

‘Hanging off a cliff’: Home Educating parents’ experience of Exam Cancellations due to Covid Pandemic

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Abstract

National examinations were cancelled for students in England at the end of the summer term in 2020/2021, and were replaced by teacher assessed grades due to the Covid pandemic. The aim of this paper is to present the experience of Home Educating parents as they navigated the process required to enable their child to access grades during this crisis. Home educated students, can only have access to exams as private candidates. The exam cancellations resulted in restricted access to teacher assessments for this population due to the nature of their educational settings. This study employed semi structured interviews with Home Educating parents in England to focus on their experience of the exam cancellations and their access to alternative grading processes for their children. The data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The most significant finding is the lack of regulations for exams and assessments, which has the potential to limit a population of children to obtain the grades they need to progress further educationally. The other significant finding that emerged is the impact of the exam cancellation on the family, including the emotional, time and financial costs. In conclusion, questions are raised about the importance of just and equitable access to qualifications for Home-educated students.

Keywords: Covid-19; Exams; Exam cancellation; Home Education; Homeschooling; IPA