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A DECADE OF HOME SCHOOLING IN SASKATCHEWAN,  
CANADA (1984-1994): A CASE STUDY

by

Sandra Christine Hill

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

University of San Diego

1995

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A DECADE OF HOME SCHOOLING IN SASKATCHEWAN,  
CANADA (1984-1994): A CASE STUDY

Sandra C. Hill, University of San Diego, 1995. Pp. 166

Chairperson: Patricia A. Lowry

The efficacy of alternative education has had a significant impact on public education. The diversity of cultures, lifestyles, and needs of home-schooling families compelled the public educational sector to make available educational alternatives.

The purpose of this study was to build upon previous research (Hill, 1988) by interviewing a sample of the same families and their children to investigate the longitudinal experiences for a follow-up study. The representative sample participated in a study entitled An Investigation of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan (Hill, 1988).

Twenty families (18 parents and 25 children) were interviewed; 10 were selected as case studies. Home schoolers ranged from 16 to 26 years and presently are involved in various professions and vocations. In-depth interviews and open-ended questions elicited rich and detailed accounts of how home schooling had influenced each participant's life.

A large majority of participants were transformed through the recognition of choice, networking, and reflection. The follow-up interviews validated their experiences and allowed them to reflect on their respective

roles, feelings of success and failure. To exercise choice was the dominant founding principle, and commitment to personal and communal needs were the keys to successful home-schooling practice. Evaluation and assessment were the acquisition of either a Christian or a liberal education, which could be achieved within the context of the home and community.

Course content supported a basic core curriculum best described as a liberal education. Elective areas of study were principled by two schools of thought: families who prescribed to the "free schools" movement and those whose programs were based on evangelical Christianity. The definition of home schooling was expanded to focus on multidirectional teaching and learning. Each participant's self-esteem, ambition, and self-confidence in transferring the skills, knowledge, and values to their networks validated their experiences and enhanced their personal growth. The globalization of education, integration of world resources, and rapid changes in lifestyles required an examination of the evolution of home schooling, its founding principles, and curriculum assessments.

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## Dedication

This research is dedicated to my parents, Jack and Helen Hill, my brother and sisters, nieces and nephews, friends, resource people, and home-schooling families. They gave me the inspiration to study leadership and the opportunity to make a difference.

## Acknowledgments

The committee members who served on this dissertation included a historian, an organizational leadership specialist, and a science specialist. Their perspectives were varied and their combined interdisciplinary strength contributed to the final document.

Specifically, a special appreciation is conveyed to Dr. Patricia A. Lowry for her flexibility, wisdom and insight. Her time lines were succinct, her knowledge of the history of education was impeccable, and her high-spirited confidence and drive motivated the researcher to stay focused. Her support will always be cherished as Dr. Lowry has allowed me the freedom to study an area of interest and relay the political, economic, and social realities that constitute the world of choice and learning.

Dr. Bobbi Hansen will always be remembered for her extremely constructive feedback, insight, and demeanor. She is a beautiful professional, both inwardly and outwardly.

I would also like to thank Dr. Larry E. Frase for his guidance and direction. I will always remember him as a gentleman and a scholar and a fine professor.

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Thank you Elisa and John, Gail and Eric for your friendship, moral support, and computer assistance in the middle of those hot summer nights in San Diego.

Debra appeared from Canada to act as a catalyst and motivate me until the end, and I am grateful for the support. Thanks to you and Verna I have finally found my "center."

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Thank you to Mr. Ken Passler and Mrs. Shirley Gange, directors of education of the Carlton Comprehensive High School Board, who supported my educational leave, and to Mr. John Kuzbik, principal of Carlton Comprehensive High School, who covered for me in the "flex" times.

A special thank you is given to those individuals and institutions who assisted me with financial support: my parents Jack and Helen, Uncle Nick and Aunt June, and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Branion Branch, Prince



Albert who trusted all along that the amalgamation of personal and educational loans would eventually come to fruition.

Last, but not least, the home schoolers were responsible once again for the privilege to share in significant sojourns in your lives. Your trust will always be cherished, and the kindred spirit that drove you has transformed my life and challenged the way that I think about possibilities.

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## THE PROLOGUE

### Ingrid Dancer

This research is dedicated to the achievements of home schoolers in Saskatchewan and the partnerships they created in order to achieve their goals. One home schooler in particular documented in vivid detail the progression of her home-schooling experience. Her personal sojourn was supported by her parents, the high school she left at age fifteen, and the central office administration of the school district in River at a time when home schooling was considered to be in violation of the Saskatchewan Education Act, 1978, and the Canadian compulsory education laws of the early 1980s.

Ingrid Dancer and her family forged ahead to create a home-schooling program based on interest, integration, and greater empowerment in learning. The ideas, philosophies, practices, and reflections shared by the Dancer family were well-documented throughout the span of Ingrid's home schooling and were typical of the experiences of the other home schoolers who participated in this study.

## CHAPTER 1

### STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

#### Introduction

Home schooling, once a necessary mainstay of education on the North American frontier, waned in the 19th century and early part of the 20th century. It retreated before the impetus for compulsory schooling and the public goal of seeing all children graduate from high school, according to Patricia Lines (1985, p. 9). In the past two decades, the practice has reemerged as a popular option for parents who desire greater control of their children's education, with the advent of the personal computer, educational compact discs, on-line databases, and renewed educational values.

Although at one time home schooling had a religious flavor, the alternative to public schools recently has been more competitive. Some school jurisdictions support home schoolers and have open-door policies to public school facilities, while others have not been as flexible. Whatever the reasons for opting for home schooling, thousands of parents in North America argue against the risk of missed social opportunities for the advantage of letting their children learn at a pace tailored to their abilities.

John Naisbitt (1982, p. 159) has estimated the number of home-schooled children to be one million or more in the United States and 125,000 across Canada (Statistics Canada Annual Report, 1993).

Home schooling, for preliminary purposes, was defined by Holt (1981, p. 13) as a "practice of teaching one's children at home" was adopted. In addition, any situation in which the primary setting for a child's education is in the home or surrounding community in which at least one child was taught by his/her parents, is encompassed in the definition and grounds the concept of the multidirectional nature of the teaching and learning relationship.

The purpose of the introduction is to suggest a historical explanation of the phenomenon. This was done by exploring shifting roles of the family and the school as educator, which helps to frame a modernization theory which Berger, Berger, and Kellner (1974) suggested may have been driven by the evolution of the idea of quasi-religious schools.

One conclusion is that the American love affair with public schools and their civic mission has ended. What followed in the 19th century was a belief that people were optimistic about the potential of what schooling could offer. Paradoxically, they were uneasy about the stability of the political and social order.



Signs of this loss of a widely shared faith in a messianic civic mission for public schooling is quite evident in recent reports that offer no vision, no mission. Rather, they focus on what is wrong and posit why schools are not working. One reads about the declining scores of the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) and the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). National achievement results and teacher accountability are primary concerns. Urban schools are criticized for being little more than custodial institutions plagued with discipline problems and inadequate security. One is offered statistics on the number of high school graduates who can neither read nor write, much less demonstrate literacy in mathematics, science, or geography. There appears to be a loss of legacy with its dictionary of cultural literacy of basic facts Americans should know (Hirsch, 1988).

Besides the formal public criticism, since the 1960s some parents have chosen to opt out of existing school systems into various private or independent schools. For a period, some turned to alternative schools known as "free schools." Others sought out fundamentalist Christian schools and academies. Now one sees the "pedagogues" and "ideologues," as Van Galen (1988, p. 54) described them, reject all schools and turn to what is paradoxically labeled "home schooling."

The expanded literature review in Chapter 2 will examine a more detailed perspective of the development and demise of quasi-religious ideology, informing a civic mission for both American and Canadian public schools and their interplay with family and community educational needs and desires. There will be a discussion of the source and transformation to beliefs in the mission of public schools and the 19th century uncertainties, when religious and political leaders debated individualism versus universal education. The outcry of progressive critics over school district consolidation in the 1840s and 1860s led to the bureaucratization of schools which was perceived to turn them into little "families" and "communities."

