduate, but at least one of their parents to participate. I needed to be mindful of my schedule, but flexible to the maximum extent possible, in order to accommodate the various schedules of each participant when scheduling the oral interviews. I also needed to be prepared that at any moment a participant could pull-out or not complete the study.

Data Collection

Four sets of data were collected: (a) questionnaire from parents, (b) interview with parents, (c) questionnaire from student, and (d) interview with student. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the questions and the methodology which were used for each of these data collection tools (Appendix I).

Bourque and Fielder (1995) contend,

One of the greatest and most studied disadvantages to mail questionnaires is their low response rate. When a single mailing that incorporates no incentives is made to a sample of the general community, the surveyor can probably expect no better than a 20% response rate. (pp. 14-15)

Additionally, Jenkins (1998) advised that “follow-up contacts or a second mailing is also expected to improve the response rate” (p. 92). In fact, this proved to be the case in my research.

Questionnaires

The validated questionnaires (Appendixes G and H) were sent to seven mothers and seven homeschooled graduates who were either currently attending a Pennsylvania institution of higher learning, been accepted to attend, or had graduated from such a Pennsylvania institute. During the course of this research, each set of questionnaires and recorded interviews were stored electronically and secured by using password protection known only to me. These electronic records will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research stage of this study.

Responses. Responses were formulated primarily as open-ended answers. The respondent was encouraged to insert their own responses and comments in each of the open formatted questions. Responses were then grouped into three categories: 1) Why were/did you homeschool?, 2) What experiences did you/your child have as you/they transitioned or once you/they transitioned to a postsecondary institute?, and 3) Did you/they have any experience(s) in college which affected you? And if yes, please describe them.

Questionnaire return rate. Each of the fourteen participants was initially given ten days to complete the questionnaire. Based on Jenkins' (1998, p. 92) advice to follow-up with a second mailing in order to improve the response rate, a second reminder was sent on the eighth day reminding the participants to complete their questionnaire. At the end of 10 days all participants had completed their questionnaire.

Interviews

As the questionnaires were returned, each of the participants was scheduled for a face-to-face or telephonic interview, whichever was able to fit into their schedules. Each face-to-face or telephone interview was recorded on cassette tape, on an MP3 recording device, or using an

online, free conference call/recording capability found at <https://www.freeconference.com/Home.aspx>. Typically, each interview lasted approximately 60-75 minutes and was prefaced with an explanation of the purpose and intent of the research project, a verbal request for permission to record the interview, a verbal confirmation that the participant was aware and agreed to being interviewed, that they were aware their input would be quoted and used in the research paper, and finally that their identification would be kept confidential and they would be identified in the paper such as “Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc.” or “Mother of Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc.” or “Mother A, B, C, etc.” Every participant agreed with these conditions.

The three baseline interview questions (Appendices G and H) were initially used, coupled with additional probing questions interspersed to enhance the collection of the real-life experiences of individuals in a situation. Every attempt was made to remain unbiased during the interview process in order to capture the experiences, recollections, and perceptions in the participant’s own words.

At the conclusion of each interview, the participant was provided with an explanation on further expectations (i.e., questionnaire responses would be reviewed, the interviews would be transcribed, the information would be analyzed to determine if there were any trends or gaps, and/or additional interviews would be scheduled in order to clarify any unclear responses. Transcripts were offered to each participant for their review to ensure their oral answers had been captured completely during the transcription stage. (NOTE: This was not necessary in most cases, however one homeschooler was contacted to clarify some of the terminology he used and to clarify some indiscernible responses in his interview.)

During the course of this research, each recorded interview was stored electronically and secured by using password protection only known to me. These electronic recordings will be destroyed five years after the completion of the research stage of this study.

Data Analysis

The final step of the research phase included preparing and analyzing transcriptions of the oral interviews, analyzing the questionnaires, and analyzing the interview transcriptions to determine if any reoccurring themes and correlated subthemes surfaced and were readily apparent.

Transcriptions and Field Notes

Each interview was transcribed for future use and analysis. On average, each hourly oral interview took approximately 4-5 hours to transcribe. This included the initial transcription, at least one editing review, and the final version. Because each interview was conducted over the telephone, special attention was made to capture the oral interview as exact as possible during the transcription. This was accomplished by receiving permission from each participant to record each interview. Additionally, after each interview, reference notes were prepared which captured information about the family composition (i.e., number of children in the family and the placement of the participant within the sibling hierarchy, the education level of each parent, parental preparation for financing college), as well as, the “tone” of the interview (i.e., was the participant animated in their responses or did they provide short/curt answers? Did they readily provide detailed answers to the questions or were probing questions needed to encourage or pull additional information from the participant? Did the information provided by the parent substantiate, enhanced, contradict or validate the information provided by their child?)

Once the interview was transcribed, I also noted every pause in the student's conversation, every deviation taken from the original question, and every incomplete sentence or thought that was not fully provided by the interviewee. The transcription was then offered to each participant so they could add clarification to their recorded interviews. While one interviewee provided clarification and the correct spelling of a specific term he used during his interview, no additions or corrections were made by any of the other participants to their transcripts.

The questionnaires, transcripts, and field notes were then stored and password protected for further use. Once I had completed all of the transcriptions and field notes, I electronically sent these to the original panel of three independent education experts. They were asked to identify and determine any recurring themes using the 'memo' technique process. This technique involves noting each potential theme as it was mentioned either in the questionnaire or the interview transcript (Given, 2008). Each panel member was instructed to tally and determine the "frequency counts" (Jenkins, 1998, p. 94) of the topical themes they had identified. Those topics that had more than three tallies were to be considered as a 'recurring theme.'

At the same time, I also independently analyzed the questionnaires and transcriptions for recurring themes by utilizing the same 'memoing' and tally system as the expert panel. I began by re-reading the interview transcript. In the margins of the transcript I noted potential topics as they occurred (i.e., college application process, college application fees, problems with roommates, specific confrontations or discussions with student peers on social issues, how to fund college, etc.). Student topics were color coded in red and parent topics in blue. I conducted this same process with each of the 14 transcripts. I then tallied the topics from all 14 transcripts into one cohesive list using the same color code. Those topics that had more than three tallies

were considered as a ‘recurring theme.’ If the topic had two tallies, it was considered a ‘sub-theme.’

After four weeks, each of us had completed the analysis using the tallying method and developed our list of recurring themes. The panel sent their lists to me and I compiled a composite list consisting of all the identified topics from the panel and myself. Through unified collective analysis incorporating all four reviews, it became apparent that each of us had identified most of the same themes. If the theme was identified on three of our lists, it was considered a ‘recurring theme’ for the purpose of this case study. In order to further classify themes, if the theme was identified with two notations by the panel, it was grouped under a recurring theme as a ‘sub-theme.’

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the trustworthiness of any qualitative study, should be structured around four factors: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Each of the seven cases in this current study was checked to ensure a level of trustworthiness was fulfilled using each of these four factors. To begin establishing trustworthiness, I relied on the panel of education subject matter experts, and Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), and my doctoral committee members to review my five research questions, as well as the questions asked in the questionnaire and during the oral interviews. These reviews ensured the questions got “to the meat” of my research problem statement and that I was asking the right type of questions.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocated that the information gathered during the study should be in a structured, truthful, and reliable manner which would lend and support the credibility of

the study. There should also be a level of confidence in the findings gathered at the conclusion of the study. In my study I utilized a number of research tools in order to build a solid foundation supporting the credibility of my study. These tools included using triangulation in three different realms: by using questionnaires and oral interviews taken from both the homeschooled graduate, as well as his or her mother during the data collection process; by including four homeschooled families who had used me as their Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator, as well as three families whom I did not evaluate; and by including seven families to participate in the study.

I also used direct quotations to support the study findings which included recurring themes and subthemes. These themes and subthemes were composed independently from the panel of three subject matter experts and myself.

Dependability

Stake (1995) advocates using a technique called ‘member checks’ as a means to support the dependability of the study. First, I received permission from each participant to record their interview. I also ensured that each oral interview was conducted in the same manner. While the same interview questions were asked of each person, I did ask probing questions designed to encourage the participant to expand or explain some of their responses, thus intensifying the richness of information provided by the interviewee. After conducting each oral interview, I immediately transcribed each recorded oral interview while it was ‘fresh’ on my mind. I then afforded all 14 participants the opportunity to review their interview transcriptions for content, accuracy, and intent. This step enhanced trustworthiness by allowing each participant to change, clarify, or add to their interviews as they felt was needed. While only one student clarified a

term he used during his oral interview, this ‘member checking’ step helped to strengthen and to validate the trustworthiness of each transcription.

Transferability

The study findings should also be transferrable from one circumstance to the next. Therefore, the findings in this current study should be transferrable to other homeschooled graduates and their families. The information should also be transferrable regardless where the student completed their homeschooling program, which state they attended college, or where they currently live. The information and research methodology which is documented within this current study should also be transferrable and usable for other researchers in such a way that they can replicate portions of this study into their own study design.

To build a firm foundation in which to support the transferability of my study findings, I incorporated the following criteria when selecting each participant family. I included a mix of:

- Male and female students,
- Families where another sibling had attended college; versus families where no other children had attended college,
- Families where the parents were college graduates; versus parents who had not attended college and therefore had no prior experience working with colleges,
- Students who were at different stages of their college experiences: just applying to colleges, applied and were currently attending, or had attended and graduated from college,
- Students who had attended college while they were considered a high school student; versus attended college after graduating from high school,

- Students who had begun their college experiences at a community college first; versus those who started at a 4-year, degree granting university or college.

Confirmability

Confirmability implies that the collected data, in this case the information collected from the questionnaires and oral interviews, aided in supporting the study findings. This was accomplished by using direct quotations from the homeschooled students and their mother, to answer the research questions and to support the study findings, recurring themes, and subthemes.

In supporting the trustworthiness concept, I utilized the experience I had gleaned from having been a certified Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator for over fifteen years. Although I started this study with four students whom I had known for a number of years and served as their homeschool evaluator, I was able to expand the participant base to students who did not use me as their homeschool evaluator. This reduced the bias I may have had coming into the study and eased in balancing and strengthening this case study for objectivity. By getting to know each of these seven families over time, I was able to build a comfortable relationship with each of them during the course of this study.

Ethical Considerations

During the course of this study, every effort was made to protect the identify of each participant. This was accomplished in a number of ways. First, I informed each participants their identity would be protected and they would be identified as either Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc. or mother of Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc. or Mother A, B, C, etc. Each participant signed an informed consent form prior to proceeding to the first step of the study - filling out the questionnaires. As each questionnaire, recorded interview, interview transcript, and field notes

were collected and they were filed in a specific password protected folder on my personal computer. The questionnaires and interview transcripts documents were released only to the panel of subject matter experts during the data analysis and recurring theme identification phase of the case study. Each study participant was identified with an alphabetic letter (i.e., Student A, mother of Student A, etc.) and no personal identifying information to include race, sex, age, or pseudonym was released to the panel. This precaution was to further protect, but more importantly, to assist the panel to remain unbiased during the data analysis phase as each of the panel members proceeded to detect recurring themes contained in each questionnaire and interview transcription. Finally, during every contact made with each study participant, I ensured they were treated with the utmost respect. I also wanted them to know that I was genuinely interested in everything they had to share as they responded to each question during the oral interviews.

Summary

This multiple case study involved several steps, each logically and progressively building on the previous step. In order to answer the five research questions, the research design included the use of questionnaires and interviews which included three unique, open-ended questions with additional probing questions. These questions were designed to discover why the student thought they had been homeschooled, how the student prepared to transition from home to college, and whether the student had any experiences/external factors and challenges during college and how they may have overcome or faced these challenges. Similar questions were asked of each participating homeschooling mother, as well. Ultimately, I made every effort to remain unbiased during the interviews.

Fourteen recorded interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions were forwarded to the original panel of subject matter experts (SMEs). These SMEs and I independently analyzed and identified several common recurring themes and sub-themes, as well as unique topics taken from each participant's insights. These insights from the fourteen participants (seven homeschooled graduates and seven mothers) were further used to develop this multiple case study. Chapter Four contains the results of the research and uses quotations taken directly from the interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The numbers of homeschoolers graduating from their homeschooling program and pursuing a college education continues to rise. In 2008 The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) estimated approximately 11,500 freshman students graduated from a homeschool (0.08 percent) and subsequently enrolled in one of the 1,693 institutions (Pryor et al., 2008). However, little research has been conducted since then to update these figures. Little research has been done that addresses how homeschooled graduates transition into college and how they are affected by these college experiences.

The purpose of this multiple case study was to discover and understand how seven, Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates, aided by his or her parent, prepared for and transitioned from their homeschooled academic environment into a collegiate one. Qualitative research methods were used to discover how each of the homeschooled graduates confronted and resolved the challenges associated with their college attendance, as well as, how their experiences may have influenced, changed, or reshaped their lives. The objective was to pinpoint recurring themes and sub-themes which answered the five research questions:

6. How does homeschooling impact college choice?
7. How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?
8. How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?
9. What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?
10. How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?

This study did not attempt to determine how each homeschooler actually attended college (i.e., through college campus attendance, distance learning, correspondence course format, through dual high school-college attendance, or through a combination of these methods.) Rather, emphasis focused on capturing, documenting, exploring, and using the unique and personal insights, reflections, and experiences to form each case. Each case consists of one homeschooled graduate and a parent, which in every instance was his or her mother.

Using the input from the questionnaires and oral interviews, Chapter Four is organized in three distinct sections. Section One includes descriptions of each homeschooled participant and his or her family. Section One also presents unique reflections of the student's pre-college experiences, their transition from home to college, and their college attendance experiences. Each case concludes with a description of each student's future plans. Appropriately inserted quotations from the participants are used to expand or support their unique experiences. Section Two captures the recurring themes and sub-themes which surfaced during the analysis phase of this study. Each of the recurring themes is also supported by using direct quotations from the participants. Section Three concludes Chapter Four with final thoughts gleaned from this multiple case study.

Section One: The Participant Cases

Stake (2006) recommends three basic principles for consideration when selecting cases to be included in a multiple case study:

- Is each individual case relevant to the collective study?
- Do the individual cases provide diversity in the context of the other participant cases?

- Is there the ability to learn through an individual case when studied alongside other participant cases?

Using Stakes' principles, seven distinct cases were identified and used in this multiple case study. Each case consists of a homeschooled graduate and one of his or her parents (NOTE: without exception, the mother). Diversity was achieved by selecting families of different sizes; families who homeschooled for a variety of diverse reasons; parents with different educational backgrounds; and with homeschooled students who had either applied to attend, graduated or were in the process of graduating from a Pennsylvania college or university. One completely unexpected fact surfaced after the selection of the participants – all seven participant students had been homeschooled from first through twelfth grade.

Case 1- Ms. A. - The Musician

Ms. A. is a soft spoken and well-articulated young female who comes from a large family comprised of both parents and three older siblings. The father is in the medical field and is the family's sole source of income. The mother has a master's degree and she is the primary homeschool educator for the family. Periodically the father helps by teaching science and math, but he relies on his wife to provide the majority of the educational instruction.

This family did not plan to homeschool their children. In fact, when their children were very young, they played a major role in establishing a private school at their church. However, through research, talking with other homeschooling families, and by attending various meetings, which addressed public, private, and homeschooling options, the mother states:

We started hearing stuff on how kids usually did really well when they started homeschooling in 1-2nd grade. We got reports, when we were in ATI (Advanced Training Institute – a homeschool curriculum developed by Bill Gothard) - that kids were

scoring at the 85th percentile in that program, so that gave us a little more assurance that we were probably going to be OK using that program. But even if we weren't, that wasn't really the primary motive in the early years, nor at the end when we were committed for the long haul. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Once this family decided to homeschool, Mother A. felt it was a God-given right and responsibility as parents to homeschool their children. Although Mother A. did not have any problems with the public school system, she felt compelled to research and look for alternate ways of educating her children.

I went to this HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) conference ... I sat at the table sobbing and I actually became convicted and saw what a blessing it was to be able to school all of them. My husband supported me and although he couldn't always help me with the schooling, he helped in other ways. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. A. had always been homeschooled and participated in a variety of homeschool co-ops which supplemented her homeschool curriculum: musical concerts, theatrical productions, church related activities, and volunteering within her community. When asked why Ms. A. thought she was homeschooled, she stated:

I think my parents homeschooled me because all the other kids in my family were being homeschooled...I didn't know I could've had a choice on being homeschooled or not...however, I don't think they would've sent me to some school even if I had wanted to go. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

For this family there was no question their children would attend college. Just as her older siblings had, Ms. A. knew she would attend college immediately after completing her high

school program. Her homeschool curriculum was founded on a college preparatory program, which actually went above and beyond Pennsylvania's state homeschooling requirements.

Ms. A. took rigorous courses and thrived in every academic area. Early on, it was apparent

Ms. A. was keenly interested in Fine Arts, although at one time she considered pursuing a scientific field of study with thoughts of following in her father's footsteps.

College application process. Ms. A. was diligent in considering all types of colleges, but she found the colleges were not always flexible in their application process towards homeschooled graduates. However, because she was interested in one specific college, she decided to take the GED in order to meet the college's application requirements. Nevertheless, her college application process proved to be very stressful:

I applied as a freshman to two schools...I didn't even consider going to a community college first since I knew they didn't have the type of major I wanted...I think I probably submitted the same things [application paperwork] that other people had to in my situation... I haven't really asked anyone though...But I don't know if every homeschooler had to take the GED as part of the prerequisite to attend [name of college] that they told me I had to do...My application process turned out to be really stressful... they weren't quite sure how to treat my application...My mom and I actually took several trips to the campus...called them...talked to a lot of people...They wanted a GED which I didn't have and [the college admissions officer] didn't want to accept me unless I had a GED...I had a lot of problems trying to explain to the school about homeschooling... while I was waiting for my SAT scores to be sent to the school, I went ahead and took the GED...While the school was waiting on my GED scores (which we never sent), my SAT scores came in...Eventually when they got my SAT results, I had really high scores, I got

a letter saying they had accepted me, even without a GED...They also didn't ask again for the high school transcript that my mom had made. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

Ms. A.'s mother was very instrumental during the college application process. Although she had helped her other children through this process, this was the first time both she and Ms. A. encountered some hostility and confusion from the college admissions officer. Mother A. admits the college did not seem to know exactly what Ms. A. needed to do in order to be admitted to the college of her choice. Ms. A. stated:

I suppose most people had a transcript that they got from a public high school or private school...I had a transcript that my mom had filled out and the college didn't really know what to do with it since it didn't have grades and had come from my parents. I think I may have been the first homeschooled student who had applied to their school who hadn't gotten a diploma from [name withheld but one of Pennsylvania's state recognized diploma granting organizations] ...they told me they didn't accept a parent-generated transcript or diploma

Since the Admissions Officers did not seem to know what to do or how to interpret a parent generated transcript, Mother A. was also frustrated. She was determined to be persistent and encourage and support her child's desire to attend the college of her choice:

I wanted to press the issue a little [re: the transcript]. I didn't hide the fact that I had done the transcript myself...I just don't think they [the college admissions officer] knew exactly what to do... I guess most homeschoolers had either taken the GED or had attended cyber-school so maybe they [the college admissions officer] didn't have a parent generated diploma...[Ms. A.] went ahead and took the GED but we never told the college

about it...They [the college admissions officer] sent her [Ms. A.] a letter of acceptance once they [the college admissions officer] received her [Ms. A.] SAT scores...but she [Ms. A.] decided to go to another school by then...I think because of all the hassle that she [Ms. A.] had gotten from [name of college withheld]. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Transition from home to college. With all the hassles Ms. A. encountered, and even though the expense was a concern, she eventually chose to attend her second, more expensive college choice. Her transition from home to college proved to be much easier than her college application process:

I was accepted to [name of state-funded college withheld], but because of the hassles... I decided to attend a private school... My transition was pretty easy, I stayed at home since I attended a school that was close...and my classes were about the same as at home – lots of reading, studying, thinking, writing, practicing – just like at home... I'll complete my bachelor's degree soon...I'll probably go further in college, but I don't know right now. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

College experiences. Mother A. knew from experiences with her other children, that Ms. A. would also encounter challenges with other students and professors who may have different backgrounds and faiths than their own.

I wanted my kids to be able to know about conflict and have their own faith and work out their own doubts about their faith. I didn't want them to be sheltered in their faith. I felt they needed to hear about the challenges they might face and yet be discerning in working out their doubts in their faith. So when they went to college they had already asked a lot of those questions and seemed to have a firm grasp on what they believed.

