

The New York Times

Has Home Schooling Achieved Respect?

To the Editor:

"Unhappy in Class, More Are Learning at Home" (front page, Nov. 10) presents home schooling as an alternative to traditional schools. But do we have to choose between them?

Traditional schools can be a great foundation upon which to add parental and other academic resources.

Our seventh grader takes synchronous literary analysis online, collaborating with other students around the world, and asynchronous math online courses through a program for gifted youth offered by Stanford University.

We put time and resources into cultural activities like taking our children to performance art, plays, concerts, and travel activities (like living in Rome one summer).

There is more than enough videogame and instant-messaging time to sponge up. There are more than enough opportunities for parents to help with studying for tests and getting project resources.

Choosing between traditional school and home school may be a false choice. CHARLES WANKEL
Bridgewater, N.J., Nov. 10, 2003

To the Editor:

Re "Unhappy in Class, More Are Learning at Home" (front page, Nov. 10):

Your article makes a fair case for some home schooling, but when it comes to socialization, these children fail to experience diversity in the classroom in terms of race, religion and ethnicity.

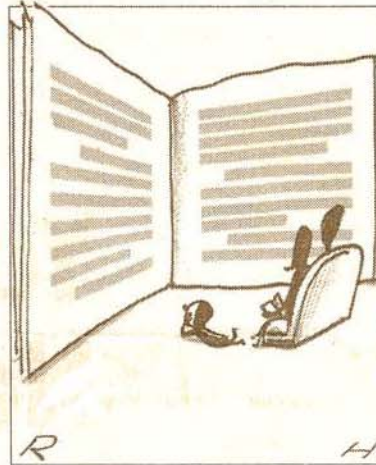
Depriving them of this exposure is bound to lead to even more insularity, to behavior that should not be condoned. MARIA ARREAZA

Fairfield, Calif., Nov. 10, 2003
The writer is a teacher.

To the Editor:

Re "Unhappy in Class, More Are Learning at Home" (front page, Nov. 10):

I am a home-schooler in New Hampshire, and this is one of the few articles I have read that portray home schooling as home-schoolers see it rather than as an outsider looking in sees it.



Rob Hatem

We do see ourselves as diverse, but the eclectic selection of materials on the shelf; the belief that children are more important than a bureaucracy; and the mixture of at-home and outside activities are all hallmarks of the families in every support group to which I have belonged in my 10 years of home schooling.

CHRIS HAMILTON
Brookline, N.H., Nov. 10, 2003

To the Editor:

Home schooling is a not-so-surprising outgrowth of both the feminist and the baby boomer movements ("Unhappy in Class, More Are Learning at Home," front page, Nov. 10).

As we progress and usually influence those institutions that we encounter, we have finally met one that is unmoving: the American education system.

When we find that this one just won't change, we just withdraw our kids and teach them ourselves.

The conundrum is if our opting out of an unsympathetic, inflexible and very unkind system that destroys the values we emulate is ultimately good or bad for that system.

But I don't have time for philosophical discussions; I have to go teach my child.

THERESA M. PORTELLI
Albany, Nov. 11, 2003