The period from the 1920s and 1960s appeared to be characterized by an increasingly frantic search for educational panaceas to address social ills and national crises. By the end of the 1960s, the idea of a national mission for public schooling had disappeared. The 1970s proved to be a time of crisis in faith, both civic and religious. Distrust of social institutions of all kinds ran deeper. Out of this era of deep disillusionment with government, schools, and even organized religion, many turned to self-nurturance, family, and neighborhood. This was the cultural setting for the home-school environment.

### Purpose of the Study

Since 1988, home schooling has received status within the Department of Education in Saskatchewan. The phenomenon, as first described over a decade ago, has received considerable attention regarding its relationship with a number of independent and private schools and the creation of two Deputy Ministers of Education Advisory Committees that brought stakeholders together. Many of the issues examined were related to Sandra Hill's (1988) recommendations summarized later in this chapter. Other stakeholders represented various governmental, teacher federation, and school district organizations as well as home-schooler alliances.

The purpose of this study was to build upon previous research (Hill, 1988) by interviewing a sample of the same home-schooling families and their children who were now in their late teens or adult years. The parents and the home-schooled children who were excluded from the original study, in the majority of cases, evaluated a decade of home schooling which provided the researcher with valuable descriptions of demographic information, achievements, and assessments.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain aspects of home schooling over time. The following research questions formed the basis of the case study investigation for this dissertation:

Question 1: What were the founding purposes for each of the home-schooling groups in this case study?

(a) How have the founding purposes been modified or remained constant over the life of the case study groups?

(b) If there have been significant changes in these purposes, what are these changes and why did such changes occur?

Question 2: What home-schooling practices did each group in the case study employ?

(a) How have these practices changed or evolved over the life of the case study?

(b) What criteria were used to develop those practices?

Question 3: What assessment strategies were used by each home-schooling group in this case study to determine success of their efforts?

(a) Did each group believe they were successful thus far in their home-schooling efforts? Why?

### Significance of the Study

Based upon the original descriptions of home schooling and the definitions and perceptions shared in 1988, the following recommendations were made:

1. The longitudinal evaluation of the long-term effects of home schooling should occur--or would be useful before home schooling is permitted, assessed, or legislated

--in order to preserve the parental right to choice in education, to ensure the State's right to protect individuals, including children for the good of the State and to preserve the rights of the child.

2. The debate related to parental choice, children's rights, and compulsory education needed a more empirical rather than a philosophical base as it related to child development and learning.

3. An examination of the process of defying the law in order to affect change in education could be an extension of another study (Hill, 1988).

It was the purpose of this research to elicit information about home-schooling experiences as the participants perceived them. This information assisted the researcher to gain insight and understanding of the long-term effects of home schooling, which related to their perspectives of events that occurred in their lives.

In Saskatchewan a massive provincial curriculum initiative occurred in the late 1980s. It continues to emerge structurally in its adaptive dimensions and circular designs into the 1990s. Home-schooling phraseology appears to have influenced the curricular change processes and strategic planning efforts by adding to educational terminology and jargon. Terms like life-long learning, independent learning, creative and critical thinking, and cooperative learning, originally coined by authors like John

Holt (1976), are now more prevalent. Many of the new teaching strategies have an independent learning focus that can be traced to an examination of home-schooling thought, philosophy, and literature (Illich, 1971; Holt, 1976; Lines, 1987, 1995; Moore & Moore, 1988; Dobson, 1987) as well as other home-schooling advocates.

Further political movements emerged from the historical writings of social activist and theorist Ivan Illich in the 1950s and 1960s. His efforts were to de-school society at large. He theorized that there were links to the belief that there was value in the creation of skill centers for citizens of all ages to learn from each other in focused, political attempts to create a sense of life-long learning towards the betterment of society and the common good. Such principles, addressing the common good as a focus for the creation of modern day preoccupations with the enhancement of a communitarian society, purported by such futurists as Joseph Rost (1991) and Paul Kennedy (1993) warned about the future of global education and the immediacy of the reality that "technologically-based countries face difficulties in dealing with certain forces of global change: the decline of fertility rates, population imbalances, global warming, financial volatility, and the need to cushion farming communities from increasing obsolescence" (p. 235).

Many of these concerns are the reasons why home-schooling families opted out of public schools as a result

of the global, environmental, and political concerns they believed that institutions like schools co-opted. Kennedy (1993) also posited that countries that do not position themselves technologically and educationally, for the new realities, may find themselves in grave difficulty as North Americans and their institutions move into the Third Millennium.

These advocates and researchers highlighted for public educators that the face of education and its structures are changing. How successful these changes will be is a discussion for another topic or study.

Similarly, many of the home-schooling families cited improved achievement as a reason for educating their children at the onset. Many of our school mission and vision statements in Saskatchewan now include these ascribing to the need for "excellence" and "quality" in education, which are presented as instructional goals and ideals that many home schoolers demand of both their practice and education. However, many parents in the original study had difficulty describing their teaching practices. In fairness, and in retrospect, the very nature of the questions that the researcher asked of them were contradictory to the philosophy of home schooling, which is to go beyond the notion of teaching to independent and shared learning. Not surprisingly, many authors such as Leonard Shulman (1986), James Cibulka (1982), Patricia Lines

(1995), and others doubt that parents teaching their children in their own homes or within the extension of the community can be pedagogically successful at transmitting the curriculum offered in schools.

In effect, Shulman (1986) proposed two major agendas for schooling and public education in particular. One agenda was the hidden curriculum socializing generations of children through the concept of community built into the classroom. Subsequently, the intention of this follow-up study was to find as many of the home-schooling population as possible and to ask them to refocus their attention on the nature and extent of their home-schooling experience throughout a decade of practice. Their perceptions and reflections provided valuable answers that addressed the need cited in the Hill (1988, p. 168) study to determine the efficacy of home schooling over a longitudinal period of time. Secondly, it was surmised by the researcher that the home schoolers would share important perceptions and assessments of their experiences, and they would articulate in greater depth and from the "voice of experience" the resources and curricula employed which proved to be effective.



Research Design and Case  
Study Methodology

Discussion

A qualitative approach to observe and gather data information was employed to reflect on the home-schooling experience of the selected home schoolers as posited in the proposal. The focus was determined to be ten multiple case studies that revealed the "interaction of significant factors" (Merriam, 1988, p. 10). The richness and volume of the data allowed the researcher the flexibility to end the sample at that number for purposes of the investigation. The researcher looked at the purposes, practices, and experiences of how each home-schooling family's program evolved or changed. Yin (1984) elucidated the claim that "what is intended in terms of methodology is defining within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context, are clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

The case study approach was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe and analyze the particular home-schooling experiences in qualitative, complex, and comprehensive terms as they were perceived to have developed and continue to develop in each of the home-schooling groups. However, there existed the possibility in such a study that as data were collected and analyzed, there may have been a need to modify the original research

questions for purposes of clarity and probing which related to question 2 and its revisions.

The researcher, as an educational administrator, had both personal experiences with home schoolers and affiliations with a variety of agencies. As anticipated, additional information surfaced that necessitated further investigation, specifically with regard to determining how many of the sample of home schoolers belonged to the various networks and whether or not they had registered for financial arrangements within the new legal contextual legislation. While the researcher was conscious of the bias, conclusions were held lightly in order to maintain openness and skepticism while in the process of investigating "inchoate and vague at first, then increasingly explicit and grounded," to use the classic term of Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 22).

#### Procedures

The researcher conducted this case study in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Located geographically in Central Canada, Saskatchewan has both an agrarian and urban population within its boundaries. It is renowned for international grain and potash exports. Due to the province's expansive nature and the distance from community to community, whenever possible the researcher investigated

those families in nearest proximity to the home base of Prince Albert.