They had at least worked through that along the way and questions didn't scare them... [Ms. A.] may be more grounded... very little tolerance in non-logical thinking...she likes classical logic. Unless someone would come along and challenge [Ms. A.] in a rational way, [she] pretty well can stand her own ground on [her] beliefs. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Additionally, Ms. A. interjected:

I was vaguely aware of some things happening around campus, but I mostly stayed in class, at home, or in rehearsals...I guess I didn't put myself in a lot of situations where things were uncomfortable for me...and I guess I was too busy with my other stuff to pay attention to what other kids were doing. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

Ms. A. did not indicate she had any real challenges that she had to overcome once she started attending college. She tended to have friends who were like-minded and who were tolerant of her stand on social issues. However, Ms. A.'s mother stated:

I don't know, maybe it was because I told them early on or something and I never thought that threatened their core beliefs because they have to work through that anyway. And I think if they don't they become brittle...We have to make them elastic to they can hear the questions and not be frightened. So when they get to these places they're going to hear stuff like, "it's stupid to think that two girls shouldn't be allowed to live together in a sexual relationship or two men shouldn't." They'll hear the politically correct thing and if they even walk through a bunch of that, they're going to be in for huge shock. So I actually tried to talk about all that stuff in advance. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Where is she now? Her future and post-college reflections:

Ms. A. engulfed herself in musical and theatrical performances. She is considering whether to enter the job force or whether to continue her education by working towards her master's degree. She has not decided which avenue to pursue and feels she still has plenty of time to make her decision. She still lives at home with her family.

Case 2 – Ms. E. - The Academic

Ms. E. is the oldest child in the family consisting of both parents and three younger siblings. The parents are both highly educated – each holding professional degrees. Ms. E. was the first child in her family to be homeschooled her entire life and consequently the first one to prepare for and to attend college. When asked why Ms. E. thought she was homeschooled, she stated:

I was in agreement with the decision to homeschool, and I was very happy being educated at home. I enjoyed the flexibility of schedule as well as the opportunity to pursue study at my own pace. Also, I found learning with my siblings very enjoyable...My feelings are similar now to what they were then [about being homeschooled], though I hope more thoroughly considered over time [about why she was homeschooled]. Looking back, I feel that homeschooling was an ideal educational choice for me personally. It allowed me to pursue a range of subjects at my own pace, it gave me a chance to develop interests which might not have emerged in a regular classroom, and it allowed me to see learning and life as deeply integrated. It also helped to foster the close family ties which I still enjoy...No [I wasn't given the choice to homeschool or not.]. My parents felt strongly that homeschooling was the right thing to do, and I doubt

that they would have changed their decision even if I had asked to be educated in another way. (Ms. E., questionnaire, April 12, 2012)

Ms. E. indicated she has always been a highly motivated and an excellent student. She especially appreciated that her parents gave her a variety of opportunities to expand her homeschooling experiences. She was active in community programs, homeschooling activities, and musical performances:

They [her parents] did give me a good deal of opportunity to pursue classroom experiences within a homeschooling structure, however, and I explored many classes for homeschoolers and enrichment opportunities. (Ms. E., questionnaire, April 12, 2012)

She finished her high school program well ahead of schedule and she and her mother spent a great amount of time researching colleges for Ms. E. to attend. They began focusing on schools which offered distance education programs since both parents were not enthusiastic for Ms. E. to attend a 'traditional' college venue. Ms. E. indicated she believed she would have been bored attending a traditional undergraduate school since she was more comfortable in completing courses at a faster pace.

I had finished high school early, and my parents advised me to begin college by distance learning...At the time, there were fewer distance-learning programs available, (questionnaire, April 12, 2012) ...My parents and I didn't think I should go off to college so we found this online program [Thomas Edison State College] and joked that it was 'home-college' (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012) ... It [Thomas Edison State College] was one of the longest-established and best-known options. (Ms. E., questionnaire, April 12, 2012)

Ms. E. finally pursued her bachelor's degree through an online program offered through Thomas Edison University which she fondly refers to as "Home-college." Thomas Edison's program used a variety of credits she earned through testing, college correspondence courses, experiential learning, and online or distance education college coursework.

I found the transition to college a smooth one academically. I felt that homeschooling had prepared me well to handle college work (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012) ...My undergraduate experience actually continued some elements of my homeschooling experience, since I did my undergraduate degree by distance learning while living with my parents. (Ms. E., questionnaire, April 12, 2012). However, I did take classes at local colleges and transferred them in to my distance learning program. .and I eventually did a master's degree and a Ph.D. program elsewhere. The graduate programs were both more traditional programs involving face-to-face classes, and I spent some time living near campus. (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Friends. Ms. E. had a variety of friends from church, homeschool support groups, volunteer activities, through her musical performances, and through college. Once Ms. E. began her on-campus master's degree, her group of friends expanded, as well. Ms. E.'s mother reflects:

...on campus she [Ms. E.] had all kinds of friends...One roommate was Muslim and she'd [Ms. E.] party with them [her roommates and her friends] all the time. They'd do Ramadan together. She [Ms. E.] wasn't invited to go to stuff at their mosque but they always invited her to their parties. She'd [Ms. E.] go and she'd be the only Christian in the group but she'd have fun with the group...I know some of their better friends were older people of course when [Ms. E.] was in her master's degree program. She had a lot of friends who were humanists that she really liked and she had friends who were mixed

marriage, one Jewish and one Christian which sadly ended in divorce. [Ms. E.] had a lot of Jewish friends at St Johns[College]. That kid [the Jewish friend] became a Christian eventually. He married a Christian girl, actually. (Ms. E.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Social issues. Ms. E. also faced a number of social issues. Her family did not smoke or drink and although Ms. E. knew this happened, she was not totally prepared when she was confronted with fellow students being drunk, 'stoned', or unprepared for class. Ms. E.'s mother commented on her thoughts on social issues:

Usually [Ms. E.] commented on social challenges after the fact, not necessarily during the challenge. For [Ms. E.] – her bigger challenge was kids drinking. All of her friends seemed to drink and were sometimes drunk when they came to class. I don't remember them [her children] getting drunk though. She [Ms. E.] had one drink and then didn't want anymore. Even thinking about her driving after one drink makes me nervous. (Ms. E.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Throughout the interview with Ms. E., it initially appeared Ms. E.'s parents seemed to make most of the decisions for Ms. E. However, with age and by attending college on campus, Ms. E. began to enjoy the experience of making her own decisions on such things as roommates, new friends, and personal choices.

I lived with a Christian family when getting my master's [degree] and I also had my own room one year... they [the college] were really good about putting you with someone who had some of your same interests and common standards. But interestingly enough, I had a Muslim roommate who didn't drink and [she] was very conservative and stuff. That went well. That transition went really well, we got along very well. My roommate

got married after the first year so then I got another roommate, a Christian roommate. At the time I was the only sibling to experience having a roommate and that all went well for me...I learned how to negotiate with other people and my roommates and I got along well with each other...I also began feeling more comfortable about making my own decisions and not always asking my folks what to do. (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Where is she now? Her future and post-college reflections:

Ms. E. has completed her Doctoral degree in English literature. Although she has taught elementary school and middle school English, she has also taught English courses at the university level. She is in the process of writing a book of devotions.

Case 3 – Mr. S. - The Scientist

Mr. S.'s family consists of one older sibling. Both of his parents have completed master's degrees. Mr. S. was homeschooled from grades 1-12. Before deciding to homeschool, his mother spent extensive time researching homeschooling, homeschool curriculum, the legalities of homeschooling, and deciding whether it was the best option for her family. Mr. S.'s mother reflects:

I didn't know anything about homeschooling until the kids were about 3-4 years old... then while the kids were in kindergarten I started checking more into it right after Halloween. My husband had asked me before we had kids to not do Halloween or Santa. So around Halloween when our kids were singing about witches, ghosts, and etc., I checked into it [homeschooling] more... and bought [their] curriculum. Then I came home and told my husband what I had done. He wasn't upset, because we had been talking about it [homeschooling]. Both of our moms were teachers so he didn't think it

was legal. I think once I bought the curriculum that kinda got him off the fence and I started homeschooling our two kids the following school year when our kids were in 1st grade and kindergarten. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

When asked why Mr. S. thought he was homeschooled, he stated:

[My] parents felt I would get a better education being homeschooled rather than public schooled... it had little to no impact [on me] until high school. [I was] happy about being homeschooled until 14. [I] was excluded from many opportunities because I was homeschooled. Like I was unable to play many sports, exposure to college recruiters, limited social environments and events, limited exposure to “real-world” problems and situations...I was unhappy about being homeschooled during high school. Overall the quality of education was better being homeschooled...[I] Was not really given a choice (being only 5 years old) to begin homeschooling... [I] was told I could enroll in public school during high school but [I] did not...Now, I am happy about being homeschooled and even brag about it. (Questionnaire, May 16, 2012) ...I probably would have chosen whatever to make my parents happy...I would have chosen to stay homeschooled. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Once Mr. S. entered junior high, his mother asked Mr. S. if he wanted to go to public school or continue to homeschool. This was particularly important because the local public school superintendent was not ‘homeschool friendly’. During a conversation with the parents, the superintendent stated she would have a homeschooler start 9th grade regardless if they had completed a higher grade while homeschooling. Therefore, Mr. S.’s mother told him once he started junior high school, he would have to be committed to his choice – public school or homeschool. Mr. S.’s mother states:

When they got to high school I remember asking them if they wanted to continue to homeschool or go to the local public school and they both wanted to continue homeschooling... There were times I wondered if I was doing the right thing. Some days were real challenges and other days I was so happy we were homeschooling... There are some things I'd do different, but overall I think it turned out OK. Particularly in high school years when I began looking around for other families where we could co-op together. I found a couple of families. I would teach stuff like English, driver's ed., art. Another mom taught Latin and science and math. Another mom liked history and civics. So we joined together. Then I found another larger group – a co-op – and we started going there primarily for math and science. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

High school guidance counseling. Mr. S.'s mother played an active role in preparing Mr. S. to attend college. During the interview, Mr. S.'s mother indicated she had been an Education Services Specialist with the U.S. Department of the Army where she provided educational counseling services to active duty military personnel interested in attending college. Using her past experience as a guide, she did extensive research on college tuition, college entrance requirements, college program accreditation, and the entire college application process. Mother S. knew Pennsylvania's homeschooling law 24 P.S. § 13-1327.1(c)-(d) required a specific number of credits the homeschool graduate needed to complete. These include 4 credits in English, 3 credits in math, 3 credits in science, 3 credits of social studies, and 2 credits of arts and humanities (HSLDA [website], 2012). Mr. S.'s mother began looking into ways her son could get dual high school and college credits. One of those challenges involved seeking and receiving information from public high school guidance counselors: However, this resource was

not readily available, so she talked to other homeschooling parents whose children were attending college and she reached out to junior college guidance counselors. Mr. S. remarked:

That was probably one thing that I probably missed out on. I had a lot of friends in high school who had access to school counselors and I got a lot of information from them [friends]. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Mother S. also began looking into college scholarships or other ways for paying college tuition. She indicated that a School Board member, who was also a neighbor, mentioned their local high school would pay for college classes as long as the student was considered a high school student. Using the School Board member's advice, and because Mr. S. was still considered a high school student, he was able to begin taking community college and college courses and receive dual high school/college credit. By proceeding in this manner, Mr. S. completed all of his high school credits by age 15. He and his family also received an added bonus, which included a 50% in his college tuition expenses. Mr. S. states:

I started taking college courses at a college down the road from me and also at the community college...I was still a high school student so my mom knew I could get dual credit for college and high school...I think because I was a high school student I got a lower price on the tuition which I know made my mom happy, but my dad also taught at the community college so I got some courses for free because he was part of the faculty. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

But according to Mr. S.'s mother there were challenges:

I don't think he was treated differently by the colleges, but he was treated differently by our local public school superintendent. The school had about 12 scholarships they would give to [high school] students who were taking a college course and getting both college

and high school credit. When I found out the school had several of these scholarships left, I asked if [Mr. S.] could use one. I even met with the school board and they agreed he could, but the superintendent told me, “I don’t care if I don’t use any of them [the scholarships], I won’t use one on a homeschooler.” I thought that was pretty crappy. But as it turned out the college treated [Mr. S.] the same and actually gave him the same 50% tuition reduction that they gave their other high school students. I thought that was pretty nice of them to do. (Mr. S.’s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

College selection and application process. Mr. S. began transitioning to a full-time college environment when he was still considered a high school junior. He took the SAT at the beginning of his high school junior year and did very well. Mother S. remarked:

We checked into grants and loans but my husband made too much money for us to be considered. He [Mr. S.] was given a full scholarship to Xavier College in New Orleans as part of their medical program, because of his SAT scores, but he didn’t want to go that far from home. Even though I have family who live in that area, he wanted to stay closer to home... (Mr. S.’s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

At the age of 17, Mr. S. completed his Associates degree through the dual enrollment program and simultaneously received high school and college credits. The next step was to begin researching colleges that offered the major he was interested in pursuing— Physical Therapy. He was very interested in attending schools that had a doctoral Physical Therapy degree built into the curriculum. These programs were designed to complete a bachelor’s degree in three years followed immediately by three additional years, which ultimately would earn him a doctorate degree in physical therapy. Although Mr. S. had completed his Associates degree, he still needed to provide a high school transcript to each college during his college application process:

I remember I had to submit a high school transcript when I applied to [school name withheld]. My mom went with me to the campus and provided a copy of a transcript that she had come up with...I don't think I had to do anything differently from anyone else...I had to have a certain number of credits in different [high school] subjects, but I think you had to do that because it was a Pennsylvania law and not really a college requirement. My SAT scores were automatically sent to the schools when I took the test...I remember I had to send them an application fee too, along with an essay...later I had an interview at the college... (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Mr. S.'s mother had generated a high school transcript for her son. Some college admissions officers asked her to provide additional information which clarified the transcript:

When it came time to actually apply to the colleges, we provided a high school transcript that I had developed. It didn't have grades and therefore the school asked me to write up an explanation of what types of things were included in each course credit...English 9 included grammar, reading 8 books and other pieces of literature. English 10 was British Literature, etc. They also wanted to know what type of extra-curricular activities he had been involved in and whether he had held any leadership roles...I think they may have used this information to provide him with scholarship money. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

His mom took him to visit a number of college campuses because Mr. S. wanted to live on campus and experience campus life. Mother S. also checked into military academy attendance since Mr. S. had indicated from an early age that he was interested in being in the military like his father:

We had always planned that [Mr. S.] would go to a military academy because that is what he had said he wanted from around 7 years old. He wanted to go into the medical field- so we visited several of the military academies. He decided not to go to one of the academies because they wouldn't guarantee him a medical school assignment. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Funding college. Both Mr. S. and his parents had 'sticker shock' when they found tuition to be \$30,000+ per year. Although Mr. S.'s parents had established a Pennsylvania 529 College Savings Fund for him, this yearly \$30,000+ tuition would have depleted his education fund in a couple of years. Since Mr. S. had ruled out attending a military academy, he ultimately decided to attend a state-funded university and pursue a biology degree for \$10,000 per year. He began his bachelor's degree as a 17-year-old, college junior after applying to at least two state-funded and two privately-funded universities and being accepted by all of them.

I went to [school name withheld] Community College and [school name withheld] College when I was still in high school... They seemed really interested and asked a lot of questions about what it was like being homeschooled...I applied to at least 3 colleges...I've forgotten how many exactly...I was accepted at all of them...there were others that I knew I didn't want to go to once I visited the campuses. So then I transferred to [school name withheld] University when I was 17 and was considered a [college level] junior...I had already completed all of my basic courses so I could concentrate on my major...I really wanted to go to a school that had physical therapy built into it, but I thought, 'why should I spend \$30,000 a year to get a biology degree when I can get the same degree for \$10,000 a year?' (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Mr. S's mother also validated that an education tuition fund had been established for Mr. S., but she also knew there was not enough money in the fund to cover the remaining years of college: Therefore, Mother S. came up with, what she infers, was an ingenious incentive that encouraged her son to work hard enough to get good grades:

I remember asking him how he was going to pay for school then since he no longer was going to a military academy. Some of the schools cost like \$30,000, a year and I knew we couldn't afford that...Several years ago we had also set up a Pennsylvania tuition assistance college fund for him and one for his sister to help with the tuition but it wasn't enough to cover \$30,000 a year...After visiting a lot of the colleges, [Mr. S.] finally said, "Look it doesn't make sense for me to spend \$30,000 a year for a degree in biology when I can go to [name of college] for around \$10,000 a year"...I told him I would pay his first full semester tuition. For every 'A' he made, I would pay for the next course, for every 'B' we paid 50/50, and for every 'C' he paid for the next course. His first 2-3 years, I ended up paying for the tuition, but when he transferred to [name of college] and started taking harder classes, then his grades weren't as high – plus he was living in the dorm or an apartment by that time and I think socializing got in the way of studying. Eventually, once he graduated I ended up asking him if he wanted a year's worth of his tuition reimbursement as a Christmas present or did he want something else...he always chose for his tuition debt to be his present, which I think was smart on his part...Then when he was about in his last semester before graduating I gave him the option to continue on for his master's degree and I would continue paying for it using the inheritance money my parents had left me. He didn't want to even think about staying in school but eventually he did and we made another deal about his grade, "you get an 'A' and I'll pay, you get a

‘B’ and you pay.” And he could take no breaks – not even during the summer. If he did, I told him my job of paying [his tuition] was done. He didn’t much care for the new rules until I told him that in a master’s degree program nothing lower than an ‘A’ was acceptable. (Mr. S.’s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Mr. S. also indicated he had some concerns, as well, regarding paying for college tuition and not getting into debt:

[I] never really had anyone to talk to about how to pay for school, or what to expect, really anything like that. I don’t remember us [my parents and I] talking about how we were going to pay for schools. I didn’t know about FAFSA or federal grants until like, I don’t know, about a semester or so into college and my friends were talking about it. I never had to worry about it. I guess I just thought my parents were going to pay for it, I guess. I don’t remember filling out any FAFSA forms...So I didn’t know that was how people actually got money to go to school...or they went to a cheap school close to home. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

College grades. Homeschool students were not the only ones to face challenges. Mr. S.’s mother also found there were unexpected challenges she never expected to face as a parent. These challenges involved getting her son’s grades, getting information about her son from the college, and also problems with college professors:

The one thing I did not like was that I couldn’t see his [Mr. S.] grades or get information from the school about [Mr. S.] like whether he was attending classes, etc. It didn’t make sense to me that I was paying the bill but I couldn’t get any information on him. So we had [Mr. S.] give us access to his transcript, his course work discussion areas, his professors...There was a problem with a Calculus professor who was known as not

passing kids the first time they took the class. [Mr. S.] had to have the class but he took it at least 3-4 times. At one point I told him he needed to get a Calculus tutor so he could pass the course – it was one he had to have for his major...I found out this professor failed a lot of kids in his class...I eventually went to the Dean of the Math Department – I think that was his title- and asked him if he was aware what this professor was doing. I don't know if anything was done, but [Mr. S.] finally completed the course. It was getting too frustrating, stressful, and expensive for [Mr. S.] to keep taking the same course over-and-over again. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Mr. S.'s mother expounded:

Student independent decision making. Although Mr. S. admits his mother prepared him to be independent and ultimately to be on his own, he admits he was not totally prepared for some of the challenges once he lived on campus and was on his own:

The first year was a bit of a shocker not having any experience living on my own, make decisions on when I was doing laundry, or what I was going to have to eat, or when I was going to eat. Umm, I'm sure that's probably a shock to everybody when they first go to college. They don't know what to really expect and all of a sudden they're responsible for all their decisions, and they don't have like anyone that they can really lean on except for other students and they're trying to get information from each other on what they're trying to do. But after the first year you kinda get in the swing of things...get into a routine and making sure your laundry is done and that you've eaten at least twice a day, and that kinda thing. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Roommates. Mr. S. also faced a challenge with his roommate. As a 17-year-old junior, he was placed with a much older student:

I was a transfer student...and transferred as a junior...I was only 17 so my mom really didn't want me to live off campus...I started living on campus when I was a junior. I was only 18 but because I had taken a lot of college classes when I was in high school, I was a junior. They [the college] put me in a [dorm] room with a senior who was around 21. We had nothing in common. He could go places that I legally couldn't and also he was into certain sports and gone all the time with that... That was a little disappointing, but I made other friends and hung out with them...my senior year I moved into a house with three other friends and that was pretty cool, but we all had to learn to live with each other...some of them smoked, some partied all the time, some didn't go to class, some...well, it was just different. We split up the cost of the rent by the size of the bedroom. It worked out OK...yea, they're still my friends. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

College professors and fellow students. Like most college students, Mr. S. also had to adjust to his college professors and fellow students. He found his professors and students alike were intrigued with the fact that Mr. S. had been entirely homeschooled from 1-12 grades. He also found they had much different thoughts, philosophies, and feelings on a number of social issues that were contradictory to his parents' views:

...in school in the classroom, at least where I went, they [college professors] were very, well I think it might have been policy, but they were very unbiased and I never had problems...I remember having one class at [name of a community college] where they kinda like had everyone talk about social issues and how they felt, how you made your decisions, and your beliefs and all that kind of stuff, but other than that one class ...like I

said before life is kinda like a ripple effect, it's a sum of all your life experiences. I'm sure it plays a little part. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Social issues. When asked if these different views affected him in any way, Mr. S. admitted he had to seriously think about where he stood on certain issues and realized that he had strong feelings that went against the way he had been raised by his parents:

My...world views and thoughts on social issues changed drastically during college. Being homeschooled greatly limited my social network and therefore my exposure to differing ideals. Classes, friends and teachers all impacted the way I view the world. I became much more "fact" oriented. To answer long-lived questions, I had about how the world functioned both physically and biologically. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Personal changes by student. His mother also saw a difference in her son once he started living on campus and away from home:

I don't know if it changed his life, but he started smoking and drinking which is something we don't do at home. He got that from his roommates, I think. I suspect he also experimented with drugs but he never told me about that. [Mr. S.] is very social, so I suspect he did a lot of things that he knew his dad and I, particularly me, wouldn't approve of and therefore he never shared any of that with me. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012) ...I think [Mr. S.] is more analytical now and has experienced some 'worldly' things. However, I also think he realized in college that he had to be responsible for a lot of things that I had done for him – like laundry, cooking, getting someplace on time, budgeting his money. I think he also realized that there are a lot of other opinions out there other than what he was brought up on. So I guess you

could say he has become an independent thinker. Some of those thoughts aren't necessarily comforting to me, but at least he's thinking about them and coming up with his own conclusions – that part I think is good. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 19, 2012).

