

The Voices of Young People: A Participatory Study on the Educational Outcomes and Social Development of Home Educated Adolescents

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Abstract

The is a participatory study that explores the educational outcomes and social development of adolescents engaged in home education. Six adolescents from the South West of England conducted their own research, addressing two key questions related to their academic achievement and social development. Data was collected through visual boards, blogs, and vlogs, and analysed using thematic analysis with support from the author. This paper will outline the findings, based on the six individual studies and highlight the methodological approach of participatory research with young people. This study addresses the lack of understanding the children and young people's perspectives being home educated as their voice is often excluded from empirical research and policy making. While the justifications for the rise on home education have been widely presented in studies with home educating parents, indicating a general consensus with a dissatisfaction with mainstream education based on pedagogical, and philosophical and educational stands, young people's voices are not represented and excluded from the research process. In response to this gap, this study gives a unique insight into the perspectives of home educated young people on their educational outcomes and social development of home educated adolescents, through their lens, their voice, their research project. The findings are presented through the lens a conceptual framework comprising the theories: Self Determination theory, Multiple Intelligence Theory and the John Dewey's concept of Education as a Process of Living. Findings suggest that home educated teenagers enjoy increased freedom, time, and space to tailor their education according to their individual needs, interests, and abilities. They often integrate learning into their daily lives, experiencing education without the rigid boundaries typically found in schools.

Keywords: home education; participatory research; alternative education; research with young people; children as researchers