A case study approach was employed for the purpose of this investigation, using a variety of research methods to gather data to explain how the families changed and how their programs worked. Guba and Lincoln (1987) believed that researchers are a vital part of research as they are the data collection instrument. They saw the researcher working in a natural setting using a variety of methods to observe normal occurrences and arriving at reasonable interpretations of that data. Yin (1984) emphasized that "the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence--documents, artifacts, interviews and observations" (p. 20). The intent was to use all of these sources as they pertained to the research questions posed by this study.

Data were gathered by observing and recording what happened in the lives of the home-schooling families and their home-schooling experiences, by interviewing a number of people and examining the documents and records they maintained. These documents included: communications with school boards, other home schoolers and networks; extension school curricula and program offerings; home-schooling policies and local agreements with school jurisdictions; minutes of meetings, correspondence, newsletters and

material that was distributed by schools, teachers, parents and other professionals, and community liaisons.

The investigation was carried out in a number of locales in Saskatchewan and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and the states of New York and Wisconsin. The reputational approach worked effectively as denoted by the fact that the researcher found the sample population with seven days of inquiries. Four out of ten interviews were conducted by telephone. It was also projected that many of the home schoolers would reside in locations different from those of their parents, which proved to be true and time-consuming for the researcher. However, their responses yielded valuable results in terms of insight, personal experiences, and reflections of the individuals around whom these efforts were centered.

Informants among the home-schooling sample were selected from a list of the original twenty families interviewed from 1984 to 1988. Each family was asked about the founding purposes they held for home schooling, the practices they employed, and the assessment strategies they used to determine the success of their efforts. These individuals exhibited a level of trust with the researcher that was encouraging and facilitating. Both interviewee and interviewer shared sets of knowledge and common ground related to the stories of success and failure that were shared.

Families were interviewed by the researcher for a minimum of one hour and a maximum of five hours. In addition, follow-up interviews were conducted with two families who wished to share more information or rethink their original responses once they received a transcription and verbatim account of their interviews. Two families declined and verified that the description was accurate based on their previous experience. Families were interviewed at a time suitable to them and coordinated with the researcher's schedule in the evenings or on weekends due to schedules and travel considerations.

All available children were interviewed with the permission of their parents. Seven home schoolers described their experience as a home schooler. In the case of the adults, it was difficult to interview them with their parents as they resided in different locations. On a number of occasions they held different opinions about their experiences which amounted to points of conjecture.

In order to investigate the research questions posed for this study, it was anticipated that the families would agree to make available to the researcher any material related to the programs and changes that occurred. Documents were examined and recorded to discover trends, highlight relationships, values and beliefs, and, in general, to provide support for data gathered relating to

the research questions. This approach has been supported by Borg and Gall (1989).

### Data Analysis

The study generated questions to which the researcher sought answers and descriptions. However, early in the investigation the researcher evaluated which questions were relevant and those which needed to be reformulated to direct the intended research (Biklen, 1985). Once data were gathered, the researcher analyzed the information and discovered themes and patterns which highlighted the process of home schooling.

The researcher combined data from the various sources available to her and used the process of triangulation, described by Guba and Lincoln (1989), as a way to test the accuracy of her interpretations as the research unfolded. The primary goal in the analysis was to bring order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. This was done through careful consideration of the data to discover significant classes of things, persons, events, and their characteristics.

Through the process of identifying marginal themes, recurring ideas or use of language, and patterns of beliefs, the researcher developed categories which were internally inconsistent but distinct from one another (Guba, 1981). Gradually the researcher linked these themes and patterns,

drew connections, and highlighted emerging patterns. The researcher was aware that the raw data may have had no inherent meaning or value unto itself. Therefore, one task was to bring meaning to these data and then to write an enriched account in the report in relation to the research questions.

In addition to the case study methodology to be employed, several ethnographic techniques enhanced the results of the study. The design included seeking to describe the culture of selected home-school families, using a triad of ethnographic techniques, namely observation, informant interviewing, and collection of artifacts pertinent to the practice of home schooling.

The researcher attempted to rediscover a segment of the population who had participated in the original study by Hill (1988). She conducted personal interviews utilizing a field study approach. It was assumed that "the participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes: (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation, and (2) to observe the activities, people and physical aspects of the situation" (Spradley, 1979, p. 54). In this study, the researcher spent time with each of the ten original families or groups selected for intensive interviews to take field notes on the physical setting and the behaviors of home schoolers. Teaching and learning contexts both in the

home and in the extended learning communities were described.

All families selected for interview and observation met the following criteria:

1. The parents were involved in home schooling for more than one year.
2. The children were of school age at the time of the original interview.
3. The home-school parents were willing to share norm-reference tests as well as successes and failures.
4. Families presently selected may have resided in different school districts.
5. Home-schooled children agreed to evaluate their own experiences whenever possible.
6. When it was geographically and financially ineffective to conduct interviews in person, telephone interviews were considered to be equally valuable and an appropriate research technique.

Prior to interviews with the parents, and whenever possible with their children, informed consent forms for participation in the study were to be signed (see Appendix A).

The case study approach was used to collect data in this study. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984), three kinds of data were gathered using this technique: baseline data, process data, and values data. In collecting baseline



data through the interview process, the researcher gathered "information about the human and technological context of the research population" (p. 97). All data collected were kept confidential and intended to enhance the picture of home-schooling accomplishments. Judgments are made in Chapter 4 as to whether or not participants felt that their accomplishments were attributed to the home-schooling experience.

The process data utilized was comprised of information determining the outcomes of a method or innovation. In this case, field notes or taped interviews added to experiences described by the home schoolers and related to either a typical or memorable home-schooling year or the length of the total experience.

The methodology of the interview process was selected because the interview was the most appropriate device for obtaining information of this nature. An interview about a long-term experience obtained a great deal of oral information and was adaptable to individual situations. The interviewer knew whether or not a respondent understood a question and could, within limits, repeat or rephrase the question. The opportunity for probing into the context was to encourage and provide reasons for answers to questions (Spradley, 1979).

In this study, the researcher engaged in a friendly conversation with the participants to rebuild the rapport

that existed at the time of the 1988 study. The purposeful exchange or meanings were supported by Spradley (1979) who noted that informants were a "source of information: literally, they became the teacher of the ethnographer [researcher]" (p. 25).

It was intended that primary evaluation of the home schoolers would provide testimony of their commitment to the process and result in significant responses to the research questions. Similar to an ethnographic research strategy, the researcher adopted the practice of taking notes whenever possible throughout the interviews and made subsequent home visits, if deemed necessary. Tests of formal and informal assessments, journals, diaries, or reports were accumulated; however, they were not limited to lesson plans, packaged materials, progress records and reports, and technical resources.

For the purpose of this study, directors of education were not interviewed about their continued experiences with home-schooling families, as the significance of their contributions related to the study by Hill (1988), in order to generate the names of families in respective jurisdictions, and their successors may not have kept accurate records of the home-schooling accounts. The researcher may not have been able to access the desired information for a number of extraneous reasons.

Interviews were pilot tested by two home-school families. They had not been part of the original study but were home schooling in Saskatchewan in 1995. The study population was selected at random from contacts with the Saskatchewan Home Schooling Association and informal contacts. The pilot test served the purpose of assessing the feasibility of the questions and thereby improved the clarity of the interview schedule, especially research question 2. Second, it attempted to identify, alter, or improve the final interview schedule, especially research question 2. It identified, altered, and removed any threatening items that would have deterred or altered the nature of the responses. Subsequently, the final interview schedule employed the ten selected families for the study.

Besides taking field notes, the researcher audio-tape recorded both the personal and telephone interviews whenever possible for the purposes of transcription and verification for internal validity. Three families preferred not to be audio-taped. Confidentiality was guaranteed by the researcher, although it did not appear to be a concern to any of the participants. Their intent was to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions and to verify the accuracy of the content.

#### Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, the following terms or definitions were included in the discussion:

1. Home schoolers: Home schoolers included the parents and guardians and children who identified themselves as home schoolers involved in the study, An Investigation of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan (Hill, 1988).

2. Intensive interviewing technique: The intensive interview technique, adopted by Feldman (1981), defined an elite as any group within a given culture or subculture which is deliberately chosen for a study. Testimony from personal interviews helped to define motives, views, and perceptions through flexible semi-structured questions and interviews. These interviews involved informational, demographic, and perceptual components which provided vital information and description.

3. Home-school curriculum: The knowledge, concepts, skills, structured experience, and values which educators attempt to transmit to students.

4. Authorized private school: An authorized private school is a school that meets the following conditions of the Education Act (1978): (a) It ordinarily provides instruction between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on any school day for pupils who are enrolled in subjects or courses of study under the Act. (b) It is owned, controlled, and administered by a person who is not a public authority.

5. Unauthorized private school: An unauthorized private school provides programmed instruction for

individuals or organizations but does not have a director of education or Department of Education approval.

6. Director of education: Chief executive officer of a school division in Saskatchewan.

7. Home-schooling instruction: The methodology or teaching technique used by home schoolers.

#### Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The home schoolers interviewed in the study were liberal-minded. However, the effort to obtain evaluative data led to hesitancy on the part of some of the participants as such an examination is personal, sensitive, and scrutinizing. All participants--the researcher and the home schoolers--agreed to build a trusting relationship as they collaboratively appraised the efficacy of home schooling.

There were no absolutes or guarantees that any of the home schoolers were residing in Saskatchewan or would be willing to participate in this study. All ten families agreed to participate from the onset; only one home schooler chose not to share their experience in a personal interview but did provide a detailed written description.

#### Limitations of the Study

There were four a priori limitations of this study. First, a number of home schoolers may not have been

identified for the purposes of this study since (a) there may have been no record of them; (b) some contacts may have chosen not to disseminate names of the families; and (c) a limited number of them may have chosen for personal reasons not to participate in the study.

Second, the writer acknowledged the limitations of the intensive interview techniques as proposed by Gordon (1969) and Feldman (1981). Related to their methodologies two central issues were considered. The data collected may have been biased. There may have been, in a few instances, biases or inaccuracies of recording by the researcher.

Third, because the population to be accessed may not have been a true random sample, the writer may not have generated findings from the study to the entire population of home schoolers. However, the selected families were afforded the luxury of time and retrospection to develop their responses.

Fourth, since home schooling was, in part, a political issue in 1988, and since there may have been legal consequences for home schoolers related to their opting out of regular school systems, distorted responses may have resulted from the interview data. The legal issue was no longer a concern in Saskatchewan due to new legislation which has been summarized in Chapter 2.

This study only included ten families selected from families who were included in a former study. It must be

noted that in Saskatchewan, as well as in other provinces in Canada, there exist other home schoolers who remain anonymous and unidentifiable to school authorities who have never engaged in studies of this kind, nor would they have the desire to contribute to the evaluation of their experience or to publicly share their successes and failures. The home schoolers reported in 1988 numbered approximately 500 and were gained by the reputational approach, which is not an accurate technique or assessment to ascertain the number of home schoolers in 1995. This information has been determined from government documents and informal contacts to provide a more accurate estimate of the population and the current provincial scene.

To summarize, although new home-schooling legislation enacted in 1993 was developed among various representatives, there existed before, and continues to exist, as many home schoolers who have not registered with school jurisdictions or with the Department of Education. Similarly, home-schooling organizations have radically changed in membership over the years, and although they provided the names and addresses of home schoolers, many in that population had changed their network affiliations or were home schooling independently.

It was conjectured that both home-schooling parents and their children would consent to be interviewed. A major assumption was that the researcher would be able to find the

home-schooling alliances and registries after a considerable length of time.

While every effort was made to gain as much insight into home schooling as possible, it must be noted that this study was confined to a single province. It was directed purposefully to target a representative sample of the original population who were interviewed and divided into typologies that were described in the form of vignettes. The first ten families that were contacted agreed to participate in this follow-up study, based on the positive experience they had in sharing their stories when home schooling was a far more controversial issue in Saskatchewan.

#### Assumptions

The names of a number of home schoolers did not need to be supplied by school boards. The formal and informal home-schooling alliances and networks yielded general population characteristics as well as their residences. It was assumed that initial advertisements placed in local newspapers and farm magazines would be necessary to have home schoolers identify themselves. The procedure was not necessary. The third assumption was that interviews based on the research questions would lead to valid and reliable responses. It was also assumed that the reputational approach sampling



procedures would yield a representative sample of characteristics of home schoolers. Further generalizations would be made from those selected responses.

### Summary

In Chapter 1, home schooling was recognized, according to the literature, as a viable method of education which is becoming more prevalent in North America. Certainly, Saskatchewan is no exception. It was important to review and ascertain the emergent reasons for home schooling in recognition of home schooling as a viable, educational option, and in light of the rapidly changing legal and cultural implications of postmodern societies. As educators, there is value and interest in discovering the outcomes and themes of a range of educational praxis. Home schooling is projected to be one of the global megatrends of the future that will lead us into the Third Millennium (Naisbitt, 1990). The challenge to educational leaders is to acknowledge that home schooling is an educational option which represents one of the many choices available to individuals in contemporary life (Bergquist, 1993).

### Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 includes a historical overview of the North American context with its predominance on the Canadian scene and, in particular, the Saskatchewan scene. Further

examination includes continued debates and criticisms of public schooling and modern day home-schooling advocates, as well as a cursory examination of curriculum implementation. In addition, links to the postmodern perspective about schooling and institutional and organizational life will lead to an examination of holistic education and home schooling's ties to the study of the future of education, including projections by some educational futurists. A summary of findings with conclusions and recommendations for further study is also presented. Other appropriate materials are included in the Appendices.

#### Time Frame

Research began in December, 1994, with initial contacts made to Saskatchewan's Independent and Home Schooling Branch of the Department of Education, home-schooler alliances, and other networks who redirected the researcher to new contacts. A pilot test was conducted in January, 1995, with two families who consented to give feedback on the research questions. The design and case study methodology appeared to elicit responses that validated findings and confirmed the transcriptions of the pilot group and added internal validity to the extent that a qualitative design lends itself to that type of examination.

Personal and telephone interviews were conducted in April, May, and June. A baseline population of ten families

was determined and agreed upon by the researcher and the dissertation committee. A further review of the literature will substantiate findings and potentially expand the research into areas shared by the respondents.

The audio-taped transcriptions and written verbatim accounts were confirmed by June, 1995. Analysis of the data is presented within this text and is a result of the interchange of the home schoolers, the researcher, and the resources that were compiled.

It was anticipated that the case study methodology had been served and that it accurately depicted what the research questions were intended to discover or describe and made a contribution to the field of education in both Saskatchewan and Canada, as well as added to the repertoire of knowledge in the field of leadership studies in North America. Home-schooling families are actively becoming involved with schools, and the knowledge of their practice should prove invaluable to administrators who work collaboratively with them according to a number of different arrangements, pedagogues, and affiliations (Knowles, 1991).

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This literature review includes three sections: philosophies and theories of home schooling, home-schooling praxis, and holistic education. Additional research highlights the evolution of legal frameworks in Saskatchewan and the postmodern perspective of modernization.

In investigating the practice of home schooling and the breadth of this topic, the researcher attempted to build upon several related yet distinct bodies of research. The sections entitled "A New Paradigm of Shifting Roles of Family and School as Educator: A Historical Perspective," "A Legal Framework for Home Schooling, Home-Schooling Praxis," "Home Schooling and Holistic Education," "Futures," and "The Postmodern Perspective" provided an intellectual context for this study. In addition, the topics related to founding principles, instructional strategies, home-school curriculum, assessments and evaluation focused the practical significance of change theory and the self-reflection and introspection of a decade of home schooling. Similarly, there was a need to briefly review the spectrum of futures

education in order to gain further insight into postmodern times and projected educational perspectives into the Third Millenium.