Organized religion. Mr. S. has also struggled with his stand or commitment on 'organized religion.' Although he was raised by his parents to go to church, he has stated that he is a 'scientist first.' Whether for short term or long term, Mr. S.'s mother feels she has failed in ensuring her son had a firm foundation in his Christian faith. On more than one occasion her son has told her that he no longer intends to go to church, which was of great importance to this family. According to Mr. S.'s mother:

... he also stopped going to church and I remember him saying that he was a scientist and there was no scientific evidence of God or heaven and he just never went back to church after that... I hoped, and still hope, that when he got married and had kids, then maybe he would think differently about going to church once again...and about his Christian faith.

(Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Mr. S.'s mother also commented and provided her feelings and thoughts about investing in education:

I think [Mr. S.] also realizes that what I've been telling him for years is actually true: 'There's no better investment than education. They can take away your dignity, your property, your job, but once you have an education, no one can take that away from you.'...I'm comforted by the fact that I helped get him started in his education by homeschooling him. (Mr. S.'s mother, Personal communication, June 19,2012).

Where is he now? His future and post-college reflections:

Mr. S. has completed his Bachelor's degree and eventually accepted his mother's offer for her to pay for his master's degree. He has some regrets on attending a state-funded college and he stated he would definitely rethink which college he attended:

Yes...I graduated with a degree in biology from [name of state-funded college withheld] and then went out-of-state to college... I just finished my master's degree...I look around at the people who I work with. All the corporate people all graduated from MIT, or Harvard, or Berkley, or Yale or some other prestigious school. And on top of the prestigious school's name, which is worth a lot in the career field, there's also a better quality of education and they're always rated higher educationally, not because they're more expensive, but because they are actually delivering better education than small, state funded schools because they're able to pay for better professors who are more reputable. But I also missed out on, I definitely missed out on that sort of networking...So looking back on it, I think I would've had way more opportunities and I think I would have had an even better education, and I think I'd be making more money if I had gone to a more prestigious school. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Case 4 – Mr. H. - The Future Engineer

Mr. H. comes from a family consisting of both parents and three siblings. This student is the second eldest child and has always been homeschooled. The father works in the computer technology field and the mother is a fulltime homeschooling mom. The family supplemented their homeschooling curriculum by attending homeschooling co-ops, meeting with other homeschooling families for fieldtrips, and in encouraging more 'hands-on' experiential learning

opportunities. Mr. H. is soft-spoken, respectful, polite, and very out-going. Although he has not completed his homeschooling program, he has already thought about attending college and has decided on his college major in the engineering field. When asked why he thought he was homeschooled, he stated:

My mom had already been homeschooling my older sister, so I guess it was just taken for granted that I would be [homeschooled] too...It worked out pretty good. We did a lot of “hands on” stuff that my mom liked for us to do, and we got to do a lot of extra stuff that we wanted to do too...I liked it, I guess, but then again I only knew homeschooling and thought that was the way it was. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Mr. H.’s mother admits she was very hesitant and unsure of her teaching abilities when she first started homeschooling. However, her sister and her Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator (see Chapter Two – Definitions) were readily available to provide her guidance and encouragement, particularly when she wasn’t sure she was doing the right thing for her children:

We started putting [oldest child] in preschool and kindergarten in Christian school. God was tugging me in direction of homeschooling. My sister, whose kids are 10 years older, she homeschooled a couple of years in Texas - that started the idea. I started looking into it [homeschooling]... I was concerned about my children... (Mr. H.’s mother, personal communication, May 7, 2012)

While in high school, Mr. H. had his Pennsylvania homeschool evaluator help him determine if he was interested in attending college or a vocational-technical program. Neither of his parents had attended a 4-year college or university, but with guidance from his homeschool evaluator, Mr. H. began realizing the advantages of attending and graduating from college. Eventually, he also realized he was interested in an analytical field like his dad, but he gradually

became more interested in the engineering field. Although he has not completed high school, he has applied to both a community college and a 4-year, state-funded college close to his home. He knows he will be accepted into his local community college, but he is still waiting to hear if he has been accepted to the 4-year, state-funded college. If he is not accepted to the 4-year university, he plans on attending the local community college and then transferring to a senior college to complete his bachelor's degree.

I knew I wanted to go to a school that was close to home...I looked at other schools, but they were just too far away...so I applied to [college name withheld] Community College and also to [4-year state-funded college name withheld] ...I wasn't interested in going any place else... I knew the schools that I applied to had good programs in [my major] ...I haven't decided yet which college I'll attend... I'll wait and see which one I will actually attend...It probably makes sense to start at the 4-year university, but I think it will be cheaper if I go to a community college first...But I plan on getting my degree in Engineering. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Mr. H.'s homeschool evaluator has been instrumental in helping him navigate through the college application and acceptance process. Each year, during her Pennsylvania mandated homeschool evaluation process, she would ask Mr. H. to think about careers he was interested in pursuing. She had him research various careers and the local colleges that offered those college majors which supported his future plans. She also had him use an online, SAT preparatory training program and advised him to take the SAT in the spring of his junior year of high school. At the time of this study, Mr. H. did not know how he did on his SAT, nor if his scores would be high enough for entrance into either college he was interested in attending. He also was not aware if he needed to have different scores on his SAT since he was a homeschooling graduate:

I heard there were some schools that want higher scores from homeschoolers...no one mentioned I had to have any specific SAT scores...I guess they'll accept my scores just like everyone else. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Dual enrollment. Unlike the other student participants, Mr. H. was the only participant still considered per Pennsylvania's public school standards to be a high school student. With the advice from his homeschool evaluator, Mr. H. started attending a local community college as a high school senior. Mr. H.'s homeschool evaluator thought it made sense to use college level course credits for both high school credits and college credits. Both Mr. H. and his parents thought it made economic sense to try a community college through the dual high school/college enrollment program. The local public high school has an agreement with the community college that they will pay one-third of the tuition, the student pays one-third of the tuition, and the community college pays the remaining one-third.

Beginning the summer prior to his senior year of high school, Mr. H. concentrated taking only one math or science course each semester from the community college. This relieved his mother from teaching these advanced level subjects. So far, he has found junior college courses to be very challenging.

Limited themes. At the time of his interview, Mr. H. had not experienced any of the pre-college challenges that other student participants in this study had experienced. Compared to the other student participants, his choice of college was simple - he chose the local community college because it was the closest one to his home and because the college accepted students who were still in high school. He did not have to address funding because, as previously mentioned, he was considered a high school student and therefore only paid one-third the college tuition. He did not have to deal with a college roommate since he remained living at home. And he wasn't

confronted or bombarded with social issues outside the classroom, especially since he didn't remain on campus to socialize after his class was over. However, Mr. H. did have at least one challenge. The interaction he had with fellow college students, professors, and even the college staff was limited. Therefore, finding study partners or someone to call for homework assistance was not as desirable as he would have liked.

Where is he now? His future and post-college reflections:

Although Mr. H. did not have any pre-college, during college, or post college reflections at the time of his interview, he plans to finish taking all his pre-requisite courses through his local community college. Once he has completed his Associate's degree, he will apply for entrance into a 4-year university close to his home. This will allow him to continue living at home, thus saving room-and-board expenses. He is working directly with the community college counselor to make sure all his college course credits will transfer into a Department of Engineering program where he plans on completing a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, as well as, working during the summers as an Engineering intern.

Case 5 – Mr. N. - The Computer Scientist

Mr. N. is the second eldest of four children. One parent is a medical professional and although the mother holds an advanced degree in religious studies, she divides her time between community volunteer work and homeschooling her children. The mother has been the primary homeschooling parent. Mr. N. is very confident, articulate, and easily relays his thoughts and ideas, although he admits there are times when he feels awkward when talking with others.

The interview was done over the telephone. Initially Mr. N. did not think he could remember much about his college application or transitioning process, but as the interview proceeded, he was able to recall additional pieces of information. He indicated that perhaps his

mother could fill in the sketchy information that he was unsure of. When asked why he thought he was homeschooled, he stated:

My understanding is that I was homeschooled so that my parents could pass their values and beliefs on to me, and so that they could be closely involved in my education, to train me and prepare me for life as well as they could...I was occasionally frustrated with not being able to slide through the cracks...Looking back, I see that as a huge advantage, but as a young kid, it definitely annoyed me...I was never interested in going to “outschool”, as we called it. If I had been, my parents might have offered me the chance. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Likewise, Mr. N.’s mother was convinced homeschooling was the most appropriate and best choice for her entire family. She had already begun teaching her oldest child, so it was an unspoken and natural decision to homeschool Mr. N., as well. She is adamant that parents, and not the federal or state government system, are responsible for rearing, teaching, and training their own children. Therefore, this family is very dedicated in preparing their children to become productive citizens within their community. This preparation includes having their children volunteer in their community, participating in enrichment programs which will enhance their children’s interests and awareness of potential careers, and in completing high school as quickly as possible so they can attend – and finish - college on an aggressive timetable. Mr. N. commented:

I was occasionally frustrated with not being able to slide through the cracks – my parents held us to a high standard, and with a class size of one, it's hard to hide behind curves or averages. Looking back, I see that as a huge advantage, but as a young kid, it definitely annoyed me...It meant that I had plenty of time to devote to extracurricular activities, and

that I was able to apportion my time effectively – subjects I did well in, I could move through quickly, while ones I found difficult could be adjusted to my pace. I was accelerated in math, until I hit algebra, which was a brick wall. Had I been in a standard classroom, I would likely have been labeled incapable of learning math, but instead, I was given the chance to do it repeatedly without the stigma of failure, and eventually became quite fluent in mathematics and technical fields, earning my bachelor's degree in computer science...On the whole, I enjoyed homeschooling immensely. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Mr. N.'s parents had provided a number of community volunteering and other enriching experiences for their children. They invested in music lessons (piano, flute, some string instruments), homeschooling co-op programs, and extensive vacations with all of their children. Mr. N. was interested in the fine arts, and particularly in art as a potential college major and career:

Usually you start at age 9 or 10 drawing, but I was looking at it, well I could get a music degree and I know I'm actually pretty good at that, but how would I pay for anything when I graduated. How could I make a living? (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Mr. N. expanded his interests and then moved from drawing to cartooning and he ultimately transitioned from cartooning to computer animation. However, he soon realized he was not very good at computer animation:

In the middle of high school, I was about 15 or 16; I was actually pretty interested in computer animation. That's what I thought I was going to do. When I was younger, I had saved up a bunch to buy a relative low end modeling animation package. I tried to

teach myself the projects. But one of the things I figured out after several years of working on things, I thought, 'Huh, I'm not really very good at this.' It was fun and valuable and it actually helped me in the degree that I ended up in, because I learned a lot of practical details of working in coordinates and green space and a lot of the details in how computers tend to deal in self base so when I took an algorithms class in college I had more revelations on 'Oh, now I see how and why it works that way.' Because I had those theoretical underpinnings. So for me, it was a practical decision in high school. I'm not very good in the arts side. I guess I could've learned, but I don't think I would've been competitive in the art field, and once again because I was interested in the computer arts and design, it was very, very competitive...And I thought, 'Well, I spent a lot of time in computers and on the graphic side and teaching myself to program, and I like what I've done so far and I know it's a pretty good degree in terms of making a living, so I guess I'll start at that.' And it happened to work out really well. I enjoy the work now. I didn't have a natural bent towards it...it was just - 'Let me try it.' (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Mr. N.'s older sibling had already begun attending college, so he recalled watching and listening as his parents helped his older sister prepare for college attendance. He knew his parents would encourage him to live at home rather than on a college campus. He also knew he would attend a local community college first and then transfer to a local 4-year degree-granting university. He was not interested in exploring the advantages or disadvantages of one college over another, nor was he interested in applying to or visiting a lot of college campuses:

I chose my schools mainly on cost, and also based on location (near my family and friends) ...I only applied to one [college] and got it...I believe I received an excellent

education for a fairly reasonable cost, and am very glad I attended where I did. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

However, when it came to working with the college during the application process, he recalls the process being ‘bumpy’ because the Community College’s Admissions Officer was not quite sure how to evaluate the high school transcript his mother had developed:

I then transferred to [University]...I think it was the Admissions Office that told me about a check list that was online...[college name withheld] is in a consortium of schools that makes it easier to transfer to...so it was pretty easy...I had to submit my junior college transcript to [name of college]...all my courses were accepted because [name of college] was in a group of schools that accepted each other’s courses for transfer...but when I applied to the junior college I don’t think they had a problem taking my transcript that my mother made, but I think it was a learning process on their part...I did have to fill in another application form and pay another admissions fee...but I didn’t have to submit my SAT scores again. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Networking. Mother N. networked with other homeschooling parents who attended the same homeschool co-op she did. Through this network she discovered how other families determined whether or not their children went away to college or started college at a local community college, whether it was best for them to live on campus although they lived locally, and the various ways each family paid for college. This family does not believe in going into debt while their children attend college. Although they have not saved or pre-planned how they were going to pay for college expenses, Mr. N. knew he needed to be a ‘good steward’ of his parent’s finances:

I hung out with some guys that were living on campus in the dorms. They were very nice rooms but one of the things that I was struck by was that it doubled their tuition to stay in little apartments on campus. They were very nice apartments; better than most apartments I've seen. But at the time I was thinking, 'You're paying as much for where you're staying as tuition, and tuition isn't cheap. Why would you do that unless you had to?'...I thought it was irresponsible. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

College testing resources. Mr. N.'s mother also encouraged that Mr. N. explore and use a variety of resources which would reduce the amount of time, as well as, the number of credits that would need to be taken in a college classroom. Therefore, Mr. N. was advised to take as many college level tests as possible in order to replace in-classroom attendance. According to Mr. N.:

I think that was one of dad's ideas. I don't remember how he learned about them [CLEP tests]. I think when I was 16 he came home with a CLEP book and plopped it down and said, 'OK you're going to take some of these - and we'll take some of these practice tests and see which ones you're good at.' I remember at one point we talked to someone and we said, 'It's a great bargain for 50 bucks a test so you can try it, see how well you do and if you do well enough, a lot of colleges will give you credit and if you didn't, you get the relative book, study it and try it again and worse case you're out 100-150 bucks if you take it 3 times. And after that time if you don't do well, you just try taking the course.'

But that was how that went in my recollection. So... (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

College attendance. Mr. N. had completed his Associate's degree from a community college and had applied as a transfer student to another state-funded college. He had no problem

being accepted into the state-funded college since it was part of a consortium of colleges which readily accepted college credits towards their bachelor's degree. Mr. N. submitted the necessary paperwork to transfer from one school's program to another:

I had to submit my junior college transcript to [name of college] ...all my courses were accepted because [name of college] was in a group of schools that accepted each other's courses for transfer...I did have to fill in another application form and pay another admissions fee...but I didn't have to submit my SAT scores again...I also had to send an official [college] transcript. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Determining college major. When asked what assistance or guidance his folks give him whether to go to college or which major to pursue, Mr. N. remarked:

You know, I don't remember that much input from them directly. I have the sense, but it's not based on actual dialogue, but just recollection or think now looking back on it, but may not have really been the case, but I have a vague input that I had from dad was, 'You know you're a guy and at some point you're probably going to want to get married and you're going to have to provide for a family. Look at practical degrees.' He didn't really pitch computer science through. That actually came from when I was a teenager...So I had some input from dad, but I don't recall much of his input. Dad was pretty much hands off, not in a bad way but a good way, he would give you advice if you were looking for it and if he really thought you needed advice and didn't know what to do, he would give you some. But he would leave it to you to stumble through life and learn on your own. I know he thinks that tends to be more affective that if people tend to listen to input more often if it's given less often. If you're being around your ideas of your

parents and what they think you should do, I think dad thought that wouldn't be very effective to make us tend to listen. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Personal values and beliefs. While Mr. N. respected his parent's input and the values they imparted to him, he also felt he was capable of making some of his own decisions. He felt his parents had given him the tools to analyze the situation and make decisions based not on their own values, but on his own values and beliefs. He also sought and began relying on the input of his friends:

Um, I think mostly I dealt with them [decision making] myself. I feel like I probably did talk to mom and dad about some of these things occasionally, but not a whole lot I don't think. They were more towards the 'slow move towards independence from high school into college.' I think at that point I had internalized my world view and knew what I thought and this was sorta, well, I was fairly vested at that point in working things out myself...maybe I was arrogant. But I didn't feel like I needed to get answers from them. I knew they had explained what they believed and I knew what I believed and we were pretty much in the same corner and a lot of it was just details of everyday life... I may have talked with [a friend] ...I've known him for years and years and years...I can't point to specific conversations...And I also know that, um, on a few occasions, with some of the guys I went to school with, we'd discuss some of the more philosophical questions about topics, and we'd talk about them. There was also one guy and he was a Christian, we would actually talk by message a lot late at night. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Religion. Although Mr. N. was raised as an evangelical Christian, he was taught to appreciate and respect believers of other faiths. He was confronted with his thoughts and beliefs

during a college course he took, which ultimately gave him a different perspective on the Muslim culture, faith, and people:

I found...a really interesting class...in *Islamic Artwork and Architecture*, and obviously a lot of the people signing up for the class were clearly Muslims and also clearly with different backgrounds and sects, if you will. We had one guy who wanted to be pretty serious – he believed in the doctrine pretty seriously, but couldn't put it into practice very well. We had another guy who practiced daily prayer, but was less concerned with the theological underpinning, if you will. That class was probably the one that affected my view on social issues, just because actually being in a course with Muslims and actually hearing their perspectives on the history and how the culture was developed, because obviously you're doing a lot with the development of religion when you're looking at artwork and architecture. I think the one place where, I wouldn't call it 100% transition, but I was already aware that in practice, not all Muslims actually think that Jihad is necessary. I got a lot more grasp of the Muslim world and I have more, I guess I'm more comfortable around Muslims now than I was, because of that class...I certainly admit there are a lot of people in the world who want to kill Americans because of their beliefs as Muslims. But there are a lot of people who are pretty embarrassed that there are people of their religion who want to kill folks because they believe differently. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Although he enjoyed taking the *Islamic Artwork and Architecture* course, and had many interesting discussions with his newfound Muslim friends, he still held fast to his Christian faith. When asked if he has become more accepting to the Muslim religion, Mr. N. responded:

I don't really say accepting, because I still don't think their world view is actually valid on a fundamental level. I guess I would say it became less of an unknown and less scary. I was better able to deal with and became more comfortable in realizing people are going to disagree with me and it's not, you know, the thought doesn't make them any less human, I guess. Just because someone says 'I'm Muslim', you don't really know and can't know what they really think just like someone saying 'I'm Christian' – you can't tell really what they think about the world. It's not that simple. I got how much orthodox and nonorthodox Muslim has gotten over the years. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Professing personal Christian faith. Mr. N. admitted he never felt embarrassed about being a Christian. His friends eventually realized he [Mr. N.] was strong in his Christian faith and beliefs and they began to respect him for his faith, just like he respected them. Mr. N.'s mother commented:

[Mr. N.] had a lot of friends that were "post Christian" – brought up as Christians as little kids and then when they went to college they didn't want anything to do with Christianity. They rejected their faith. A number of them actually appreciated [Mr. N.'s] elasticity and a couple of them he might have made a difference. I don't know. He just tried to love them where they were and they were sort of shocked by that and sort of like it. (Mr. N.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Classroom interactions and discussions. There were times when Mr. N. would want to interject his thoughts into the classroom conversation and discussion, but he had experienced first-hand that professors and students alike did not take him seriously. He also felt his thoughts were not valued by others particularly once they knew he was a Christian:

Generally, I got the feeling that they thought, yea he's got a valid point. I was very hypersensitive and aware of the fact, particularly in the computer science fields, Christians have a reputation of not having basic reasoning and therefore being very stupid. I was often very quiet and careful not to say anything that would have the remotest chance of having people think I was dumb and hadn't thought things through... Most of the guys weren't open to big world differences. I remember having an argument once about, um from a species survival standpoint, whether promiscuous mating would help to ensure with the survival of human kind. I argued that I didn't think it was. And in that particular occasion there were a couple of folks who disagreed with me, and looking back I would say I probably didn't make a very good argument from an academic perspective. Um but...there was definitely a backlash against me on that occasion. Apart from that incident, the general reaction I think others thought I had made a fair point and had given it some thought about the issue. There was one guy who professed to be an atheist and had a very consistent set of morals that fit into him being an atheist, but he knew what his "world view" implied and he lived by it. Um, I remember he said to me, 'You're obviously a Christian, but you also think very carefully about things. How's that work?' I remember thinking that he may have thought, 'I can respect you and your opinions intellectually. How does that fit with the fact that you self-identify as a Christian?' He saw that as an anomaly. So in that case I saw that as a case as 'Hey, [Mr. N.] can think and he identifies himself as a Christian.' (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Government's involvement in social issues. Mr. N. was also confronted with other political social issues that seemed to challenge his way of thinking. One area concerned the

government's involvement and obligation to provide birth control, abortions, as well as in supporting unwed mothers:

I remember in one English class, we had a discussion that was fairly heated once, that was, I guess it was a combination of birth control, abortion, and sort of social support for unwed mothers. That conversation I mostly sat and listened. I may have had 1-2 comments, but they were definitely as a hard line conservative. That was a summer session class at [community college], so it was a wide range of life experiences and political perspectives, because you had everything from the high school students going back to get a degree so they could get some real work; you had 1 or 2 hardline conservatives there; you had quiet, reserved introverts like I was at the time, that would add something they thought relevant, but didn't really feel like putting their feelings on display...There were a couple of folks who just thought, that's the government's job to help people solve their problems...I personally don't think it's the government's problem. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Where is he now? His future and post-college reflections:

Mr. N. has graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science. He still lives at home, but has established his own computer programming and web design business. He has partnered with a friend in order to grow his business and feels he is successful in running his business. He has no plans at this time in pursuing a master's degree since he does not feel additional education will enhance his current skill sets nor help his business grow.

Yes...I have a Bachelor's degree in computer science from [name of state-funded college withheld] ...but I really have no need to get a master's degree...I gave some thought to doing a master's [degree]. My general reaction to it, and I thought I'd do pretty well in a

master's program, but what I mostly came back to was, I've been given enough of a tool in computer science. When the need arises, I can sit down with algorithms and a piece of paper ...and research says, and see if the research can actually help me in solving a particular problem that I'm trying to solve. As a programmer if you can do that, even if you're not particularly proficient at it, you can work your way through what you're working on. That will help you to handle the job in computer science. I really enjoyed the academic side of computer science while I was in school, it was probably one of the better parts that I could do, but from a pragmatic aspect, I never felt a strong need to go back for career purposes. There's, I'm not a serious trend follower in industry, but computer science is one of the odd ball fields where you will occasionally find someone who is against people with more advanced degrees like in software development, but I've heard people express that people with advanced computer science degrees have been spending their time doing academic research which is difficult, but actually doesn't have anything to do with developing software...I just want to concentrate on expanding my business right now. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Case 6 – Ms. L. - The Social Worker

Ms. L. comes from a large, extended family of seven consisting of both parents, her maternal grandmother, and four younger siblings. The father is a master carpenter and although the mother was a medical laboratory technician, she currently concentrates raising and homeschooling her family. Ms. L. is the first child in her family, and one of the first grandchildren, to attend college. She is passionate about working with the elderly and she worked in nursing homes as part of her high school, homeschooling curriculum. When asked why Ms. L. thought she was homeschooled, she stated:

I don't think my mom thought she would end up homeschooling all of us, but I think she started checking into it when she heard some other moms talking about it at church. She didn't think she had enough schooling to be able to do it, but once she started homeschooling me, she found she liked having control over what we were learning...I liked being able to have some control over my day and what I did, but that was when I was older, I don't think I even thought about whether I was happy or not being homeschooled, but looking back on it, I liked being home during the day with my mom and family. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. L.'s mother commented that sending her children to public or private schools was "not even considered." She admitted, however, that even if they had wanted to send their children to a private school, they just could not afford it:

We're in a good school district, so I struggled a little with the choice of homeschooling versus going to the public school ...Private school was never an option- just too expensive for us... Looking back on it, I think we made the right choice, because I was able to concentrate on making sure [Ms. L.] and the other kids really learned the stuff I wanted them to learn... (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Ms. L. did not remember discussing college attendance with her mom or dad. Since neither of her parents attended college, she had no family experience to rely on when considering college attendance. However, she does recall being with a group of her homeschooled friends when they were discussing their future plans:

I remember a group of us were out doing something together and we just started talking about what we wanted to do when we were no longer in high school. Most of my friends already knew they were going to college and even had an idea what school they wanted

to go to...It made me start thinking about what I was going to do...I just never really thought about it [my future] – I was just trying to get by on my schooling, my job [in the nursing home], and the time I was spending with my boyfriend and my family. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

In her senior year of high school, Ms. L. began seriously thinking about her future. She had access to a local community college where she could attend and receive dual high school and college enrollment status. If she had taken this route, her local public school district would have paid a portion of the college tuition and the community college would have paid a portion, leaving her with paying only one fourth the tuition costs. However, she determined it was really too late in the school year for her to take full advantage of the dual enrollment program.

She also talked to her boyfriend's mother, who was a college graduate, to find out what options were open for consideration: attending college, determining which school to apply, deciding what major course(s) of study would be a 'good fit' for her, as well as applying for scholarships, student loans, work-study programs, and other means of paying for college

However, once Ms. L. firmly decided she was going to attend college, she began to actively and aggressively complete a number of pre-requisite steps needed to research, consider, apply, and to fund her college attendance. I asked Ms. L. a probing question, "Did you feel you were treated differently or had to submit additional forms during your application process because you were a homeschooled student or because you were applying so late in the school year?" Ms. L. reflected:

No, I don't think it really came up that I was homeschooled...They [the college registrar] didn't even comment on the transcript that my mom and I developed because it didn't have grades...Anyway, I don't remember if it had grades or not...they [the colleges]

seemed to be more interested in whether I had submitted all the forms. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. L. was also asked how she determined which schools she wanted to apply for enrollment and acceptance consideration and what types of forms she was required to submit.

Ms. L. indicated:

...Even though [college name withheld] Community College was close by, I never considered going there... I applied to two schools as a freshman...that were known to have a good social work program and... I had to submit an application and a fee...I don't remember how much that was but it seemed they wouldn't let me attend their school unless they had those two things...They also wanted SAT scores since I hadn't attended a community college. I think if I had already attended a community college, I probably wouldn't have had to submit the SAT scores, much less take the [SAT] test...I didn't hear anything from the schools until I had given them everything they asked for...I got accepted pretty quickly after I turned in everything...I got letters from both saying I was accepted... but I really wanted to go to [name of college withheld] because my boyfriend was already going there. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Paying for college became a major stressor for Ms. L., particularly since her parents had not made prior plans for Ms. L. actually going to college, much less how her college tuition, books, as well as her housing, food, and other living expenses would be paid.

I don't think my family had a plan for how college was going to be paid, so I did some research, put in the FAFSA form, and applied for scholarships...I knew it was going to be expensive because I was going to live on campus or in an apartment too...I was really

late in the game in getting started with that whole process. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. L. knew her parents would not be able to afford to contribute financially, so Ms. L. researched college loans, scholarships, and college grants.

By the time I knew for sure that I was going to college, it was like, too late for me to put in for any of the PELL grant applications...I think that's what they were called...My only option was to apply for student loans based on financial need...I was given some money but I also had to work while I was in college...It was tough some semesters! Looking back on it, I'm not sure how I did it [attending college full time and working] and I wasn't sure how I was going to pay back those loans...working in nursing homes or in the sociology field doesn't really pay much, you know. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. L.'s mother admits she and her husband had not prepared for any of their children to attend college. Since Ms. L. is their oldest child, and the first to go to college, it proved to be a challenging and grueling learning experience for the entire family. Part of that learning experience was understanding the vocabulary and terms used by college admissions and registrar offices, uncovering resources that proved most helpful as they navigated through the college transition experience, and reaching out to other families who had already gone through the college application, acceptance, and transitioning processes.

We didn't plan for college because we [my husband and I] didn't go that route. [Ms. L.] did all the work to get her college paid for with loans, working several jobs and saving because she had a couple of roommates...I don't think she really had a problem transitioning to college because she already knew kids that were going to the school

where she would be and I guess they helped her get used to the campus. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Additionally, Ms. L.'s mother remarked that neither she nor her husband had attended college. She had no family experience to rely on either which could give Ms. L. any help in considering which college to attend, how to apply for college, being accepted to college, or transitioning from home to a college campus. Ms. L.'s mother knew that eventually all her children would leave home, but with Ms. L. it was an emotional experience for both herself and her husband:

[Ms. L.] knew what [career] she wanted to go into and she actually did all the work to see which schools she wanted to go to...I had to let her do this on her own because, well since I didn't go to college, I wasn't sure how to help her get started. We couldn't really help much except give our support...we were just so happy she had decided she wanted to go to college...but I had to just let her do what she needed to do when it came to her college stuff...But I can tell you, we [her husband and herself] couldn't believe it was happening so soon. We just weren't prepared for her being on her own. We had to just trust that she would be OK being away from home. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Ms. L. had some of the same experiences and challenges as the other homeschooled students involved in this study. She came from a large family so she was familiar with sibling discourse and rivalry and sharing bedrooms and living space. She knew she'd be able to adapt to getting along with her roommates. However, she was not completely prepared for the strong resistance she received from fellow students on several socially sensitive or politically charged topics, particularly in her social work and sociology courses:

I had some challenges with some of the kids in my classes...I realized they didn't believe in many of the same things I did and they certainly didn't want to hear what I thought about certain things...it was like I was expected to conform to them and accept the way they were and what they thought, rather than them accepting me for me. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Likewise, Ms. L.'s mother commented on her concern, too. However, she felt confident that her daughter was going to remain faithful in her beliefs. She also knew her daughter's personality would not allow her to quickly or readily change her personal convictions.

I had no worries that [Ms. L.] would be able to keep her faith and her convictions...She's pretty strong, what's it also called? Strong-willed? But some of the things she told me were going on at school really shocked me. I just had no idea because it just wasn't something that went on at home or even with her friends. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Overcoming social pressure from fellow students. Ms. L. admits she could have taken a firmer stand on those social topics in which she had strong convictions or opinions. However, it took only one time, after interjecting her Christian based ideology in one of her classes and subsequently feeling strong negative peer-pressure that she realized:

...it just wasn't worth it. I knew they'd never understand, nor did they want to understand, any other view than what they probably got from the news, their friends, and maybe even from their families or teachers...I just felt if it was a Christian view, they wanted no part of it...maybe because it wasn't considered 'cool' to think for yourself or take a stand on something you were passionate about, even if it wasn't the same thought as the person sitting next to you...I don't know, I just decided, 'Let me just get through

this class. I know how I feel and I know why I feel that way and I know they are not going to make me change my mind just to be part of the ‘group-think’ mentality’...I did have one girl tell me after class one day that she appreciated me giving my side of the story. She thought it was good that I didn’t back down from what the others were saying in class and that I just didn’t give in to what they were saying, even though some of the other students got really hostile with me during the discussion. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Remaining true to personal convictions. Ms. L. believes her religious faith was “tested” during these times. She also believes it made her even stronger in her Christian faith and convictions particularly on a number of volatile, social topics. She stated:

I think all of that just was preparing me to deal with families of the elderly patients that I would deal with as a nursing home director. I learned how to keep from letting certain situations get out-of-hand, particularly when you’re dealing with a family member who either doesn’t understand why the nursing home does certain things or why their parent is not getting [or getting] certain treatments...It also helped me be able to deal with how to handle financial stuff and even in preparing families for the imminent death of their parent...stuff that I would have to discuss with the families and [that] could get very emotional. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Where is she now? Her future and post-college reflections:

Ms. L. has graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work with a concentration in Gerontology. She continues to work in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and she spent a short period of time as a case worker for troubled youth. She has had no problem finding employment and has been in ideal situations where the “job has found her.” In each situation, she

has been able to advance herself, not only financially, but enhancing her skills, experiences, and in building her competencies to better serve her passion, the elderly.

Yes...I decided to go to [name of state-funded college] University and went there all four years...[I] got my degree in social work...I'll probably get a master's degree later, but right now I just want to practice the stuff I learned in my classes...One day maybe I'll even open up my own chain of nursing homes or maybe a combination of nursing home-assisted living homes...I've really gotten very familiar with state laws and requirements, so I think I'd be able to set up my own businesses one day...Who knows? (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. L.'s mother's final comments on her daughter's future plans:

[Ms. L.] is the first child to go to college. I knew she would go into a field helping others. She's always been passionate towards older people...and she'll be really good at it...Even her boyfriend's mother says she'd welcome [Ms. L.] into her family [as a daughter-in-law] since she knows she'd be treated well in whatever nursing home she was put into and that [Ms. L.] was the head of. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Case 7 – Ms. M. - The Graphic Artist

Ms. M. is a member of a large family comprised of both of her parents, as well as, two older and one younger sibling. The father is in the healthcare profession and although the mother has completed a master's degree, she has not worked outside the home since her oldest child started school. All of the children have been homeschooled from kindergarten through high school and given a wide assortment of enrichment opportunities, community volunteer choices, and participating in national homeschooling conference attendance. Ms. M. is a quiet, respectful, and very confident young woman. Ms. M. asked her mother to participate in the oral

interview in order to provide some background information that Ms. M. thought she may not know or remember. When asked why she was homeschooled, Ms. M. states:

I was homeschooled because my brother and sister were... I just thought that was how it was and what we did...and there was never any choice that I can remember on whether I would continue homeschooling...it's just the way it was with my family. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M.'s mother expanded her daughter's statement:

...it was a done deal for our entire family. We decided we were in it for the long haul and no longer thinking about it from year by year, but rather to the end [high school graduation] ...I made that transition for our family...So when [Ms. M.] was ready for school, there was no doubt that she would also be homeschooled along with the others. (Mr. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

During high school, Ms. M.'s homeschooling program included writing a number of research papers. Each year she was encouraged to pick her own research topics. During her junior year of high school, she chose to write about the pros and cons of preparing and eventually going to college. She intended to submit her paper to a homeschooling magazine so it could perhaps help other homeschool students get through the college application process. Although she did not submit her paper for publication, she did present it during her homeschool co-op English class. Ms. M. reflects back to her college choices experiences:

I had to do a lot of research to find schools that had a program in [her major area of study]. My family was concerned about the cost so I kept that in mind too as I looked into schools ... I applied as a freshman and come to think about it, I found out that even though community college would probably be cheaper, I knew they didn't have

the type of major I wanted, so I concentrated on 4-year colleges and technical schools...I really didn't want to have to take all the basic stuff over again that I had taken in high school, so I took a lot of CLEP tests and stuff...I just wanted to get right in to taking the courses in graphic arts and design. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M. was asked a probing question about her college application process and whether she felt during her college transition period, she had to submit the same types of application forms required by all other college applicants.

Yea, I think I submitted the same things as everybody else...I had a transcript but with no grades on it... I don't remember if we had to turn in a high school transcript or not... I wasn't told I had to have higher test scores...in fact, I went ahead and took the GED...I think I remember my scores were pretty high on my SATs and my GED...I just received a letter of acceptance, maybe based on my SAT scores? I don't really remember them mentioning anything about my GED scores or even asking if I had completed a Pennsylvania homeschool diploma; but to be honest, I think my acceptance was based more on my graphic portfolio and samples of my art work rather than anything else... I had to show them some of my art work and graphic stuff. I think they looked at that more than they did anything else that I gave them...and that's what they used to decide if I would be accepted into their program...I think it was pretty competitive. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M.'s mother also additional comments regarding their preparation for Ms. M. entering college:

[Ms. M.] and I decided that maybe she needed to just take the GED. I knew she'd be able to pass it with no problem. So that's what she did...It turned out to really be a waste of time, but we didn't know that at the time. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

When asked if Ms. M. visited a number of college campuses during her transition and college application period, she commented:

I only seriously considered and looked at one school, because that is where I knew I always wanted to go. It was close to home so I knew I could live at home and save money...If I hadn't been accepted into that school, I'm not sure what I would've done...but I'm sure I would've found another school. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Like most families, college tuition and other college-associated expenses were of concern. This family was no exception. Although her older children had already attended college, Ms. M.'s mother was baffled at the hassles homeschooled students still faced during the college application and acceptance process, as well as, the college living and dormitory expenses. She interjected:

[Ms. M.] had such a hassle with the school because she hadn't completed a [Pennsylvania recognized] high school diploma program, so she and I decided that maybe she needed to just take the GED. I knew she'd be able to pass it with no problem. So that's what she did...Ms. M. found a school nearby which saves us a lot of money since she lives at home. Thank goodness, she can live at home. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M. further commented on the multiple avenues she and her parents took to help defray the cost of her tuition:

My folks didn't want us to have a lot of debt going to college, or really have student loans, so I was glad I got the help [scholarships]...I think I would've still gone to that school even if I hadn't gotten some of the tuition paid for...but I don't really remember us talking about how we were going to pay for it. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Roommates. While attending college, Ms. M. kept the same roommate during all four years. It became part of the family's inside joke how Ms. M. could manage to keep the same roommate and not even ask to live with someone else:

Ha! This became the family joke. I sometimes got along with my roommate and sometimes didn't, because my roommate was the one I had had for years...my sister. I either stayed with her or I guess the only other choice would've been to move to the basement. UGH! (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Friends. Since Ms. M. continued to live at home while attending college, Ms. M.'s mother knew the types of friends who remained 'in the picture' too. She encouraged all of her children's friends to spend time with Ms. M.'s family and she provided a variety of activities for the young people to do during their visit.

They [Ms. M. and her siblings] had a lot of "humanist" friends and stuff that they hung around with. They had a lot of Christian friends that have become life-long friends now, too, that they keep in touch with. When they were in school they kinda fraternized across the board is my general impression. I know without having actually been there [on the college campus], they had a lot of different kinds of friends...We encouraged all our kids

to bring their friends home...and we had a lot of fun interacting with them...It also gave us the opportunity to minister to some kids and see where they really were in some of their thinking. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Social issues. Both Ms. M. and her mother feel they were well prepared to deal with all kinds of controversial issues that Ms. M. may have faced while attending college. Mr. M.'s mother felt she had given her daughter the means to think independently for herself, feel confident in taking a stand, and in resolving problems. Ms. M.'s mother specifically commented on the Terry Schiavo case where pro-life and end-of-life issues were discussed in Ms. M.'s classes:

[Ms. M.] did tell us about feeling alone in class. She took a stand on the Terry Schiavo incident and she took a stand against pulling the plug on her. She was the only one in her class, and maybe one other person in class who was pro-life...She thought the [other kids'] values were so different. I think it was in a speech class that this occurred, but I don't think she felt challenged or threatened by the other students or professor. You may want to ask [Ms. M.] about this when you talk to her. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Professors. Ms. M.'s mother went further to explain her insights into some of the professors that Ms. M. had. Although Mr. M.'s mother never thought to actually talk to any of the professors, she was quick to acknowledge the challenges that students and professors face during heated discussions on socially sensitive topics:

I can't really say for sure, but I think the Professors were careful about letting people take their stand and express their opinion without too much disruption, because they [the students] actually had to support their stand of their position - in a respectful way. I think

in the class that was discussing the Terry Schiavo situation, he [the professor] was pretty cautious and respectful about that...And I think that helped Ms. M. stand up to some of the other students who thought it was nothing to end someone's life...What do you think [Ms. M.], did you feel that way? (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M.: Yeah, pretty much. I mean, I knew right away that most of the others [students in the classroom] weren't going to think the same way I did, but I went ahead anyway and told them what I thought about the situation. I know it wasn't a popular thing to say, but well, I can be pretty outspoken when I want to be. I know that's hard for some people to realize because I don't normally talk very loud anyway, and I guess coming from me would've been a total shock for a lot of people if they really knew me." (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Social behaviors of students. While certain behaviors may have been acceptable by the majority of students, Ms. M. knew she was not totally prepared for the extent of some of this behavior, particularly when it included rampant drug and alcohol use, skipping classes, and unmarried couples openly living together. Ms. M.'s mother remarks:

[Ms. M.] really seemed to stand firm on her thoughts on social things. Even though she suspected some students who drank, used drugs, and probably did others things, [Ms. M.] didn't really associate with kids that did those things...I don't think she would've been talked into doing that kind of thing either. In that, I'm glad she remembered the values she was taught at home. (Mr. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M. further added:

It seems like that kind of stuff [alcohol, getting drunk, drugs, and open sex] was everywhere. And even worse, it was accepted by everyone to include the professors and other adults! No one really thought anything about it...Did I do anything about it? Not really. I pretty much found friends who didn't do that kind of thing. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Where is she now? Her future and post-college reflections:

Ms. M. has completed her bachelor's degree and is not sure where life will take her. She has completed a number of independent projects for local businesses and for private individuals, but this work has been sporadic thus far:

Yes, I graduated but it was hard deciding which major I wanted...I liked art, but I also did well in music...at one time I even thought about following my dad into the medical profession, but I didn't want to have to take all that science over again – like chemistry! I eventually went with graphic arts...I think I have a better chance really working in my major. I might go back to school and get a master's in something, but I'm not thinking about that right now...I'm glad I lived at home during college and thanks to my parents, they're not in any real hurry for me to move out! (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Section Two: Research Questions and Recurring Themes

Thorough analysis was conducted after the administration of four distinct and separate research tools: open-ended questionnaires designed specifically for the homeschooled student and a separate questionnaire designed for the parents, as well as, individually recorded interviews with each student and a separate interview with each parent. Recurring themes, along with related sub-themes, became quite apparent by the panel, which consisted of myself and

three subject matter experts familiar with homeschooling. These recurring themes aided in answering and supporting the five research questions as shown in Table 3.