A New Paradigm of Shifting Roles of  
Family and School as Educator:  
A Historical Perspective

There is a need to explore the shifting roles of family and school as educator and the social changes framed by modernization theory (Berger, Berger, & Kellner, 1973). They suggested that the quasi-religious national mission for public schools in North America, or the "civic faith flowered in a 19th century America that was both optimistic and chronically uneasy about the stability of the social order" (Kirschner, 1981, p. 37) has ended. The 1830 ideology for common schools to serve as established churches came to be regarded as the messianic hope of an American millennialist mission (Tuveson, 1968, pp. 9-10). The apparent religious faith in the mission of public schools to assure civic virtue has vanished (Church, 1976; Sedlak, 1981). The formal criticisms of public schools are documented in various reports and commissions on excellence in education, task forces on teaching as a profession. Similar concerns about the public education system and its deficiencies were presented by other researchers (Rogers, 1969; Schlechty, 1990; Vaille, 1989). Several advisory committee reports on home schooling in Saskatchewan (1991,

1994) appear to offer no mission or vision on how cultural literacy and the content in the "book of basics" that all Americans should know (Hirsch, 1988) is to evolve.

Since the 1960s, a number of parents have taken their children out of public schools and sent them to private schools, free schools, and fundamentalist Christian schools and academies. These "pedagogues" and "ideologues," as Van Galen (1988, p. 54) described them, rejected all schools and turned to what is paradoxically called home schooling. The conceptual framework provided by Berger's modernization theory discussed a story that can be seen as a defense of modernization and a protest against modernity (Berger et al., 1973, p. 8; Kirschner, 1981). Berger's work revealed the genesis of a religious faith in common schools in the 19th century and its path of transformation and ultimate demise.

History traces the source and transformation of beliefs in the mission of public schools which provided dialogue for the defenders of modernizing tendencies and "discontents" as labeled by Berger et al. (1973, pp. 181-184). Preoccupation with the excessiveness of individualism, toward a turn to the idea of universal education and state and provincially-run schools, appeared to be a greater assurance to economic progress and social order. In the 1840s and 1880s, the consolidation of district schools, the rise of

superintendents, and standardization of curriculum became apparent.

The period between the 1920s and 1960s, according to Kirschner (1981), was characterized by frantic searches for educational panaceas to address social ills and national crises. The 1970s was a time of civic and religious crisis; distrust of social institutions heightened and a deeper disillusionment with government, schools, and organized religion turned individuals inward. Self-nurturance, family, and neighborhood became the creeds of the day and the cultural setting for the home-school movement.

#### A Common School Ideology

Kirschner (1981) outlined the story of a reassuring civic/religious faith in common schooling,

. . . whereby a common morality would be achieved by all. The eventual loss of faith along with nostalgic recollections of a sort of moral golden age have recently convinced some to abandon public schools and turn to home schooling. An understanding in where this faith in public schooling came from as well as the strength of its appeal may help to explain the intense disillusionment that fueled the passion and commitment of home schoolers. (p. 139)

Western countries have tied their faith in public schooling to their national identity. With the emergence of the nation-state, the notion of the state as the source of ultimate social value appeared to have transcended the values of the family, community, and religion. Divergent sects grew out of a new democratic religious and social

vision as a challenge to authority. The 1840s schooling ideology offered "a centripetal force" that offset centrifugal tendencies of modernization in the early republic. Ironically, the schooling that originated as a counterpoise to the isolating and fragmenting aspects of modernization developed into an institution that exacerbated its impact.

Universal public schooling developed to inadvertently diminish control parents felt they had over their children (State versus parental right to educate). Industrialization transformed the economy and social relations to include the institutionalization of education and a transformation of family and the roles of men and women. The enhanced expectations of public schools and the dominance of schools in children's lives grew in the midcentury. It was apparent that families in agrarian societies became productive units tied to kinship networks in their communities. The resource system became economic survival and support for rearing and socialization of the young (Kirschner, 1981).

Women became known as the guardians of social morality and the "conscientious moral agents" of the home (Rachels, 1986, p. 35). With the changes in the role of the family and women, the move of education from home and community to the school can be traced. A common faith led to the twin goals of morality and literacy in universal, state-supported schools and moved away from moral ideology discussions to a



management philosophy of structuring and organizing schools. With this rhetorical shift, there has been a transformation in the mission of public schools no longer perceived to be bulwarks against modernism but have become its very agency. The home/school gap widened as more and more education moved from home to bureaucratic school (Kirschner, 1981).

#### Home Education to School Education

The largely protestant universal public school ideology articulated statewide school and provincial-wide school systems. Certain educational practices moved out of the home: the general population was less interested in religious matters, women developed a quest for greater education, and the responsibilities of the socialization of children. Self-reliance became a virtue as did character formation. Finally, the anxiety over not feeling able to shape the young at home contributed to what Tyak (1981, p. 69) saw as a shift of educational responsibility from home to school. He described this action as a loss of authority and control over children's education, creating a trade-off for the state to discipline and take custody of children's lives at a time when parents felt they could not successfully fulfill such a commitment. Ironically, when public schooling no longer instilled the desired values for some parents, "resistance became rebellion."

### Local Control to Professional Control

In the 19th century, schools changed radically with regard to complexity and locus of control: age-graded schools, professional control of curriculum, state and provincially appointed administrators. A transformation of mission changed the public school as a vehicle of opportunity and mobility, from a common set of values to differing values of rapid population growth, technological and social changes fueling modernizing influences (Berger et al., 1973). The sequence, order, and compartmentalization in society was also evident in public schools: professionalization of administrators, educational literature, normal schools, certification and "managing" of schools, and from the influx of immigrants the need for a broader perspective of education for all. However, the distinction between the rich and poor warranted replacing common education with special education (Kirschner, 1981). Schooling had to be designed to recognize the differing roles children would play in American society compared to those that others would play (Church, 1976; Sedlak, 1981).

### Educational Panaceas

From progressive conservatism to liberalism in education, there was dialogue over school reform toward John Dewey's quest for a "great community." Unfortunately, the quest appeared to have widened the school/family gap and

weakened the faith in public schools. Fifty years of searching for educational panaceas led to the crises of the 1970s when parents turned to educational alternatives in a quest for national identity. Feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness predominated for many disenchanted individuals.

Out of the free-school movement John Holt (1981), a leading advocate and practitioner, provided the pedagogical leadership for home schoolers and a radical critique of public schooling. As the researcher posited a decade ago, and continues to posit today, the movement involved a small fraction of the school population. However, its impact and Holt's theories have been far reaching in a variety of educational sectors.

### A More Holistic Education

Home schooling appeared to be a movement for a more holistic education. In summary, it was a quest to practice ideals of control, develop student and teacher relationships, and reach "beyond the school walls" (Holt, 1978). The linking of the young and the old in Holt's philosophy was a crucial point. What he professed was a need for dialogue as to what schools were intended to do and sought empowerment to challenge the traditional mission of schools as agencies to mold and stream children for life. From the annals of universities to the homes of North

America, Holt influenced a generation to feel empowered to teach their young and become their own experts.

Similarly, the history of public schooling provided both educators and home schoolers with insight by explaining disillusionment with public education. The content of this history concerns socialization of the young and the vacillating roles parents and schools have had in that socialization. The 19th century issues centered on the mission of schools and locus of control. The 20th century introduced specialized schooling intended for the poor, but oftentimes failed the expectations of the rich as well (Kirsch, 1991). Alternatives and the matter of choice have begun to search for meaning in personal empowerment in the hope and renewed optimism for a healthy future generation.

#### A Legal Framework for Home Schooling in Saskatchewan

Historically, in Canada as in the United States, education is a provincial responsibility left to parental discretion. Decisions of whether or not to educate one's children and the nature of what should be taught were considered parental rights. After the Civil War and the beginning of socialism, in Canada the State began to question the parental prerogative.