Research Question 1 - How Does Homeschooling Impact College Choice?

Olsen (2009) stated, “The history of home education in America reveals that moral and religious convictions have long been part of choosing home education” (p. 415). In my study, the participating mothers validated Olsen’s premise and were motivated to homeschool their child for a variety of factors which ultimately supported the first recurring theme. Research Question 1 attempted to address how homeschooling may have impacted college choice? Three overarching motives were conveyed by the participants: religious convictions, family values, and academic considerations. Each of these played some role during the college choice decisions tackled by each student participant.

Table 3*Research Questions*

Research Questions	Recurring Theme	Sub-themes
How does homeschooling impact college choice?	Why homeschool?	a. Religious commitment b. Family values c. Academic considerations
How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?	Pre-college experiences	a. College selection and application process b. College acceptance procedures
How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?	Transition from home to college	a. Dual high school/college credit and enrollment b. Campus visits c. Financial considerations and costs
What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?	College attendance	a. Transfer from one college to another b. College experiences i. Roommates ii. Classmates and professors iii. Social issues
How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?	Reflections and personal changes	a. About homeschooling b. Thoughts on social issues c. Personal changes d. Reflections on inherent family values and the student's own beliefs

Notes: Recurring themes and sub-themes derived from the five research questions

Recurring Theme 1: Why Homeschool?

Religious commitment. Throughout the growth of the homeschooling movement, parents have decided to homeschool for a variety of reasons. One strong and overarching factor considered by parents is their religious conviction to homeschool. Six of the seven families in this multiple case study held strong feelings about their God-given right to train and educate their own children. In part, this conviction remained an overwhelming and determining factor for each of these seven families, who ultimately homeschooled their children from 1st through 12th grade graduation.

We started putting [oldest child] in preschool and kindergarten in Christian school. God was tugging me in direction of homeschooling...I think the main reason would be that I was to teach them about God, God was directing us that way. (Mr. H.'s mother, personal communication, May 7, 2012)

My parents homeschooled me mainly because they felt that God had given the primary responsibility for education to parents. (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

We thought as Christians we were responsible for training our children in the ways of God, in the ways of scripture. We thought it was our responsibility and we probably had a better shot at parting those values to the kids as opposed to a public school teacher. We thought we had a better chance of consistently sharing that with them, not just for that first year but for their entire lives. That was our primary mode. (Mr. N.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

The seventh family did not homeschool their children specifically for any religious conviction, but rather, the mother felt it was a better choice for her family due to the father's type of work.

I didn't know anything about homeschooling until the kids were about 3-4 years old... then while the kids were in kindergarten I started checking more into it...I think once I bought the [homeschooling] curriculum...my husband and I both saw some advantages of homeschooling...It also allowed us to go with my husband on some of his business trips and experience the area. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

All of the families were asked whether they thought they were doing the right thing by homeschooling their children. Mr. S.'s mother's philosophy was to homeschool her children "year-by-year" during the elementary years. She re-evaluated her homeschooling objectives at the end of each school year to determine if her children would continue to homeschool the following year. Mr. S.'s mother remarked:

I don't remember really saying we were in it for the long haul at the beginning or we were doing this for academic reasons. But I do remember every year when the kids were in elementary grades I would ask them what they wanted to learn that year and I would incorporate what they wanted into the curriculum. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

None of the families initially planned on homeschooling their children from kindergarten through high school. However, they realized once they started homeschooling, they were 'in it for the long haul' and they persevered through high school graduation.

I heard about [homeschooling] from James Dobson, on Focus on the Family.... I asked my husband if he knew that you could teach your kids at home... My husband looked at me and said, "That's nuts. We are never going to do that. Get the idea out of your head. That's just weird." Then I went to this HSLDA [Home School Legal Defense Association] conference and heard story after story on how the Lord was working on so

many lives [of families who were homeschooling] across the nation... with a turnaround on [husband's] part we started that homeschool journey. (Ms. E.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

When they got to high school I remember asking them if they wanted to continue to homeschool or go to the local public school and they both wanted to continue homeschooling... (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Family values. Many of the student participants commented they were homeschooled based on their family's values. Those values ranged from one child being homeschooled so it was taken for granted they would also be homeschooled or the parents may have had the perception that the quality of public school education – or the lack thereof – did not meet their expectations. The student's also saw their own value in being homeschooled since it afforded them the ability to pursue their own academic interests and to appreciate the value of learning new information on their own schedule.

Looking back, I feel that homeschooling was an ideal educational choice for me personally. It allowed me to pursue a range of subjects at my own pace, it gave me a chance to develop interests which might not have emerged in a regular classroom, and it allowed me to see learning and life as deeply integrated. It also helped to foster the close family ties which I still enjoy...My parents felt strongly that homeschooling was the right thing to do, and I doubt that they would have changed their decision even if I had asked to be educated in another way. (Ms. E., questionnaire, April 12, 2012)

Likewise, while Mr. N. believes he was homeschooled for religious reasons, he also knew he was homeschooled because his mom had success homeschooling his older sister.

My understanding is that I was homeschooled so that my parents could pass their values and beliefs on to me, and so that they could be closely involved in my education, to train me and prepare me for life as well as they could...Also, they had already been homeschooling my [older] sister, so they thought it just made sense that I would be homeschooled too. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Academic considerations. Parents were concerned the quality of a public school education would not meet their academic expectations. Overwhelmingly, parents felt a Christian-based education and curriculum, taught at home, was a better choice for their children. Although private and religious-based schools were readily available, many families felt a private school education was just too expensive, particularly since each family relied primarily on one salary, typically provided via the father's employment.

We're in a good school district, so I struggled a little with the choice of homeschooling versus going to the public school ...Private school was never an option- just too expensive for us... Looking back on it, I think we made the right choice. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Mr. S. also saw the academic benefits for being homeschooled:

[My] parents felt I would get a better education being homeschooled rather than public schooled...Overall the quality of education was better being homeschool ... [I] was told I could enroll in public school during high school but [I] did not...Now, I am happy about being homeschooled and even brag about it. (Questionnaire, May 16, 2012) ...I probably would have chosen whatever to make my parents happy...I would have chosen to stay homeschooled. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Mother A. focused on academic achievement and success, two principles highly valued by this family.

We got reports...that kids were scoring at the 85th percentile in that program [ATI (Advanced Training Institute) homeschool curriculum] ... But even if we weren't, that wasn't really the primary motive in the early years, nor at the end when we were committed for the long haul. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Research Question 2 - How Do Homeschooled Students Prepare to Transition From a Homeschool Academic Environment to a Collegiate One?

Research Question 2 specifically delved into how homeschooled students prepared to transition from their homeschool academic environment into a collegiate one. Students conveyed their pre-college experiences, which included not only researching which colleges they wanted to attend, but also which college major they wanted to pursue, how far from home they wanted to be, and how many college applications they ultimately wanted to submit. By answering these initial questions, the students were then able to progress through the college selection, application, and acceptance processes with more self-assurance.

Recurring Theme 2: Pre-college Experience

Students and parents alike relayed their personal reflections as they prepared for college attendance. This process started with researching and selecting colleges, taking college entrance examinations such as the ACT or SAT test(s); followed by submitting a myriad of college application packages, submitting the associated application fees, developing and submitting high school transcripts, visiting college campuses, and waiting for acceptance to the college of their choice.

College selection and application process. The first step in their transition between home and college was to research and determine which colleges to consider attending. The students indicated they spent time researching a variety of colleges. They looked at colleges close to home, as well as, out of state. They listened to input from their parents and they also looked at colleges their parents had attended. They considered colleges based on cost, size, location, and reputation. Ultimately, they narrowed their college choices to those schools which granted a degree in a specific course of study.

As each student narrowed their list to a few chosen schools, they began the laborious, and in some case expensive, application process. Several students indicated they were not aware if colleges required a different application process for homeschoolers. However, they also indicated every school had different application processes, different entrance requirements, and of course, different application fees.

I think I probably submitted the same things [application paperwork] that other people had to in my situation... I haven't really asked anyone though... My application process turned out to be really stressful...they weren't quite sure how to treat my application... I had a lot of problems trying to explain to the school about homeschooling... (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

I heard there were some schools that want higher scores from homeschoolers...no one mentioned I had to have any specific SAT scores...I guess they'll accept my scores just like everyone else. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

I don't think I had to do anything differently from anyone else...I remember I had to send them an application fee too, along with an essay...later I had an interview at the college... (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Each student readily accepted their responsibility for submitting a complete college application package; however, they were not necessarily prepared for the different levels of acceptance of their homeschool completion by college admissions officers. In one case, Ms. A. was told she had to include her GED or SAT scores with her application package:

I don't know if every homeschooler had to take the GED as part of the prerequisite to attend [name of college] that they told me I had to do...My application process turned out to be really stressful... they weren't quite sure how to treat my application...I think I may have been the first homeschooled student who had applied to their school who hadn't gotten a diploma from [name withheld but one of Pennsylvania's state recognized diploma granting organizations.] They told me they didn't accept a parent-generated transcript or diploma ...They wanted a GED which I didn't have and [the college admissions officer] didn't want to accept me unless I had a GED. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

Other application packages required a portfolio review, dual college and high school enrollment transcripts, or a homeschool transcript complete with a detailed accounting of the curriculum, samples of student essays, face-to-face interviews, a list of their leadership roles, and a myriad of other college entrance requirements.

When I applied to the junior college I don't think they had a problem taking my transcript that my mother made, but I think it was a learning process on their part...I did have to fill in another application form and pay another admissions fee...but I didn't have to submit my SAT scores again...I think it was the Admissions Office that told me about a check list that was online. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

They also wanted to know what type of extra-curricular activities [Mr. S.] had been involved in and whether he had held any leadership roles...I think they may have used this information to provide him with scholarship money. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Ms. M. faced other challenges during her college application process. She knew she wanted to pursue a very unique artistic program. Therefore, her challenge was locating a school that had the specific program she wanted and would also accept her GED.

Yea, I think I submitted the same things [college application documents] as everybody else...I had a transcript but with no grades on it...in fact, I went ahead and took the GED...I think I remember my scores were pretty high on my SATs and my GED. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Likewise, Mr. N. grappled with multiple considerations when choosing colleges. He was interested in attending a school that was affordable, choosing a college where he could do well academically, attending a school that had a well-known name, and attending a college that was known to have an excellent computer science department:

Um, I gave some vague thought to, um some consideration to other schools that I might like to go, but when I did my interview at the CS [computer science] department at [school name withheld] it seemed good and solid and I thought, 'Well, I can do this pretty affordable, if I were to go off someplace else and have to pay for room and board and pay more for a more expensive degree'...I thought vaguely of applying to MIT, but I thought at the time that I probably would not be able to muster up the skill that they were looking for in their application to their CS department. People may argue, but I think they [MIT] are probably one of the top 2 schools in the U.S. for computer science, probably the

world actually. Since I was coming from an arts and humanities background, my thoughts were, it probably wouldn't work out too well. I had also thought a little bit about going to a couple of technology schools, in design and art application in technology. But going to a private school the tuition is pretty expensive and I'd have a lot of debt for a degree that focuses on technology, a pretty competitive field, which is already hard to land jobs in. So I gave a little thought to it but it worked out well because [school name withheld] is a small school, but happens to have a really good computer science department - or at least it did when I was there, which was 5 years ago now. (Mr. N., personal communication, June 12, 2012)

College acceptance process. Some colleges required the homeschooled student to have passed the GED exam, while other college admission officers relied on the high school transcript coupled with their SAT scores, an art or music portfolio, or whether the student had successfully completed previous community college course work. In some cases, this acceptance process caused a great deal of frustration for the homeschool family, but with perseverance, each student worked their way through the process in order to be accepted into the college of their choice.

[Ms. L.] actually did all the work to see which schools she wanted to go to...I had to let her do this on her own because, well since I didn't go to college, I wasn't sure how to help her get started...but I had to just let her do what she needed to do when it came to her college stuff. (Ms. L.'s mother, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Ms. L also had her own insights on being accepted into college once she had submitted all the required documents.

I applied to two schools as a freshman...that were known to have a good social work programs...I got accepted pretty quickly after I turned in everything...I got letters from

both saying I was accepted... but I really wanted to go to [name of college withheld] because my boyfriend was already going there. (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Not all students were as confident or knew what they would do if the college did not accept them.

I only seriously considered and looked at one school, because that is where I knew I always wanted to go...If I hadn't been accepted into that school, I'm not sure what I would've done...but I'm sure I would've found another school. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M. was accepted to her college by submitting both her GED and SAT scores, but she also believes her art portfolio played a stronger role in her being accepted to the college of her choice.

I just received a letter of acceptance, maybe based on my SAT scores? I don't really remember them mentioning anything about my GED scores or even asking if I had completed a Pennsylvania homeschool diploma; but to be honest, I think my acceptance was based more on my graphic portfolio and samples of my art work rather than anything else... I had to show them some of my art work and graphic stuff. I think they looked at that more than they did anything else that I gave them...and that's what they used to decide if I would be accepted into their program...I think it was pretty competitive. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Research Question 3 - How Do Homeschooling Parents Help Their College-bound Child During This Transition Process?

The previous research question addressed how homeschooled students prepared to transition to college. Equally important, and addressed in Research Question 3, was how homeschooling parents helped their college-bound child during this college transition process. The parents in this study not only provided their insight, but also their support by encouraging their child to pursue dual high school and college credit programs, scheduling and accompanying their children on college campus visits, ensuring all financial concerns were addressed (tuition, transportation, housing, and other association expenses), and by talking to other families who had already gone through the college application and acceptance process in order to capture their expertise.

Recurring theme 3: Transition From Home to College

Students conveyed a number of personal experiences during their transitioned from home to a college campus - many of them humorous. While one student may have transitioned to college with no problems, another student experienced anxiety. One student faced challenges head-on, while another relied on friends and family to get her through. Parents experienced transition too, from realizing their child was leaving home, to accepting that their child was going to continue to stay home while attending college. They also came to grips with how they were actually going to pay college tuition and other expenses, particularly if they had not made prior financial arrangements or saved for college.

Dual high school and college credit and enrollment. There was a small number of participating homeschooled students in this study who concurrently acquired high school and junior-community college credits. This unique enrollment status gave them not only

simultaneous high school and college credits, but it provided a reduction in college tuition costs, gave them the college experience while still living at home, and later gave them a higher college class level standing. One student, Mr. S., actually completed two full years of college by the time he ‘officially’ graduated from high school.

I started taking college courses at a college down the road from me and also at the community college...I was still a high school student so my mom knew I could get dual credit for college and high school...I think because I was a high school student I got a lower price on the tuition which I know made my mom happy. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Our homeschool evaluator told us about this [dual high school and college enrollment] ...We thought it was a good idea since we were told the college courses wouldn’t cost the full tuition... [Mr. H.] took some basic courses at [school name withheld] Community College, but they were challenging for [Mr. H.]. (Mr. H.’s mother, personal communication, May 7, 2012)

I knew other families whose kids had gone to college when they were high school students...We checked into it and knew it was the way to go. (Mr. N.’s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

I was never interested in going to “outschool” [public school], as we called it...but my last year of high school was my freshman year [of college]. It was a combination of homeschool-high school and a few courses at [a local Community College] ... I took 2 [college] courses each semester in the fall and spring...I did a lot CLEP tests... and I lived at home... (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Likewise, parents used this financial incentive to their advantage as much as they could, thus saving the total cost of a bachelor's degree for their child. As an added and unexpected benefit, 4-year university admission officers more readily accepted these students into their school since the student had already proven they were academically successful in a collegiate environment.

Mother S had been a guidance counselor at one time and knew how to use the college financial system to their advantage, particularly once she found they would not qualify for any form of financial assistance.

[Mr. S.] started taking college courses when he was still considered a high school student. The local community college and the local 4-year college gave him 50% reduction in tuition, so that really helped...They also wanted to know what type of extra-curricular activities he had been involved in and whether he had held any leadership roles...I think they may have used this information to provide him with scholarship money. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Mr. H.'s parents were also concerned and wanted to reduce the cost of college tuition, particularly since they had not made prior financial preparations for college expenses. They asked their homeschool evaluator for her expertise and advice. The evaluator told this family about dual high school/college enrollment, the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), college tuition grants, loans, and scholarships. The parents were in favor of using all the resources they could, which would further help Mr. H. succeed in pursuing his future goals.

Mother H. stated:

Our homeschool evaluator told us about this [dual high school and college enrollment]...We thought it was a good idea since we were told the college courses

wouldn't cost the full tuition...[Mr. H.] took some basic courses at [school name withheld] Community College...Our evaluator also told us about college level testing which would save us some money too...[Mr. H.] decided not to take any of the tests since he decided to take the [college] classes instead because of his major... (Mr. H.'s mother, personal communication, May 7, 2012)

Campus visits. Parents were just as interested as their child, in visiting college campuses. Mother S. indicated they went to great expense visiting military academy campuses at West Point (NY), Air Force Academy (CO), and the Naval Academy (MD), as well, as large universities several hours from home. However, once Mr. S. visited a number of campuses, he realized he was more attracted to the smaller campuses rather than a large campus, such as Temple University, which just did not feel like a campus to him.

On the other hand, Mr. N. knew he was going to live at home and commute to school. He was very familiar with a number of campuses and did not feel the need to make 'official' campus visits. Ms. M. and her mother made one college campus visit and did not feel the need to visit any other campuses, primarily since Ms. M. knew there was only one college within commuting distance that offered her college major. On the other hand, although Ms. A. knew her college choices were limited, she decided to visit several campuses.

My mom and I actually took several trips to the campus...called them...talked to a lot of people...I applied as a freshman to two schools...I didn't even consider going to a community college first since I knew they didn't have the type of major I wanted... (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

Financial considerations and costs. For many families, college tuition and other associated costs were of great concern. Overwhelming, each participant, student and mother

alike, felt some trepidations associated with the costs of going to college. None of the parents in this study had discussed with their children how college was going to be funded, much less if there were any established rules or expectations about financing and paying for college. Six of the families had made no prior preparations for funding their child's college education. The exception was Mr. S's family, who had established a college savings plan which is part of IRS Section 529 Education/ Qualified tuition program fund, or more commonly known as the 529 Tuition Assistance Plan (TAP).

To help defray the total costs of college, over half the students elected to continue to live at home, three students capitalized on dual high school and college enrollment which reduced their total overall bachelor's degree expense, and one family had invested in a college tuition assistance fund to help supplement the rising cost of college tuition. Still other families had made no financial arrangement or plans on how they would pay for college. They relied on the chance their child would receive some form of financial aid (i.e., student loans, scholarships, college grant money) and, for most, they prepared themselves for paying 'out-of-their-own-pocket' for college expenses.

Living at home. Over half of the students in this study attended local colleges which allowed them to continue to live at home, thus eliminating dormitory and other high cost living expenses.

[Ms. A.] commutes which saves us about \$14,000 a year in housing. The tuition there is \$32,000 a year now and living on campus is now \$15-16,000 a year now I think. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Ms. M. found a school nearby which saves us a lot of money since she lives at home.

Thank goodness, she can live at home. Even though we didn't really ask how much the

dorm would've cost, I think it would be at least \$10,000 a year...How can it possibly cost the college a \$1,000 a month to house just one student? And I don't think that even included her meal tickets! (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

My parents had already paid for my brother and sister's college tuition so I knew the rule was to keep it reasonable and not necessarily go to the most expensive, but not the cheapest school to get a bachelor's degree...So I decided it was probably best to live at home too because the dorm cost was so expensive. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

I chose my schools mainly on cost, and also based on location (near my family and friends) so I could live at home...I am very glad I attended where I did. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Scholarships and loans. Mother A. helped her college-bound child by finding other means of paying for college through scholarships. Conducting extensive online research, calling professors, and asking other families for ideas on various methods of paying for college, were all methods used to find ways of paying for college. Ultimately:

[Ms. A.] got a Presidential scholarship. We never applied for FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] ...we only applied for scholarships. So she got the highest scholarship they offer. They don't give out many of them and she got one of them for all 4 years - if she keeps her grade point up. (Ms. A.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

I got a couple of scholarships or maybe it was some sort of financial enticement so I would go to that college... [the financial assistance was] for my art work and also

because of my SAT scores...so I was glad I got the help [scholarships]. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

I don't think my family had a plan for how college was going to be paid, so I did some research, put in the FAFSA form, and applied for scholarships. I was given some money but I also had to work while I was in college...It was tough some semesters! Looking back on it, I'm not sure how I did it [attending college full time and working] (Ms. L., personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Family funded. Although Mr. H. has not actually begun attending college full-time, he is conscientious about the cost of attending college. He is trying to help his parents pay for his schooling:

I know it's pretty hard for my parents, so I work as much as I can to help pay...even though I only took one course at [school name withheld] Community College and my public high school paid 50%, the tuition was still pretty expensive... I didn't know books were going to be so expensive...the library keeps a board where students can sell their used books, it's still really expensive...I saw one book was being sold for over \$200, and that was a used book! (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Ms. E. was the first child in this family to attend college. Although both parents had college degrees, they felt they needed to be conservative with the amount of money spent on college tuition, particularly since they had not saved for this expenses and they had three more children to raise at home. Ms. E.'s mother states:

[Ms. E.] had a strong desire to go to [name of college.]. It was \$30,000 a year. We just didn't have \$30,000 a year for her to go...Once you [a college student] finish your undergraduate degree, they [the college] no longer look at your parent's income for

scholarships. So even if you lived at home, they don't care. They look at what you make and you don't have to report your parent's income. But we didn't have much money to send her to [name of college>]. But we may have qualified for all kinds of loans, but we didn't want that. We weren't going to qualify for scholarships either. (Ms. E.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Other expenses. Students found tuition was not the only college expense of concern.

Textbooks were another expense they had not anticipated being so costly. Mr. S. indicated some of his science books cost over \$150 each, while Mr. H. found a used book resource which helped:

I know it's pretty hard for my parents, so I work as much as I can to help pay...even though I only took one course at [school name withheld] Community College and my public high school paid 50%, the tuition was still pretty expensive...I didn't know books were going to be so expensive...the library keeps a board where students can sell their used books, it's still really expensive...I saw one book was being sold for over \$200, and that was a used book! (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

One interesting note however, none of the participating students indicated they took advantage, nor applied for, military or local business/social group scholarship programs!

Although Mr. S. had considered attending a military academy, he decided not to pursue that avenue, or even enroll in a military ROTC program, when he realized the academies would not guarantee him the degree or career field he wanted.

We also visited a number of the military academies because [Mr. S.] had always said he wanted to go there. But when they wouldn't guarantee him a medical school assignment,

he wasn't interested in them anymore. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Debt. Equally important was the family's stand on incurring debt – particularly private college tuition debt which tends to be more expensive than that of a public, state funded college. We told [Ms. E.] 'No debt for undergraduate' unless there's something you're called to that you can't get without debt. We really sacrificed the 'going away to college' experience for 'going to college closer to home.' [My Husband] said, "No undergrad degree is worth that kind of debt that kids are accruing and if you can get the degree and avoid the debt, you'll be a lot happier than you would be if you went to Harvard. (Ms. E.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

My folks didn't want us to have a lot of debt going to college, or really have student loans... (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

I just didn't want to have a boatload of debt after college or have my parents have to pay for medical school. I don't know. I thought having a cheap degree was just as good as having an expensive degree at the time. (Mr. S., personal communication, May 19, 2012)

Research Question 4 - What External Factors and Challenges Do Homeschoolers Face While Attending College?

As expected, no two experiences in this study were the same. One student had not fully entered his college enrollment adventure, while on the other end of the spectrum - another student had successfully completed her doctoral degree. While each homeschooled graduate faced challenges during their application and acceptance processes and while transitioning from their homeschool environment to a collegiate one, they also faced unique challenges actually attending college. Ms. A. was able to rely on the experiences of her older siblings. Ms. A. did

extensive research on the college or university that offered the program she was considering as her major:

I had to do a lot of research to find schools that had a program in [my major] and that was close to home. My dad was kinda concerned about the cost so I mainly looked at community colleges and state schools so I could live at home...However, as it turned out, I actually went to a private college because the other college gave me such a hassle when I was applying...and I got a scholarship. (Ms. A., personal communication, June 25, 2012)

Recurring theme 4: College Attendance

Three students (Ms. A., Ms. L., and Ms. M.) applied as freshman and completed their bachelor's degree 4 years later from the original college they attended as a freshman. One student (Ms. E.) completed her bachelor's degree through an online college program and her master's and doctoral degrees in residence.

I had finished high school early, and my parents advised me to begin college by distance learning. At the time, there were fewer distance-learning programs available...My parents and I didn't think I should go off to college so we found this online program [Thomas Edison] and joked that it was 'home-college'...However, I did take classes at local colleges and transferred them in to my distance learning program, and I eventually was accepted and did a master's degree and a Ph.D. program elsewhere. (Ms. E., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Another student (Mr. H.) had just graduated from his homeschool program and was in the process of applying to a community college with plans to transfer to a Pennsylvania state-funded school at a future date. This student was the only student who received a high school diploma

from one of Pennsylvania's Department of Education recognized homeschool diploma-granting organizations.

I knew I wanted to go to a school that was close to home...I looked at other schools, but they were just too far away...so I applied to [college name withheld] Community College and also to [4-year state-funded college name withheld] ...It probably makes sense to start at the 4-year university, but I think it will be cheaper if I go to a community college first. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Mr. S. completed two years of college credits as a high school student through the dual high school/college credit program. He then transferred to a 4-year university and completed his bachelor's degree. The final student, Mr. N., began his college experience at a community college and transferred to a university to complete his final two years of college with a bachelor's degree.

College transfer. It was anticipated that homeschoolers would be more likely to continue their collegiate education at a four-year, degree granting college after attending either a distance education program or a community college. This proved to be true with this group of homeschooled participants. While the numbers were small, two of the students did attend a community college prior to applying for admittance to a 4-year, state-funded college.

I then transferred to [University]...I think it was the Admissions Office that told me about a check list that was online...[college name withheld] is in a consortium of schools that makes it easier to transfer to...so it was pretty easy...I had to submit my junior college transcript to [name of college]...all my courses were accepted because [name of college] was in a group of schools that accepted each other's courses for transfer...I did

have to fill in another application form and pay another admissions fee...but I didn't have to submit my SAT scores again. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

College Experiences. Each student experienced certain struggles being accepted by their classmates. They also communicated struggles they faced with some of their professors and whether their thoughts were accepted or taken seriously by their fellow classmates during classroom discussions. They learned to adapt to roommates from different family or religious backgrounds and in making new friends. They were confronted with social issues such as student binge drinking, illicit drugs, skipping class, openly living together with a person of the opposite sex, and unmarried sex. They learned to take a stand on socially charged issues such as right-to-life and end-of-life topics.

Classmates and professors. Some students and mothers commented on circumstances dealing with classmates and professors.

[Ms. M.] did tell us about feeling alone in class...You may want to ask [Ms. M.] about this when you talk to her. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

I found the college classroom environment fairly easy to adapt to. I was sometimes less used to dealing with bureaucracy than my classmates...Occasionally guys would come into class hungover and you would think, 'Go sleep it off. You'll learn more if you sleep it off and you won't be distracting people by putting your head on the desk hung over.'...I never encountered it before. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

[Mr. N.] did have some difficulties with a couple of professors. Once we [the parents] talked to him about what he wanted to do – stay in the class or not. But [Mr. N.] knew he needed the credit so he stayed in the class and toughed it out...but we [the parents] took [Mr. N.] out of a calculus class at midterm because he was failing the course and because

of a review that we found on the professor – where the professor only passed about 5 kids the semester before. So we took him out of the class and he repeated it the next semester with a different professor...We didn't want a failing class to affect their GPA [Grade Point Average] ...We worked those things through as a family... (Mr. N.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Roommates and friends. All of the student participants eventually made some friends while in college. For some it was an easy process, for others, more difficult.

Computer scientists, by and large, in college are not the most outgoing or social of people. So during the course of the first semester there I got to know a few of the guys and we would occasionally hang out, and we got to, huh, go to the dorm rooms and play “HALO” and other video games. One of the first times I had to deal with this [drinking], I thought, ‘Huh, these people are really doing really destructive behavior and I liked them. They’re funny. They’re good at what they do.’ I learned a lot about my field [computer science] from them and we liked working together. It’s just that they go and try and kill their livers every weekend. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

In certain occasions, it was more difficult to make ‘true’ friends as Mr. H. found:

I’m just starting college so I really haven’t made any friends yet – anyway I wouldn’t call them friends. They’re just in my classes. (Mr. H., personal communication, May 20, 2012)

Social issues. During the course of this study, euthanasia, end-of-life, and pro-life were particularly dominant topics in social media and caused heated discussions within the classroom. Mother M. remembered her child taking a stand in class:

[Ms. M.] did tell us...She took a stand on the Terry Schiavo incident and she took a stand against pulling the plug on her. She was the only one in her class, and maybe one other person in class who was pro-life...She thought the [other kids'] values were so different. (Ms. M.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Social behaviors. Each student had interactions with fellow students and was confronted with behaviors they had previously never encountered such as binge drinking, drugs, and sexual innuendos. They also found themselves taking a stand on social issues such as euthanasia, end-of-life, and right-to-life. For some, these confrontations resulted in changes in their own behaviors in order to fit in with their new friends.

Binge drinking. These homeschooled students were confronted with real-life social or controversial issues taking place around them, such as drinking and drug use. Although Mr. N. is academically intelligent, articulate, and easily relays his thoughts and ideas, he indicated he was uncomfortable at times with these issues. Mr. N. admits that males tended to be more inclined to binge drink and come to class drunk. He recalls there were females involved too, which he found disturbing:

I experienced some culture shock when I first ran into drug use and binge drinking in person – I knew about them, but seeing their effects first-hand was disconcerting.... My program [computer science] is notorious for being a male dominated field. They'd [students] go for a weekend football game and would get roaring drunk and then come back here and tell stories. At some of the actual events there may have been girls involved, but I actually didn't meet any of them...Occasionally guys would come into class hungover...I never encountered it before, but mostly it was people talking and telling stories. It was people mostly saying, 'You would not believe how drunk I got last

weekend.’...I just wasn’t use to people doing that, you know...I wouldn’t describe myself as sheltered having been a homeschooler but I also wasn’t dealing with the range of random stuff that a lot of the kids were doing having gone to public school and dealing with the public school stuff in the classroom. It’s just that they go and try and kill their livers every weekend. I really don’t know what went on at these events because I never was actually invited to them and never went to one. I take that back. I was invited to one, I just didn’t go...Hum - Well, at the time, I was underage! The person who asked me asked, ‘Well, do you want to get drunk anyways?’ And I said, ‘No.’ (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Mr. N.’s comments were confirmed when his mother remarked about her awareness of student drug and alcohol use, as well as, Mr. N.’s interactions with female students and professors:

[Mr. N.] talked to me, sometime during the college years but definitely after college years, the kids coming in drunk, hung over, the kids coming in doped. Our kids were never approached or participated that I know of. (Mr. N.’s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Although Mr. N. came from a large family, he found he needed to adapt to certain social behaviors by some of his fellow students, which he basically found to be unacceptable:

But I don’t think I really started to piece together that a lot of these guys drink just staggering amounts, specifically to get drunk and roll around town, drunk. Until, I think, around the first semester when I started piecing together the real story, if you will. At that point, I had started to get to know them...and my encounters with them that they were somebody running their mouth about how they had gotten drunk and what a good

time it was. But I had gotten to know them before that happened, and I thought they were doing this really stupid thing and you had to be incredibly stupid to do this too, and yet clearly they weren't stupid because they were a lot better in some cases in doing stuff than I am, and it was my first encounter in coming to grips with living with fallen people, because Christian people and culture, we often focus on hiding or overlooking stupid behavior. I really didn't see it as being problematic or alcoholic. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Drugs. Mother S. indicated she could see a difference in her son. While she did not have any concrete evidence, never-the-less, she felt her son had changed:

I don't know if it [college] changed his life, but he started smoking and drinking which is something we don't do at home. He got that from his roommates, I think. I suspect he also experimented with drugs but he never told me about that. [Mr. S.] is very social, so I suspect he did a lot of things that he knew his dad and I, particularly me, wouldn't approve of and therefore he never shared any of that with me. Later his sister told me about a lot of stuff that he would do and keep secret from me. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

Sexual innuendos. Mr. N. was confronted with casual discussions and acceptance of open sexual behavior from some of his friends and fellow classmates:

...in the classroom context...I remember meeting this one guy...He was a very generous sort of fellow and we were sitting around one of the tables in the cafeteria and he goes, 'Oh hey, I actually own a house so if any of you guys have a girl that you want to get busy with just, ah, let me know and I'll get you a house key. Just don't use my bedroom is all.' That was the most personal I ever got. I didn't even know this guy so why was he even

offering something like that to me? [It] was pretty offensive. I just sat there and didn't really say anything, but I never talked to him about it. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

[Mr. N.] did have a girl hit on him and he didn't realize it until it was over. (Mr. N.'s mother, personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Behavioral changes. For the most part, all students but one, appears to retain the ideologies they obtained from their parents. However, there was only one mother who commented on behavioral changes she saw in her child once he began attending college.

[Mr. S] stopped going to church and I remember him saying that he was a scientist and there was no scientific evidence of God or heaven and he just never went back to church after that... I hoped...maybe he would think differently about going to church once again...and about his Christian faith. (Mr. S.'s mother, personal communication, June 10, 2012)

But not every student changed, as Mr. N. indicates:

I got to know one or two binge drinkers fairly well, one of whom was a fairly dedicated atheist (I'm an evangelical Christian), and that changed a number of the nuances of my worldview, particularly regarding details of interacting with people I disagree with. None of my core values or beliefs were changed, however. (Mr. N., personal communication, April 12, 2012)

Research Question 5 - How Do Homeschoolers Overcome or Face These Challenges?

Each student faced their own unique experiences while preparing for and attending college. They shared their reflections about their homeschooling experiences, their thoughts and perceptions on social issues, as well as, changes they made as they matured and tested their

decision making processes. Their decisions ultimately impacted interaction with their peers, their parents, and their future.

Recurring theme 5: Reflections and Personal Changes

About homeschooling. Overwhelmingly, each student liked that they were homeschooled. In some cases, being homeschool was an ice-breaker during discussions with admission officers, professors, and dorm mates. Six families commented their primary reason for homeschooling was based on their religious conviction to do so, as well as their concern for the quality of education their child would receive in the public schools. Most students were not given a choice on whether or not they would be homeschooled. However, Mr. S. was given the choice each year whether he wanted to continue to homeschool and each year he chose to remain being taught by his mom at home.

Thoughts on social issues. These homeschooled students were confronted with social issues ranging from binge drinking, taking drugs, skipping class, smoking, and extensive, casual sexual encounters. They were faced with having to take their stand on how they felt on socially charged issues such as right-to-life and end-of-life topics; and adapting to having roommates who came from different family or religious backgrounds. They each commented that they learned from these experiences and in some cases accepted them because they realized that's what many kids did in college.

It seems like that kind of stuff [alcohol, getting drunk, drugs, and open sex] was everywhere. And even worse, it was accepted by everyone to include the professors and other adults! No one really thought anything about it...Did I do anything about it? Not really. I pretty much found friends who didn't do that kind of thing. (Ms. M., personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Personal changes. Although not planned, it turned out all seven homeschooled graduates came from Christian families and were raised attending church. Five of the students indicated they have remained strong in the Christian faith. The “Scientist”, Mr. S., indicated he struggles with his stand or commitment on ‘organized religion’ and not sure he intends to go to church, which was of great importance to his family. Additionally, he sees himself as a scientist first and believes there is no scientific evidence of God, heaven, or hell. He also admitted he had strong feelings about certain issues that went against the way he had been raised by his parents. The seventh student honors and understands his parent’s Christian values, but is not sure whether he will remain as strong in his own faith and values.

Section Three: Student Participant Updates

Since the completion of the questionnaires and interviews, I was privileged to have subsequent contacts with several of the student participants. Many of them have experienced major, life-changing events. Each student participant continues to be successful in his or her college endeavors, as well as, in their professional lives. This section contains a brief synopsis of each student’s college attendance, an update on each student, and a brief description of changes they have experienced in their lives.

Ms. A. – The Musician. She completed a bachelor’s degree from a 4-year state-funded college with a concentration in the performing arts. Ms. A. continues to live at home. There is no further update on whether or not she is employed in a performing arts career, which was her ultimate goal, or what her future plans are.

Ms. E. - The Academic. At the time of this study, she had already completed her doctoral degree. Since the study, she wants to write a book of devotions and is looking for a way

to have her book published. She would like to get married in the future, but will continue to live with her parents until that happens. She remains active in her church.

Mr. S. - The Scientist. He is now married and has completed two master's degrees: one in Biotechnology and a second in Business Administration. He believes this degree combination will give him more flexibility in applying for jobs and perhaps even pursuing his desire to be a patent lawyer in the biotechnology and bio-research arena. He works for a biotechnology research company as a medical investment researcher, but may pursue working with the National Institute of Health in the cancer research department. He picked this area of research because both his maternal grandparents had died from cancer. He still does not attend church, something his mother and also his wife hope will change. He is also adamant he will not homeschool his children...something else his wife is hoping will change.

Mr. H. - The Future Engineer. He completed courses at a local community college and is pursuing his bachelor's degree in engineering. H is in a serious relationship with a girl he met at college. He also has successfully completed an engineering internship in order to get 'hands-on' experience in his engineering field. Mr. H. is anxious to graduate from college and probably marry his girlfriend, but he is not sure whether he will immediately begin work or whether he will pursue working on his advanced engineering credentials.

Mr. N. - The Computer Scientist. He has had a number of successful computer related work opportunities, but his main passion is to continue to grow his own computer business. He is now married and has one young child, the first grandchild in his family. He and his wife plan to homeschool their children.

Ms. L. - The Social Worker. She married her high school sweetheart and completed her master's degree in counseling. She continues to find herself in the perfect spot where she has no

problem finding work – in fact, the job opportunities seem to continue to find her. She feels she has made a good reputation for herself in the field of geriatric care, nursing home administration, and state licensure for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. She hopes she will be able to successfully continue her career once she starts having a family. However, she wants to be able to work from home so she can raise her children. She also hopes to homeschool them and for her children to have the same positive homeschooling experience that she had.

Ms. M. - The Graphic Artist. She completed a bachelor's degree, but there is no further update on her.

Summary Findings

Pennsylvania is considered by many homeschool experts and families as having one of the most governmentally restrictive homeschooling laws for grades 1-12 within the United States (HSLDA [website], 2011). These same laws do not appear to hinder the growing number of homeschooled graduates who successfully apply, are accepted, and who transition from their home academic program into Pennsylvania's colleges and universities. This phenomenon may be attributable to a variety of reasons, among which are: positive experiences by homeschooled students attending college in a dual high school and college enrollment status, active recruitment of homeschoolers by college admission officers, or higher SAT or ACT scores of homeschoolers, etc. While the numbers of homeschoolers applying to Pennsylvania's colleges and universities has not been researched, it is assumed these factors could lend themselves for further research consideration.

I used five research questions and theoretical/empirical literature as a framework for discovering and understanding the unique experiences of each of the seven, homeschooled families participating in this multiple case study. During this multiple case study research, it was not my

intent to focus on why these families chose to homeschool. Murphy (2012) stated that nationally 75% of homeschoolers consider themselves Christian and were motivated by evangelical and religious motivators for homeschooling. Of the seven homeschooled participants that I surveyed, six students (or 85%) indicated during the interview phase, they thought they were homeschooled based on the Judeo-Christian values held by their parents. One student indicated that although his parents were Christians, he felt his parents primarily homeschooled to provide a better education than what the public school could provide.

It also was not my intent to uncover how each homeschooling family actually prepared for college attendance. During the questionnaire and interview phases of this study, both the homeschooled graduates and his or her mother shared their college application, acceptance, and admission process experiences. These experiences involved deciding which college to attend; preparing and submitting the application forms and associated fees; taking and submitting SAT or ACT college entrance examination scores; and submitting some form of a high school transcript outlining their homeschooled coursework. The student's transition may also have included completing a GED, a Pennsylvania state approved diploma program, or a parent approved homeschool completion program; writing a college application essay; and/or conducting face-to-face interviews with college admissions officers. In some cases, the parents assisted their child in submitting these requirements – and in other cases the student was left to complete these requirement(s) on their own.