All provinces have compulsory school attendance laws and formal and informal policies that relate to home schooling (Tobak & Zirkel, 1982). However, it was the

contention of the researcher that Saskatchewan was a leader in Canada with respect to the background, membership, objectives, and mandate it had created with various partners to develop a legal framework that enveloped the spirit and intent of the work of such ideologues as John Holt (1976, 1974) and Raymond Moore (1983). Both were strong influences on the participants in the earlier study.

As provided in a detailed report, Advisory Committee on Home-Based Education: Final Report to the Deputy Minister of Education (vol. 1, 1992), there existed a need in Saskatchewan to develop more defined policies with respect to home-based education. For the purpose of this study, this will be referred to as "home schooling." Historically, home schooling was predominantly distance education for children who could not attend school. In 1925, the Saskatchewan Correspondence School was established with the explicit purpose to serve this group of children. Since 1977, however, the school has directly offered high school courses only, even though it indirectly still provided an elementary program with the British Columbia Correspondence School. According to the document:

Today, a new group of parents are choosing to educate their children at home, primarily for philosophical reasons. While there exists a broad continuum of philosophical perspectives among home-based educators, three major perspectives among home-based educators are child-initiated learning, popularized by John Holt; late introduction to academic learning, researched by Raymond and Dorothy Moore; and a traditional back-to-basics approach to learning with a Christian philosophical base. Various publishers, suppliers, and

support groups have arisen in response to each of these various perspectives. (Advisory Report, 1992, p. 25)

It appears that a number of parents are educating at home in a legal climate, represented by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982. Consequently, an Alberta legal case, *Jones v. The Queen*, shed some light on the powers and responsibilities of provincial governments with respect to home schools. In the 1987 Supreme Court of Canada decision, the Court rendered its decision in the *Jones* case, and a study on private schooling was conducted by Gordon Dirks, a government-appointed researcher, to examine both independent and home schools in the province.

A subsequent case, *The Queen v. Cline*, Elizabeth Cline one of the participants in the Hill (1988) study, confirmed that public authorities must act fairly when receiving applications for home schooling. Citing the *Jones* case and finding that the director of education gave no real consideration to Elizabeth Cline's application to educate her children at home, Justice Young held that "the decision of the director in this case was arbitrary and contrary to the principles of fundamental justice" (cited in the Advisory Report, 1992). At the time of the judgment procedural fairness was determined to be reaffirmed.

The Saskatchewan Education Act must now be read in light of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Education Act when read as a whole has the underlying principle of equality of education throughout the province. If students are allowed to make use of a home school program as referred to by the Act as an exception for attendance in one school

division, the same right should exist and should be governed by generally the same principles in another area of the province. (Judge Young, P.C.J., 1988)

In 1987, the Minister of Education released the Review of Private Schooling and announced a number of new policies related to independent schools. In addition, his response to home schooling was declared.

Saskatchewan Education will hold discussions with interested groups and school boards. Home schooling will continue to be permitted but [the Minister] said he wants to see stronger supervisory procedures worked out to ensure that home schooled children receive a good education. (Dirks, 1988)

The Minister of Education proceeded to develop new legislation, regulations, and policies in two stages: for independent schools and for home schooling. Effective July, 1989, he established an Independent Schools Branch which was given the responsibility for policy development with respect to home schooling and for administration with respect to home schools. Public school boards remained responsible for administering home-schooling policies. An Advisory Committee on Home-Based Education met for one year to make recommendations with respect to legislation, regulations, and policies which "effectively balance the interests of children being educated at home, their parents, and the public at large" (Advisory Committee, 1992).

The committee was given wide latitude to discuss a maximum of eight mandated issues.

1. The secretariat to the committee presented an overview of home-based education in Saskatchewan which

included the number of home schoolers, the history of home-based education, why parents educate their children at home, major debates with respect to home schooling, and a list of publishers and suppliers of curricula.

2. Each of the organizations on the committee, as well as two at-large members, of which the researcher was one, made presentations with respect to (a) their organization's goals and philosophy, (b) their membership and operation, (c) how they perceived their role in Saskatchewan education, and (d) their views of public education and home schooling.

3. The secretariat presented a summary of laws and regulations with respect to home schooling in other Canadian provinces.

From the information received over the span of a year, twenty questions were categorized under four headings: (a) accountability; (b) curriculum, instruction, and evaluation; (c) funding, services, and special needs students; and (d) settlements of dispute. These responses became part of the package of recommendations.

### Guiding Principles

In an attempt to answer the pending questions, the Advisory Committee took into account the constitutional and legal framework within which parents may educate their children at home in Canada.



1. Every child has a right to an education. Education is the very foundation of good citizenship and should develop the potential of all children in a changing world. Education should affirm the worth of each individual and lay a foundation for learning throughout life.

2. Parents have the responsibility to provide for the education of their children and the right to direct their children's education at and from their home in accordance with their conscientious beliefs, subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

3. The Government of Saskatchewan has a compelling interest in the education of all Saskatchewan children, of which the primary vehicle is the public education system in its three dimensions: public, separate, and francophone schools.

4. The government exercises the legislative authority to exempt children of compulsory school age from attendance at a public school. In exercising this authority, however, public authorities must act in accordance with the principles of freedom of conscience and religion in education and fundamental justice.

5. In the case of an alleged failure of parents to provide an adequate education for their children, the burden of proof resides with the government.

The committee's intent of the policy framework had the interest and responsibility to put into place a legislative and regulatory framework for home schooling. The government would not repeal the compulsory attendance sections of The Education Act. Children of compulsory school age, who were not attending a public or an independent school, were required to be under a program of instruction at home or elsewhere. All parents who were educating their own children were required to register this fact, either directly or indirectly, with some public authority. In addition, the quality of education must be comparable to that provided by the public schools which the government recognized may or may not satisfy the home schoolers in their attempt to achieve their objectives.

A number of operating principles surrounding its decisions which taken together constituted its operational framework: to work on a consensus basis, to recommend amendments to provincial legislation with respect to regulations and policies, and to promote a harmonious and cooperative relationship between boards of education and home schoolers. Although a detailed presentation was available, a summary of the developments was outlined in a Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment document shared by the Director, Gene Hodgson, of the Independent Schools Branch. The illustration recognizes common issues

that affect home schoolers in the province in response to key questions.

What is the intent of the home schooling education policy? The home schooling education policy recognizes that parents have the responsibility to provide for the their children's education from their home. The policy also acknowledges the province's compelling interest in the education of all children by delegating to school divisions the responsibility to register home-schooling students. The home-schooling policy establishes guidelines to assist school divisions and parents.

Education in Saskatchewan is "inclusive" in that a child may be educated in the public, separate, Francophone, independent school systems, or at home.

With whom does a parent register? Parents register with their resident board of education.

How does the parent register? To register, parents complete a "Notification of a Home-Based Education" form which includes a written educational plan. Registration provides an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements (Section 155, The Education Act). Parents are required to give at least thirty days notice before commencing a new home-schooling program, whether at the beginning or in the middle of a school year.

What should be included in the written educational plan? The written educational plan will demonstrate that

there is a positive and constructive approach to the student's program of education. The plan should be appropriate for the age and ability of the child, and it should not be inconsistent with the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's goals embody a student-centered approach to learning which recognizes the inherent worth and potential of each individual student and addresses all aspects of child development, knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for life-long learning.

A written educational plan includes: the philosophical approach to the program; a reference to the major supplier of learning materials; broad general learning objectives for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; and the means of assessing student progress. Student assessment strategies commonly used are a summary of educational progress or summative record and portfolio of work, standardized testing, a third party assessment or mutually agreed upon assessment. In addition, parents must maintain a portfolio of work and a summative record for student record-keeping purposes.

What is meant by monitoring programs? Monitoring is the responsibility of the school division. A designated school division official ensures that parents are following the regulations and policies. The emphasis in monitoring home schooling is on educational outcomes. School divisions ensure that children are receiving an education based upon

an educational plan, rather than concentrating on methods by which the education program is delivered.

School divisions cannot, as a component of monitoring, require home visits or interviews of the students without parental consent. However, monitoring may include a conference when the parents register their programs and when the program concludes.

Are there any other requirements of parents?

Recognizing the flexible and spontaneous nature of home schooling, the regulations were written to provide freedom without burdensome requirements upon parents. Parents are expected to follow the educational program presented in the educational plan. Parents may arrange learning activities with tutors, private schools, public schools, correspondence schools, or in concert with other home-schooled parents. Choices related to the duration and frequency of instruction belong to the parent. Students are not required to follow a prescribed attendance schedule. Parents must maintain a portfolio of work and summative record for each child.

What services are required for students with special needs? School divisions are required to provide access to special needs assessment and diagnosis at the request of the home schoolers. If a child has special needs, additional supportive activity may involve period testing and conferences. Home-schooled children with designated disabilities receive province financial support.

What services are required of school divisions? School divisions are required to maintain permanent student records, monitor the program, arrange for student testing and diagnosis, and cancel programs under special conditions.

Policies will be developed by boards of education with respect to how home schoolers may access, on behalf of their learners, the services that the board is prepared to make available.

What is required to renew a program? A parent may terminate the program during the school year or decide not to renew the program by August 15. A school division may cancel a program because of a violation of The Education Act or provincial policy.

How should local disputes be resolved? In the event a dispute occurs between a school division and a parent, a dispute resolution process has been included in the regulations and policies. The objective of the process is to resolve any disagreements in a nonconfrontational, positive manner. The dispute resolution process may be initiated by a parent and is designed to ensure a fair hearing with the board of education. The decision of the board of education is final. If a parent feels that the processes described in provincial policy were not followed, they may appeal to the provincial Home-Based Education Review Board.

What may be included in a school division home-schooling policy? School division policy indicates a commitment to serve home schoolers within the school division. In addition, a registering authority is designated and procedures are established to guide administration of the provincial policy.

How is home schooling monitored by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment? Home schooling is monitored by the Director, Independent Schools/Home-Based Education, who ensures that provincial policy and regulations are followed. In addition, a Home-Based Education review Board is established to monitor and review the implementation of the new legal framework in Saskatchewan.

How can I get further information on home schooling? School division and Independent Schools, Home-Based Education Branch contacts can be made (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment brochure, 1995).

### Home-Schooling Praxis

#### Founding Principles for Home Schooling

A synopsis is provided by the Home School Legal Defense Association of Canada entitled, "A Nationwide Study of Home Education in Canada: Family Characteristics, Student Achievement" (Ray, 1994). Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) released a

comprehensive report with the focus on Canada. The intent was to study the demographics, motivation, and educational results experienced by families who bypass traditional schooling options to teach at home.

The findings of the home-schooling families surveyed indicated that parents generally have had more formal education than the national average (Ray, 1994, p. 2). He also suggested that family income is lower than for similar families in Canada, and two-parent families are the norm. Home schoolers notably have more children than the average Canadian family. Most of the families were predominantly Christian in their world-view, and a wide variety of religious preferences was evident.

The average age of the children under study was nine years, and that population had little experience in public or private schools. The social activities were varied, and the majority experienced significant activities with both peers and adults outside of their home.

On the Standard Achievement Test (SAT), home schoolers performed at or above the 76th percentile on national norms in terms of their reading, listening, language, mathematics, science, social studies, basic battery, and complete battery scores. Many factors were examined for their relationship to the students' academic performance; only a few were significant. Educational attainment of the fathers was a weak predictor of reading and language scores, and the



longer a child was home schooled the better his language score. Ray (1994) set his target population of over 800 families via support networks, newsletters, the reputational approach, and personal networks similar to the methodology in the Hill (1988) study. A four-part survey addressed descriptive information regarding parents and family (including demographics, teacher certification, status of parents), and information regarding students (including demographics, years taught at home, academic achievement scores, curriculum used).

In addition, Ray (1994) investigated information related to the family's home education (including contact with public school officials and attorneys) and, similar to the present research, provided participants with the opportunity for the long-term assessment of home schooling with over 800 families and 2,500 Canadian children. A key finding in his study was the opportunity for home schoolers to provide a solid academic and moral education for their children.

### Instructional Strategies

The literature on home-school methods are as diversified as the needs of the families and children involved. Research by Williamson (1989, p. 37) attested to the selection of options. She used, to a greater or lesser degree, any of the following resources and methods: classes and activities within institutional schools; courses, books

and manuals, community classes, athletics and activities; museums, art galleries, and other cultural institutions; private or semiprivate tutoring; ever-increasing computer learning software; quality radio and television programming; and the vast wealth of knowledge available in books and audio/visual materials in libraries. As homes turn into learning centers, television programs are incorporated into curriculum of many home schoolers. Williamson shared a common theme pertinent to home schoolers. At the beginning of their home schooling, many families used a formal, structured, classroom-like method until they discovered that the majority of children fared better in a more natural informal setting which, in Williamson's view, was more conducive to learning.

The teaching and learning methods adopted were often a curriculum designed for children to pursue a direction that propelled them into an area of inquiry that interests them. Their parents, who were equipped with a firsthand knowledge of each particular child's needs, guided and encouraged that learning. This renewed natural learning or self-directed learning approach (whole or holistic learning), considered by many as a new method, is receiving recent attention and acclaim (Williamson, 1989, p. 37).

### Home School Curriculum

The 1944 study by Ray provided answers to the questions regarding types of curriculum materials used for individual children as it was indicated that parents often utilized more than one type of curriculum for a particular child. Parents used a parent-designed curriculum (i.e., the major components selected by the parents from various curriculum suppliers) for 61% of the students, a complete curricular package (i.e., materials that included language, social studies, mathematics, and science material for a full year) for 36% of students, no particular curriculum plan for 7% of the students, a local private school's home education program for 4% of the students, and a satellite school (i.e., materials from a private school or educational organization that worked with the home schooled at a distance) for 3% of the students, and a range of multiple options that skewed the percentages.

The instructional practices within the home were described in several categories. The degree of structure in the home-school environment, time spent in formal educational activities, and the age at which formal education commenced were not significant predictors of students' achievements. In the Ray (1994) study, the age at which parents began planning and intentionally structuring, the degree to which parents structured the daily instruction/learning process, and the amount of time the

child spent in planned and intentional learning activities did not appear to have a significant relationship to achievement for those taught at home. This supported Ray's estimation that pedagogical practices of home schoolers should not be prescribed or regulated.

In Ray's (1994) survey, as in many other studies, the kinds of activities home schoolers engaged in accounted for a large part of their curriculum. Table 1 illustrates a fair assessment of what was presented in the literature about the kinds of activities home schoolers experienced with peers and outside of their homes. For example, in the Ray (1994) study, 60% were involved in Sunday School, 48% in music classes, and 93% engaged in play activities with nonsibling children.

They were asked additional questions about watching television or videotapes (41%), reading for enjoyment or general interest (26%), and up to 45 to 90 minutes per day in the activity. Eighty percent shared that someone had read to them when they were young, and 95% saw someone reading in their home every day.

#### Assessments and Evaluation

According to Ray (1994, p. 9), the 1,393 students who were at least age 5, had never been home schooled, and 524 (37.6%) had never taken a standardized achievement test during the past 24 months.

Table 1

Children's Social and Other Activities

Activity	Percent of students (at least 5 years old) involved in activity*		
Play with people outside the family			93.0
Field trips			87.7
Sunday School			82.0
Group sports			59.6
Music classes			48.1
Classes with students outside the home			44.6
Volunteer work with people			31.3
Ballet/dance class			6.2
4-H			4.6
Other activities			42.7
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Mean hours/ week</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>	<u>Sample size (n)</u>
Contact with: Non-family adults	8.96	7.06	1,485
Siblings	64.42	21.28	1,160
Non-siblings	12.30	9.25	1,485

\*Percent given is valid from a base of 1,561 students.