While some families may have faced insurmountable challenges during the college application and acceptance phases, each family seemed to find solutions which overcame these challenges. Additionally, although some of the student participants may have faced challenges while attending college, they were able to overcome these challenges and learn from their

experiences in personal and meaningful ways. They tackled and resolved issues with their roommates, classmates, and even their professors, particularly as these experiences affected them during the time they attended college. Of particular note and interest is how their comments and experiences supported and validated previous research which indicated that other homeschooled graduates generally have had no problem transitioning from a home academic environment to a collegiate one.

Finally, although this multiple case study did not delve into the actual college acceptance rates of Pennsylvania homeschoolers, I had no problem locating homeschooled graduates, who had attended college or were in the process of attending college, and who readily stepped forward to share their college transitioning experiences with me. My challenge during this research was not capturing homeschoolers' personally-lived experiences, but was organizing, refining, and presenting the vast knowledge and shared experiences into a manageable, integrated, and logical format.

Using the personal experiences and insights from each homeschooled graduate and his or her mother, five major themes surfaced during the data analysis phase. These themes emerged as I sought to understand the similarities and differences between each of the homeschooled student's college transition experiences. Direct quotations from the students and his or her mother helped to support and strengthen each of the themes and in answering the five research questions:

Research Question 1. How does homeschooling impact college choice?

These seven homeschooled graduates were very accustomed to independent learning as part of their homeschooling programs. They were able to research and use a variety of available resources to help them progress through their college choice and transition process. Five

students relied on help from their parents to research, select, apply, and ultimately choose the college to attend. Because Ms. L.'s mother felt she could not help her daughter during the college selection and application process, Ms. L. was left to her own devices to research and progress through her college choice process. The seventh student, Mr. H., relied on his homeschool evaluator's expertise to help him through the college selection and application process.

Five students had no problem being accepted to the college they were most interested in attending. The colleges worked with each student when evaluating and accepting their homeschooled transcripts. However, Ms. A faced many challenges primarily because the college was not quite sure how to evaluate her 'parent-generated' transcript and more specifically because she did not have a GED. She was able to work through this challenge by doing extremely well on her SATs, which the college readily accepted in lieu of a GED.

Six students retained their family's religious values and academic standards. These two foundations, instilled in each student during their homeschooling years, helped shape and prepare them for challenges they faced with roommates, fellow college students, and professors. While Mr. S appreciated his family's academic standards, he did not retain their religious values during nor after his college attendance.

Research Question 2. How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?

Transitioning from home to college involved a combination of multiple steps: attending college as a high school student and receiving dual high school and college credits, pre-college experiences such as selecting, applying, and being accepted into colleges, considering whether to live on campus or at home, and/or determining how to fund college.

Research Question 3. How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?

Each homeschooling parent played an active role assisting their child during the college transition process. They visited college campuses with their child, they gave direction and parameters on funding college, and they provided guidance and support during the college application process. Additionally, they also did not want their child to accrue a lot of college-related debt .

Research Question 4. What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?

All seven students faced a variety of challenges during their college attendance to include:

- Having college credits transfer from one college to another;
- Persuading the college to accept their parent-generated high school transcript;
- Taking a personal stand on social issues;
- College tuition costs and debt;
- Making independent decisions without their parent's input.

Research Question 5. How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?

Each student worked their way through their personal set of challenges. They found ways to pay for college by applying for scholarships, student loans, using the college fund their parents had established years before, or by their parents paying for tuition. They learned to debate social issues, persuade or accept other's viewpoints, get along with roommates, manage their time, and make choices and decisions on their own. They learned to do their own laundry, get to class on time, complete school assignments on time, and choose new friends. They were

also confronted with binge drinking, drugs, pre-marital sex, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, and homosexuality

It became quite apparent that the parents were not only actively involved in supporting their children's higher education goals, but very proud their children were going to or had completed college. These homeschooled students chose a variety of college majors: music performance and theater, English literature, biology and biotechnology, engineering, computer science, geriatric sociology, and graphic arts. While some had not completed their degree, another had already completed her doctoral degree. These accomplishments are pretty impressive, particularly since each of these families and their children had just faced 12 years of Pennsylvania's governmentally challenging and intrusive state homeschool laws! Equally exciting was hearing their post-college reflections and the plans they were making for their future.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Homeschooling continues to be a growing and well-accepted educational option for many families throughout the United States. Figures provided by Ray (2014) indicated the total number of homeschooled students across the United States was approximately 2.3 million. HSLDA (2012) expected this number to continue to grow 10 to 15% per year. More families are not only homeschooling their children for longer periods of time, but are also graduating their high school aged children using their homeschool curriculum program of choice. Many of these homeschooled graduates are electing to continue their higher education through military academy programs, vocational-technical training, or college attendance.

Anticipating the growing population of homeschooled graduates applying for college admission, Bunday (2006) developed a list of over 1000 homeschool friendly colleges and universities which were found to be homeschooled friendly. This listing includes Ivy League schools, United States military academies, as well as, state and privately-funded colleges and universities which actively recruit homeschoolers. With growing interest, college representatives began attending state homeschool conventions, developed college preparatory programs targeting homeschoolers, conducted college application workshops for homeschoolers and their parents, provided special scholarships and grants for deserving homeschool graduates, and advertised in homeschool magazines (Klicka, 2007, “How Are Colleges Recruiting Home Schoolers?”, para. 2).

Barnebey (1986), Jones and Gloeckner (2004b), Ashford (2005), Basko (2005), Bunday (2006), Klicka (1999, 2007), and Ray (2011, 2012) all conducted more formal research addressing the college application and acceptance processes. Additionally, research by Bagwell (2010), Galloway (1995), Gray (1998), Jenkins (1998), and Jones and Gloeckner (2004b)

documented successful college performance by homeschoolers who experienced a variety of college environments and scenarios.

Research remains limited on homeschoolers transitioning from a home academic environment into a collegiate one. Smiley's 2010 research comes closest and includes the perceptions and phenomenological experiences of five homeschoolers reflecting on their public, postsecondary, four-year college experiences. Smiley's study includes how these college experiences impacted the homeschooled student's thoughts, minds, emotions, and their future. However, no existing research was located which included homeschooled students' views, their transitional college experiences, or the cognitive/non-cognitive effects homeschooled graduates experienced transitioning from their home academic environment to a collegiate one.

During the course of this multiple case study research, the homeschooled participants were encouraged to expand on their precollege and college attendance experiences, as well as, their post college reflections. It was not the intent of this research to determine the format that homeschoolers actually attended college (i.e., residency, distance learning, correspondence course format, or by first attending a community college). However, it was interesting to discover that each participating homeschooled graduate faced their academic circumstances and experiences in their own unique ways.

Therefore, the purpose of this multiple case study was to discover how seven homeschooled graduates prepared for and addressed the many challenges associated with attending college, as well as, how they transitioned from a home academic environment into a collegiate one. This research project is expected to expand the body of knowledge that pertains to the homeschooling phenomena, to homeschooled graduates, and to those who continue their education through higher education venues. These actual experiences were recorded and

presented in Chapter Four and reflect personal insights of each homeschooled graduate, as well as one of the parents [in every case the mother] who volunteered to be a part of this research.

Research Questions

Five distinct research questions were used as the baseline for this multiple case study research. These questions were designed to uncover how homeschooled graduates prepared to transition from their home academic environment into a collegiate one, how their college experiences may have influenced, changed, or reshaped their lives, and how the participants overcame or faced these challenges.

1. How does homeschooling impact college choice?
2. How do homeschooled students prepare to transition from a homeschool academic environment to a collegiate one?
3. How do homeschooling parents help their college-bound child during this transition process?
4. What external factors and challenges do homeschoolers face while attending college?
5. How do homeschoolers overcome or face these challenges?

In order to answer these five research questions, three educational subject matter experts validated three distinct open-ended questions with additional probing, sub-questions as the baseline used to answer the five research questions in this multiple case study research.

Review of the Methodology

This multiple case study began with the development of a questionnaire followed by individually recorded oral interviews. The questionnaire, containing three main questions with additional probing questions, was validated by three educational subject matter experts and included open-ended questions used to answer and enhance the five research questions. Once

approved through Liberty University's IRB process, the questionnaire was prepared for administration in both paper and electronic formats using the questionnaire template through *Zoomerang* located at <http://www.zoomerang.com>.

A "call for assistance" was posted in FACEBOOK, the online, social networking tool and was sent to four homeschooled students I knew were interested in attending college. With the help of this initial small group of homeschooled students, other potential participants were contacted and agreed to assist with this case study. Once each participant completed a questionnaire, a telephonic oral interview was scheduled and recorded on cassette tape or through an online, free conference call/recording capability through <https://www.freeconference.com/Home.aspx>. The oral interviews were designed to capture in further detail, the personal experiences from each participant. These oral interviews were then transcribed and analyzed independently by a panel consisting of the original three subject matter experts and myself. The panel identified five broad topical themes, coupled with additional subthemes. These findings are presented in Chapter Four as seven individual cases. Each case is comprised of one homeschooled graduate and one of their parents (in every case, his or her mother.)

Summary of the Findings

The participant's personal experiences are presented as seven unique cases in Chapter Four - Section One. In order to protect their privacy, each participant is identified as Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc., Mother A, B, C, or Mother of Mr. or Ms. A, B, C, etc. Each case explores how the homeschooled graduate transitioned from his or her home academic environment into a collegiate one, identifies challenges that each student faced, and how each student confronted

those challenges. Personal quotations, taken from the homeschooled graduates and his or her mother, answer and support each of the five research questions.

Of the seven homeschooled respondents, six students indicated they believed they were primarily homeschooled for religious reasons. The seventh student indicated he thought his parents homeschooled him because they thought they could provide a better education than he would receive from the public schools. All seven students indicated they were happy being homeschooled and thought they received a good education. Although not a deciding factor when selecting the students for this study, it happened that all seven were homeschooled from 1-12 grade. They graduated from high school using a variety of homeschooling curriculum and methods, to include completing online or correspondence courses, using a Pennsylvania Department of Education state approved homeschooling program, capitalizing on dual college-high school credits, or using a structured, homeschool curriculum. For the most part, each homeschooled student was not given the choice on whether they were homeschooled; however, Mr. S's mother indicated once Mr. S was entering junior high school, she asked Mr. S if he still wanted to be homeschooled.

Collectively, each of the seven students prepared and transitioned to college in very similar ways. They each decided on their college major and researched colleges which they thought would provide them with the best education in their selected major. With guidance and input from their parents, they were all concerned about college tuition costs and additional expenses such as housing, transportation, and textbooks. They each visited college campuses and submitted college application forms to only one or two colleges. Two of the students had difficulty with the college accepting their 'parent-generated' high school transcript but overcame those challenges by obtaining a GED or by testing exceptionally high on the SAT. In every case,

each student was accepted to every college to which they applied. Six of them graduated with a bachelor's degree in their originally chosen college major. The seventh student, Mr. H, had just entered college, but felt confident he would complete his engineering degree. One interesting note:

Six students indicated they had experienced a number of instances which changed their values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues while attending college. For some, it was being confronted with binge drinking, drugs, or casual sexual encounters. For others, it was participating in debates with other students on euthanasia, comparing different religious beliefs, or taking a stand on social issues with a professor or classmates. Others mentioned challenges with roommates, fellow classmates, or with their own time management and decision making choices. Six students indicated they felt they would continue their religious faith. However, Mr. S indicated there was no scientific evidence validating his parent's religious faith. Therefore, he had no intention continuing practicing the religious faith he had while living with his parent's.

Discussion

Whether homeschooling in a friendly or non-friendly state, more homeschooling families are choosing to homeschool their children through high school. As noted in Pennsylvania's Home Education Law, 24 P.S. §13-1327.1 et seq., many homeschooled students do not have some of the same resources as public or private schooled graduates, such as the availability of school counselors who can answer questions pertaining to college attendance, scholarships, and college entrance exam preparation. Never-the-less, homeschooled students are working through the same challenges as their traditionally schooled counterparts. They must determine if they even want to go to college, what college they would like to attend, which school has the best program in their field of study, and which college provides the best value for the cost?

The findings in this current study not only updates Kranzow's (2004) call to "study the effects of homeschooling on the college experience" (p. 19), but also refines Smiley's (2010) challenge to understand how homeschooled graduates might be affected by the college culture. This current study identifies how seven Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates used available resources to research, select, apply, finance, and attend college. This study also identifies challenges each of the students faced during their college application process, inside and outside class, with their peers and professors, and on taking a stand on social and current event issues. Lattibeaudiere (2000) and Kramer (2012) found homeschooled students needed certain assistance while preparing for college life. While my study validates some of Lattibeaudiere's and Kramer's recommendations, I also identified several areas unique to these seven homeschool families, such as attending homeschooling conventions, asking their homeschool evaluator for guidance, and contacting the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) for information.

Duggan (2010a), Bolle, Wessel and Mulvihill (2007), and Mason (2004) found homeschooled students also face other challenges once they enter college. In my study, I found they were confronted with different moral, ethical, social, and personal values than what they may have had at home. If they were not brought up in a religious family or were not surrounded by like-minded college friends, their faith may have been tested. And for some, the college experience was the first time the homeschooled students faced being on their own, making their own decisions, and coming to terms with their own world-values on a variety of issues.

Lattibeaudiere (2000) noted that homeschooled students were prepared and adjusted well into college life. Lattibeaudiere also found that homeschooled students adjusted particularly well in college the longer they were home schooled (p. vi). My study supported Lattibeaudiere's

finding since all seven of my study participants had been homeschooled from 1st to 12th grade. However, my study also updated and expanded Lattibeaudiere's study by indicating how they completed their high school program using a variety of homeschool friendly methods: completing online or correspondence courses, using a Pennsylvania Department of Education state approved homeschooling program, capitalizing on dual college-high school credits, or using a structured, homeschool curriculum.

Studies by Bagwell (2010), Klicka (2006), Ray (2004), Jones and Gloeckner (2004a), Prue (1997), and Remmerde (1997) proved homeschooled students are successful in college. These seven participants proved this to be true, as well. Each had established goals for themselves and had met those goals or were on their way to completing them. By attending college, each student had faced certain challenges. Some were successful in overcoming these life-changing challenges, while others changed their values to redefine their own personal values – separate and apart from that of the parents.

Implications

This research should prove helpful for future homeschool graduates and their families as they begin preparing for their transition from their homeschool environment to a college, academic environment. While each student will undoubtedly face their own unique set of challenges, the recurring themes uncovered in this research may help students and their families anticipate possible challenges as they make their journey transitioning from a home academic environment into a college environment.

Secondly, this study may serve as a foundation for college admission officers, counselors, and professors as they continue to understand and appreciate the college, transitional challenges homeschooled students face. By expanding their understanding and knowledge of college-bound

homeschoolers, college personnel will be able to provide better counseling services specifically targeted for homeschoolers. They can also develop marketing plans and presentations at homeschooled conventions that focus on real issue homeschooling families face as they prepare their child for college attendance.

A third implication may prove useful to state homeschool support organizations, such as the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania (CHAP). This research may be helpful as CHAP and other homeschool support groups determine which speakers to invite to their annual homeschool convention or even to their monthly support group meetings. These speakers, to include college representatives, could be selected to present topics that focus on financing college tuition, college testing preparation, challenges with the college application and acceptance process, how to structure parent-generated high school transcripts, how to apply for scholarships, and transitioning from home (dependent living) to college (independent living).

Finally, the information gathered as the result of this study should be helpful to the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which is known for its prolific and aggressive research focusing on homeschooling issues. Although HSDLA initially was confined to providing legal homeschooling advice within the U.S., their work and endeavors have expanded internationally. This research could include updated information on current financial aid laws, how to prepare and fund for college, how to protect one's "Freedom of Religion" constitutional rights on controversial social issues within the classroom or with school officials. Additional initiatives could provide for online legal discussions with college-bound students and their parents, focusing on college transitional topics, as well as, providing advice to HSLDA member families on other legal homeschooling issues pertaining to the transition from home to college

environments, the legality of a parent-generated high school transcript, or college requirements mandating that homeschool graduates must take the GED for college entrance.

Limitations

This study, which addresses homeschooled students' transition from their home academic environment into a collegiate one, was limited by four factors: the identification and potential selection of homeschooled participants, parental involvement, communication and scheduling with all participants, and the refined geographical location.

Identifying Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates who would participate in this case study proved challenging. Locating and contacting potential participants who were accessible, responsive, receptive, and willing to contribute in the research was of utmost concern. Without networking and electronic tools such as FACEBOOK and email, contacting additional participants would have been a further challenge.

Likewise, enlisting at least one parent for each homeschool participant limited participation in this study. Consequently, because one parent could not participate, the homeschooled student could not participate in the study, as well. However, the seven mothers who did actively participate in the study, remained dedicated to the study and were enthusiastic about providing valuable information and insights. At the request of two students, their mothers participated simultaneously with them during the personal oral interview to provide information the student either did not know or could not recall.

The results of this study are not generalizable. By using a small sample size of volunteer participants, there is no certainty, nor can any assumptions be made, that the study participants' views or experiences represent those of all other homeschool graduates transitioning from 'home to college.' Also of note, I employed purposeful sampling "to reach a targeted sample quickly

and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern” (Trochim, 2006).

Furthermore, Trochim (2006) advocates using *snowball sampling*, particularly when the:

researcher needs to begin by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in [the] study. You then ask them to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria. Although this method would hardly lead to representative samples, there are times when it may be the best method available. Snowball sampling is especially useful when you are trying to reach populations that are inaccessible or hard to find.

(Nonprobability Sampling, Purposive Sampling section, para. 8)

Conducting face-to-face interviews proved challenging. Student participants were either attending colleges hundreds of miles from me or from each other or they had graduated from college and were residing in a number of states. Contacting and interviewing parents was equally challenging due to scheduling conflicts. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were not always feasible. Personal correspondence via email, chat sessions, electronic questionnaires, and telephonic communications was used very successfully.

Pennsylvania was selected because it is considered by many homeschooling experts as having one of the most restrictive and governmentally intrusive homeschool laws in the United States (HSLDA [website], 2011, “State Laws”).

Recommendations for Future Studies

It would be interesting to perhaps locate and contact these same students in the future and see if the homeschool values their parents imparted actually “stuck” and are being passed down to their children - the next generation of homeschooled children. However, here are other recommended topics for future studies which would be beneficial to fill the gap on homeschooling issues:

1. Compare and contrast the similarities and differences of homeschooled graduates attending college, vocational-technical schooling, or perhaps even an apprenticeship programs.
2. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine and track which homeschooled graduates apply to and complete a bachelor's degree in four years or less.
3. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine and track which homeschooled graduates pursue a master's and doctoral degree.
4. Conduct longitudinal studies to examine and track the degree and career choices of homeschooled graduates and whether they actually work in their degree area.
5. Conduct historical research to discover why homeschoolers choose one particular program of study over another and why they elect to attend junior or community colleges, universities, apprenticeship, vocational-technical programs, or enlist in the military in order to achieve their academic goals.
6. Conduct a longitudinal or historical study tracking homeschooled graduates who apply as college freshman and who eventually complete a master's or other advanced degree in order to discover and understand their choice(s) of academic delivery methods or the length of time it takes to complete their intended education/training goals.
7. Conduct a qualitative research to uncover the growing alternative methods that homeschooled graduates use to reduce the cost of attending college (i.e., completing correspondence courses, taking College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Subject Standardized tests, attending distance/online education programs, taking college courses as high school students, obtaining their entire college education at home through

“homeschooled college”, attending as a college resident or through a blended college attendance venue).

8. Conduct research to discover and understand why homeschooled graduates, who apply to and attend college as freshman, drop out of college before completing their intended educational/training goals. Compare and contrast this drop-out rate with "traditionally schooled" students. Capture the reasons why they drop out of college.
9. Conduct focused research to compare college experiences among siblings.
10. Conduct longitudinal studies to compare the changes in values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues that homeschoolers had during college versus 10 years later. Did their values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues remain the same after a period of time, did they revert back to a previous view they had before attending college, was their religious faith affected, did their faith affect their future thought processes, etc.?
11. Conduct focused research on how the community can prepare homeschool graduates to transition from home to higher institutions of learning.

Summary

This research uncovered a variety of issues affecting the transition of homeschooled graduates from their home academic environment into a collegiate one. Prior research has already established that homeschooled students are just as successful in college environments, if not more so, as traditionally schooled students, despite the same tools not being available to them (i.e., guidance counselors, school loan or scholarship advisors, college admission officer presentation at local public schools, etc.)

Homeschool experts such as Chris Klicka, Dr. Brian Ray, and HSLDA representatives, worked diligently to change the way colleges view and accept homeschooled students into their college programs. Because of these homeschooling experts' ground-breaking work, homeschool graduates are finding growing numbers of colleges more open and receptive to homeschooled graduates attending their schools. But homeschoolers still face challenges as they head off to college. They must prepare for, choose, apply to, transition into, attend, finance, and face other personal or social challenges associated with college attendance. Much of the time, homeschoolers, their parents, and in some cases grandparents, face these challenges on their own with little assistance from their local public school community (i.e., guidance counselors, college recruiter visits, library materials.)

This research is a tribute to those families dedicated to homeschooling their children, not just in elementary grades, but persevering all the way through high school graduation. It is through their dedication and determination that more and more homeschoolers are becoming college graduates and joining the ranks of well-known public and historical figures who were also homeschooled -- notables such as George Washington, Woodrow Wilson, Louisa May Alcott, Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, General Douglas MacArthur, Wolfgang Mozart, Wilbur and Orville Wright, Florence Nightingale, Winston Churchill, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer, and astronaut Sally Ride (as cited in Glass, 2004; homeschoolutah.org, 2002; Moore and Moore, 1982). Additionally, it is a testament to the perseverance and determination of a growing number of homeschooled graduates who transition, attend, and graduate from colleges and universities.

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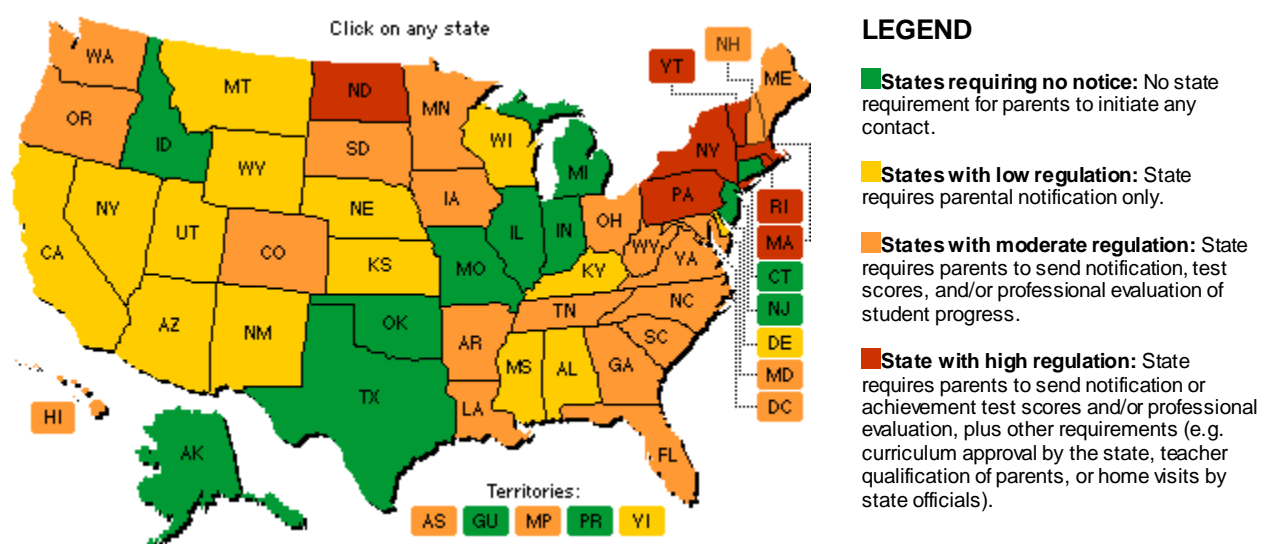
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APPENDIX A

Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) Ranking of Homeschool Friendly States According to Their Homeschooling State Laws

State Laws



From Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). (2011). *State laws*. Retrieved from <http://www.hsllda.org/laws/>. Reprinted with permission by the copyright holder, Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA).

APPENDIX B

Bunday's List of Homeschool Friendly Colleges (C) and Universities (U)

http://learninfreedom.org/colleges_4_hmsc.html

Adelphi U. NY	Butler U. IN
Agnes Scott C. GA	California Institute of Technology
Albertson C. ID	CA
Albion C. MI	California Polytechnic State U., CA
Alfred U. NY	California State U.--Los Angeles CA
Allegheny C. PA	Calvin C. MI
Alma C. MI	Capital U. OH
Alverno C. WI	Carleton C. MN
American U. DC	Carnegie Mellon U. PA
Amherst C. MA	Carroll C. MT
Antioch C. OH	Case Western Reserve U. OH
Arizona State U. AZ	Catholic U. of America DC
Asbury C. KY	Cedarville C. OH
Assumption C. MA	Central C. IA
Auburn U. AL	Christian Brothers U. TN
Augustana C. IL	Claremont McKenna C. CA
Austin C. TX	Clemson U. SC
Baylor U. TX	Coe C. IA
Beloit C. WI	Colby C. ME
Bemidji State U. MN	C. of St. Benedict MN
Bennington C. VT	C. of St. Scholastica MN
Berea C. KY	C. of the Atlantic ME
Berklee C. of Music MA	C. of William and Mary VA
Berry C. GA	C. of Wooster OH
Bethany C. WV	Colorado C. CO
Bethel C. MN	Colorado School of Mines CO
Biola U. CA	Colorado State U. CO
Birmingham-Southern C. AL	Concordia C. Moorhead, MN
Boston C. MA	Cornell C. IA
Boston Conservatory MA	Cornell U. NY
Boston U. MA	Creighton U. NE
Bowdoin C. ME	Dartmouth C. NH
Bradley U. IL	David Lipscomb U. TN
Brandeis U. MA	Davidson C. NC
Brigham Young U. UT	Delaware Valley C. PA
Brown U. RI	Denison U. OH
Bryn Mawr C. PA	DePaul U. IL
Bucknell U. PA	DePauw U. IN
Buena Vista U. IA	Dickinson C. PA

Drake U. IA
 Drew U. NJ
 Drexel U. PA
 Drury C. MO
 Duke U. NC
 Duquesne U. PA
 Earlham C. IN
 Eckerd C. FL
 Edinboro U. of Pennsylvania PA
 Elizabethtown C. PA
 Emory U. GA
 Evergreen State C. WA
 Fashion Institute of Technology NY
 Florida Institute of Technology FL
 Franciscan U. of Steubenville OH
 Franklin and Marshall C. PA
 George Fox U. OR
 George Mason U. VA
 George Washington U. DC
 Georgetown U. DC
 Georgia Institute of Technology GA
 Gettysburg C. PA
 Goddard C. VT
 Gordon C. MA
 Goshen C. IN
 Goucher C. MD
 Grinnell C. IA
 Grove City C. PA
 Guilford C. NC
 Gustavus Adolphus C. MN
 Hampshire C. MA
 Hanover C. IN
 Harding U. AR
 Harvard U. MA
 Harvey Mudd C. CA
 Hastings C. NE
 Haverford C. PA
 Hillsdale C. MI
 Hiram C. OH
 Hobart and William Smith Colleges NY
 Hood C. MD
 Hope C. MI
 Houghton C. NY
 Humboldt State U. CA
 Illinois Institute of Technology IL
 Illinois Wesleyan U. IL
 Indiana U., Bloomington IN
 Iowa State U. IA
 Ithaca C. [yes] NY
 James Madison U. VA
 John Brown U. AR
 Johns Hopkins U. MD
 Juniata C. PA
 Kalamazoo C. MI
 Kansas State U. KS
 Kenyon C. OH
 Kettering U. MI
 King C. TN
 Knox C. IL
 Lafayette C. PA
 Lake Forest C. IL
 Lawrence U. WI
 LeTourneau U. TX
 Lewis & Clark C. OR
 Linfield C. OR
 Louisiana State U. and Agricultural &
 Mechanical C. LA
 Loyola C. MD
 Loyola U. Chicago IL
 Luther C. IA
 Macalester C. MN
 Marietta C. OH
 Marlboro C. VT
 Marquette U. WI
 Maryland Institute C. of Art MD
 Maryville C. TN
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology MA
 Messiah C. PA
 Miami U. OH
 Michigan Technological U. MI
 Middlebury C. VT
 Mills C. CA
 Montana State U.--Billings MT
 Montana State U.--Bozeman MT
 Montana Tech of the U. of Montana MT
 Mount Holyoke C. MA
 Muhlenberg C. PA
 Muskingum C. OH
 New C. of the U. of South Florida FL
 New Mexico Institute of Mining and
 Technology (New Mexico Tech) NM
 New York U. NY

North Carolina State U.
 North Central C. IL
 Northeastern U. MA
 Northwestern C. IA
 Northwestern U. IL
 Oberlin C. OH
 Occidental C. CA
 Oglethorpe U. GA
 Ohio Northern U. OH
 Ohio State U.: Columbus Campus OH
 Ohio U. OH
 Ohio Wesleyan U. OH
 Oklahoma City U. OK
 Oklahoma State U. OK
 Oregon State U. OR
 Ouachita Baptist U. AR
 Pacific Lutheran U. WA
 Pennsylvania State U. University Park Campus
 PA
 Pepperdine U. CA
 Philadelphia C. of Pharmacy and Science PA
 Pitzer C. CA
 Polytechnic U. [yes] NY
 Pomona C. CA
 Princeton U. NJ
 Providence C. RI
 Purdue U. IN
 Quincy University IL
 Radford U. VA
 Reed C. OR
 Regis U. CO
 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute NY
 Rhode Island School of Design RI
 Rhodes C. TN
 Rice U. TX
 Ripon C. WI
 Rochester Institute of Technology NY
 Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology IN
 Rutgers, State U. of New Jersey, Rutgers C.
 NJ
 St. Andrews Presbyterian C. NC
 St. Bonaventure U. NY
 St. John's C. MD & NM
 St. John's U. MN
 St. Joseph's C. ME
 St. Joseph's U. PA
 Saint Mary's C. IN
 St. Mary's C. of California CA
 St. Mary's C. of Maryland MD
 St. Norbert C. WI
 St. Olaf C. MN
 St. Vincent C. PA
 Samford U. AL
 Sarah Lawrence C. NY
 Seattle U. WA
 Seton Hall U. NJ
 Shepherd C. [yes] WV
 Simmons C. MA
 Simon's Rock C. of Bard MA
 Smith C. MA
 Southern Methodist U. TX
 Spring Arbor C. MI
 Stanford U. CA
 State U. of New York at Binghamton NY
 State U. of New York C. at Geneseo NY
 Stephens C. MO
 Stetson U. FL
 Swarthmore C. PA
 Sweet Briar C. VA
 Syracuse U. NY
 Taylor U. IN
 Temple U. PA
 Texas A & M U., College Station TX
 Texas Christian U. TX
 Thomas Aquinas C. CA
 Trinity U. TX
 Truman State U. MO
 Tulane U. LA
 Union U. TN
 US Air Force Academy Colorado Springs, CO
 US Coast Guard Academy CT
 US Military Academy West Point, NY
 US Naval Academy Annapolis, MD
 U. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa AL
 U. of Alabama in Huntsville AL
 U. of Arizona AZ
 U. of California: Berkeley CA
 U. of California: Davis CA
 U. of California: Riverside CA
 U. of California: San Diego
 U. of California: Santa Cruz CA
 U. of Chicago IL

U. of Cincinnati OH
 U. of Colorado at Boulder CO
 U. of Connecticut CT
 U. of Dallas TX
 U. of Dayton OH
 U. of Delaware DE
 U. of Denver CO
 U. of Evansville IN
 U. of Florida FL
 U. of Georgia GA
 U. of Houston TX
 U. of Idaho ID
 U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
 IL
 U. of Iowa IA
 U. of Kansas KS
 U. of Kentucky KY
 U. of Maine, Farmington ME
 U. of Maine, Orono ME
 U. of Maryland, College Park MD
 U. of Massachusetts Amherst MA
 U. of Miami FL
 U. of Michigan MI
 U. of Minnesota, Morris MN
 U. of Minnesota, Twin Cities MN
 U. of Missouri-Columbia MO
 U. of Missouri-Kansas City MO
 U. of Missouri-Rolla MO
 U. of Montana MT
 U. of Nebraska-Lincoln NE
 U. of New Hampshire NH
 U. of North Carolina at Asheville
 U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
 NC
 U. of North Dakota ND
 U. of Notre Dame IN
 U. of Oklahoma OK
 U. of Oregon OR
 U. of Pennsylvania PA
 U. of Pittsburgh PA
 U. of Portland [yes] OR
 U. of Puget Sound WA
 U. of Redlands CA
 U. of Rhode Island RI
 U. of Richmond VA
 U. of Rochester NY
 U. of St. Thomas MN
 U. of San Francisco CA
 U. of South Carolina CA
 U. of Tennessee TN
 U. of Texas at Austin TX
 U. of the South
 U. of Utah UT
 U. of Vermont VT
 U. of Virginia VA
 U. of Washington WA
 U. of Wisconsin--Madison WI
 U. of Wyoming WY
 Ursinus C. PA
 Valparaiso U. IN
 Vanderbilt U. TN
 Vassar C. NY
 Villanova U. PA
 Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State U. VA
 Wabash C. IN
 Warren Wilson C. NC
 Wartburg C. IA
 Washington and Lee U. VA
 Washington C. MD
 Washington U. MO
 Wellesley C. MA
 Wells C. NY
 Wesleyan U. CT
 West Virginia Wesleyan C. WV
 Westminster Choir C. of Rider U. NJ
 Westminster C. MO
 Wheaton C. IL
 Wheaton C. MA
 Whitman C. WA
 Whittier C. CA
 Willamette U. OR
 William Jewell C. [yes] MO
 Williams C. MA
 Wingate U. NC
 Winona State U. MN
 Wittenberg U. OH
 Wofford C. SC
 Worcester Polytechnic Institute MA
 Xavier U. OH
 Yale U. CT

APPENDIX C

FACEBOOK - Call for Assistance

Can you help me out with this research and/or send to other homeschooled grads who may be able to help?

Calling all homeschooled graduates who applied to, are attending, or have graduated from Pennsylvania (PA) colleges!! I'm a homeschooling mom who is doing a major research paper on homeschooled students and how they transition from home to college. My research will require you to answer a short online questionnaire (takes about 15 minutes) and perhaps talk to me if I need further clarification on some of your answers to the questionnaire. Can you help me out? Your name will be kept private if you want. It's OK if you need to get the information from your parents. Please pass this on to your other homeschooled friends and then email me directly by mid-April if you can help out [my email address removed]. I really appreciate your help. Shellie Glass (Doctoral candidate, Liberty University)

APPENDIX D

CHAP 2006-2008 Convention Topics – College Information

<i>Title of Presentations</i>	<i>Presenters</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Admissions Process: The Homeschooled Student’s Guide 	Diane Kummer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Funding 	Shellie Glass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Level Exams: The Nitty-Gritty on How to Prepare 	Janice Campbell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Searching 	Shellie Glass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Without Compromise: Completing Your Degree 	Scott Wightman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t Home College Me! 	Bruce & Mary Ann Eagleson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a Jump Start on College 	Janice Campbell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The High-School Transcript: It’s Easier Than You Think 	Janice Campbell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeschooling the College Bound: Successfully Navigating the Road to Admission 	Betty Cooke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Does One Choose a College and Be Accepted to a College of his/her Choice 	James Stobaugh
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s Off to Work We Go! Homeschooling for the Marketplace, the Home Front, or the Military 	Betty Cooke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning into Life After High School 	Camden Spiller
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your College Degree: Faster, For Less, For Sure! 	Woody Robertson

Appendix E

Letter of Introduction

Date

(Name of Student))

(Street Address)

(City State, Zip)

Dear xxx(Salutation):

I am a Department of Education doctoral candidate at Liberty University located in Lynchburg, Virginia and also a Pennsylvania resident. The purpose of my study is to discover how you transitioned from your home academic environment into a collegiate one. Since Pennsylvania is known by some homeschool experts for having one of the most governmentally regulated homeschool state laws within the United States, I am attempting to determine if that may also have any effect on how you transitioned to college.

Your participation in my study is crucial and would involve up to three steps.

1. The first step is to respond to this letter of introduction by May 18, 2011, on whether or not you are interested in participating in this study. Please indicate your response on the enclosed consent form (page 3) and return to me either as an email attachment to [email addressed removed] or you may fax it directly to me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx **or** you can agree on the electronic questionnaire noted in item #2. Further contact may not be necessary.
2. The second step would be completing either the paper (page 4) or electronic questionnaire available at the website <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22CCSMDPFMU/>. At your request as indicated on the consent form, your name will be kept confidential and will be identified only by title such as "Ms./Mr. A." Your personal identifying information (PII) will be kept confidential. Additionally, *for security purposes, your online questionnaire results can only be accessed by the researcher.*
3. The final step may involve face-to-face, telephonic, or email interviews to clarify any responses you may have made to the questionnaire or to answer any questions you may have about this study.

In order to get a thorough sampling, I will be canvassing as many Pennsylvania homeschooled graduates as possible who applied to Pennsylvania's colleges and universities. Therefore, **if you know any other homeschooled graduates who have applied to a college, I would appreciate you forwarding this information on to them.**

Please respond to the questionnaire, if at all possible, no later than May 18, 2011. If you should like more information or have questions concerning this research project, please don't hesitate to contact me by telephone, xxx-xxx-xxxx or to my email address [email address removed] or you can contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@liberty.edu. At your request, I will also provide you with a summary of the findings at the end of my research.

I want to thank you in advance for allowing me the opportunity to use your college transitional experience in my research and for your cooperation and support in completing my dissertation research project.

Sincerely,

Shellie R. Glass
Liberty University doctoral candidate
[home address withheld]
[email address withheld]
c) [telephone number removed]
h) [telephone number removed]

Dr. Kathie Morgan, EdD
Dissertation Committee Chair
Liberty University

DISCLAIMER - THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA AND IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH IRB GUIDANCE TO PROTECT HUMAN SUBJECTS.

APPENDIX F

Statement of Consent Form

*This questionnaire is designed specifically for homeschooled students who graduated from high school using a homeschool program and who applied to at least one Pennsylvania college or university. The questions can be answered either in paper or electronic format. You may consult a parent or other person who may be able to recall information which you do not know or may not remember. Your personal identifying information (PII) will be kept confidential. **For security purposes, your online questionnaire results can only be accessed by the researcher.***

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I have asked questions and received answers, if needed.

___ I consent to participate in the study and my initials or first name can be used in the study results.

___ I consent to participate in the study, but my initials or first name cannot be used in the study results. I understand that my questionnaire and/or telephonic responses will be identified by a descriptor such as “Ms. A” or “Mr. A”.

___ I cannot participate in the study.

Homeschooled student’s Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

I want to thank you in advance for allowing me the opportunity to use your information and data in my research and for your cooperation and support in completing my dissertation research project. If you should like more information or have questions concerning this research project, you can contact me at [telephone number removed] or [email address removed] or you can contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Shellie R. Glass
Liberty University doctoral candidate

Dr. Kathie Morgan
Dissertation Committee Chair
Liberty University

DISCLAIMER - THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY, LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA AND IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH IRB GUIDANCE TO PROTECT HUMAN SUBJECTS.

APPENDIX G

Student Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Question 1: Why were you homeschooled?

1a. How did the decision to be homeschooled (whether the decision was made by your parents or yourself) impact you? Were you in agreement with the decision? Were you happy or unhappy being homeschooled?

1b. How did you feel about it at that time as opposed to how you feel about it now?

1c. Were you ever given a choice of continuing or discontinuing to homeschool?

Question 2: What experiences did you have as you transitioned or once you transitioned to a postsecondary institute?

2a. Why did you apply to the college you ultimately attended? Are you glad you attended that school?

2b. Did you graduate?

Question 3: Did you have any experience(s) in college which changed your values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues? If yes, please describe.

3a. What were the results/outcomes of these college experiences on your life?

APPENDIX H

Parent Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Question 1: Why did you decide to homeschool?

- 1a. How long did you homeschool this child?
- 1b. How did you feel about homeschooling this child at that time as opposed to how you feel about it now?
- 1c. Did you ever give your child a choice of continuing or discontinuing to homeschool? What were the results?

Question 2: How did you prepare your child for the transition into college?

- 2a. What experiences did you have which supported your child transitioning from home to college? What were the challenges of your child attending college?
- 2b. Why did your child apply to the college he/she ultimately attended? How did you feel about the school he/she attended?

Question 3: Has your child shared with you any of their college experiences which may have changed their lives? What were those experiences? What advice did they ask for or did you provide at the time?

- 3a. In what ways do you feel your child has changed in their values, beliefs, world views, or thoughts on social issues (samples include but are not limited to: abortion, divorce, premarital sex, homosexuality) after attending college?
- 3b. In your opinion, what were the results/outcomes of these college experiences?

APPENDIX I

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

From: IRB, IRB
Sent: Friday, March 16, 20xx 11:08 AM
To: Glass, Shellie
Cc: IRB, IRB; Morgan, Kathie May
Subject: IRB Change in Protocol Approval: IRB Approval 763.111409

Good Morning Shellie,

This email is to inform you that your request to change the title and research questions to “gather phenomenological insights on whether the homeschooler’s views, beliefs, [and/or] ideals may or may not have changed once they transitioned into a postsecondary institution” for your study has been approved.

Thank you for complying with the IRB requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research!

Best,

[name removed]
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
The Graduate School

(434) 522-0506

Liberty University | 40 Years of Training Champions for Christ: 1971-2011