The most frequently used test was the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (by 52%), while 34% took the Canadian Achievement Test. Scores were recorded on reading, listening, language, mathematics, science, social studies, basic battery (typically reading, language, and mathematics), and complete battery (all topics included in the overall testing of the student). The study revealed that home schoolers on the average scored at or above the 76th percentile in all preceding categories. The national average for conventional school norms is the 50th percentile. Consistent with the data in other studies and reports, these findings show that the achievement scores were high in all grade levels (K-12) and in all subject areas (see Table 2).

A summary of this study, as presented by Ray (1994), suggested that his target population would have done well in any setting, considering the backgrounds of the families and the motivational levels of their parents. On the other hand, he pointed out admittedly that

. . . a logical argument could also be made because of low student-to-teacher ratio, the greater flexibility that is possible in the private setting, close contact between parent and child, and the enhanced opportunity to individualize curriculum and methodology in response to the gifts and limitations of a particular child.  
(p. 9)

The examination of tight statistical controls has not been applied in other studies to date. However, Ray did examine relationships between several important factors and

Table 2

National Percentile Scores on Standard Achievement Tests

Variable	Mean*	Sample size (n)
Reading, total	80th	334
Listening, total	84th	48
Language, total	76th	309
Mathematics, total	79th	333
Science	82nd	20
Social studies	81st	33
Basic battery	79th	211
Complete battery	82nd	137

\*National norm, 50th

student achievement. Another interesting note is that information about adults who had been home schooled was gathered for only thirty-three subjects. The analysis did not report how long these individuals had been taught at home. It is the intention of this study to interpret such findings for the target population under study. As 63% of Ray's population moved to some form of continuing formal education in an institution outside of the home, it was conjectured that similar results might apply to the home-schooling population in Saskatchewan.

#### Home Schooling and Holistic Education

The self-directed or holistic approach teaching method was described in the work of Kerri Williamson (1989). The students she studied in Northern Alberta, Canada, worked independently and sought help and guidance as they perceived their needs. They requested resources and sources of information in order to learn within their own schedule rather than cover material placed before them. These appeared to be a banquet of resources as opposed to what was colloquially termed "spoon or force-fed" learning common to schools. The rationale offered by Williamson was that "by researching on their own with their own interests, they learn to reason and think rather than to remember and forget" (p. 38). The assumption is that unlike institutionally-schooled students, home schoolers tended to



continue to be inquisitive and searched for answers to their questions. Jean Renoir (cited in Williamson, 1989, p. 38) stated, "learning is being able to see the relationship between things." Children need time to recognize these relationships in a natural way and need time to learn naturally, according to Williamson.

Similarly, play took on a whole new perspective in home schools. The belief held by many home schoolers was that it took very little academic time to keep up with institutional peers, inviting experimentation, creation, and natural learning. The idea conveyed was that playing leads to discovery often lost to the militaristic control in schools which removed freedom of expression in children (Williamson, 1989, p. 39). Children were lost to conformity and lost a degree of their uniqueness, individuality, and creativity. By following a self-directed learning approach and with the aid of a guide, learners created their curricula to match both their needs and interests.

Herman (1993) offered that throughout the years certain characteristics of effective schools have evolved. These characteristics supported the holistic precepts inherent in home schooling. His work was derived from statistically significant correlative research findings. The following characteristics had been judged to be effective and were associated with effective schools research:

1. Strong instructional leadership;

2. A safe and orderly school climate conducive to learning;
3. High teacher and administrator expectation of students;
4. High emphasis on the mastery of basic skills of students in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and language arts;
5. Regular and continuing feedback on the academic progress of each student; and
6. Parent and community involvement. (Herman, 1993, pp.9-10)

With regard to home schooling, it was conjectured that many changes were involved in the creation of a holistic educational program. The characteristics of effective schools, as presented by Herman, were transferrable to a number of home school settings. These included leadership and guidance from the parents and significant others, comfortable climate of the home, high expectations, and mastery learning and continuous feedback. The changes in the lives of the home schoolers were cosmetic or a truly systemic transformational change, depending on many variables such as ownership, adequate temporal and human resources, and a long-term plan or vision for the integration of a home-schooling program and the total home environment.

### Change Theory

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) posited that there needed to be a serious look at giving curriculum back to the public schools. They called for new "collaborative cultures" related to the vital aspects of school-based futures in Canadian education. In particular, "what's worth fighting for, for parents and students, has not been spelled out." The authors prophesy that until schools and teachers change and adapt to new realities, educational alternatives will flourish. Home schooling was one alternative to public education as it existed. Recent trends and developments now have provided the right conditions and pressures for these changes to occur. With the changing multicultural populations in schools, the framework for individual and collective responsibility is changing. The impact for reform and restructuring has attempted to address change in education over the past decade, but it has been called into question by many educators (Sarason, 1982, 1990; Fullan, 1993; Lieberman, 1992; Bolman & Deal, 1991).

On the theme of cosmetic change, Fullan (1993) illustrated the "first order" or structural changes needed in public education. If we evaluate then we must evaluate what we most value, according to the change theorist: collaboration, commitment to continuous improvement, risk-taking, breadth and flexibility in instruction, and articulation of voice (p. 97). It was to the sense of

individual voice that home schoolers had spoken. The collective action of forming networks and alliances that developed became the substitutes and structures they felt they could influence.

### Self-Reflection

We each have the ability to create our own "quality world" as part of self-reflection in our attempt to find perceptive balance, according to psychologist William Glasser (1969). His view of relationship was to find common ground within our personal worlds that we can agree on as the "real" world and find the resolution in the cognitive dissonance we find ourselves experiencing in institutional living. Overlap and tolerance between the two arenas need to be resolved, and tolerance for the ambiguity between the two can lead to control and punishment in relationship or the flexibility and compromise in relationship, that home schooling purports to achieve.

### Futures Education and Postmodernism

William Bergquist (1993) offered a context for the future which included the picture of an era of attention to personal growth that will become a preoccupation as individuals establish a new sense of community in the workplace characterized by commitments, collaboration,

dedication, love, and partnerships. He described an internal sanctuary that spoke to a greater unity.

Thus, at the heart of survival in a turbulent, postmodern world is the capacity of synthesis love and sanctuary. We must be able to draw together or synthesize that which seems diverse or ambiguous in hybrid organizations. We must be able to love and build a sense of community among men and women who live with the complexities of cyclical and intersect organizations. We must be able to find personal sanctuary in a world of organizational turbulence. Those of us fortunate to be living in this remarkable period of transition to a new postmodern era can expect to look at many irreversible organizational changes--organizational fires if you will. We will be able to tell our children and grandchildren about the early postmodern organizations of the 1980s and 1990s they began to move irreversibly and sometimes even quietly into a new world, with new perspectives, new realities, and new visions. It should be quite a story! (Bergquist, 1993)

Others like David Guterson (1989), Foster (1986), Griffiths (1988), and Harman (1988) recognized that the criticisms that embrace postmodern perspectives may clash with perceived values inherent in the practice: its academic virtues, socialization of home schoolers, and the sexist nature of female dominance as facilitators of program. To summarize, in his precis, Guterson discussed his own perspective as a public school educator who teaches others, but he home schools his own children.

He pointed out that few people realize that home schooling is populated by a large number of educators or ex-educators who have taught in schools, but they keep their children out of them (Guterson, 1989; Hill, 1988). The structure of some schools is both expedient and indicative

of schools' custodial function. In essence, they are primary, according to Guterson. Schools keep students first and education happens along the way and is often incidental and achieved against the odds. His critical view of public schools is characterized by the following comments:

It may be, finally, that schools temporarily prevent us from getting the education we persist in getting outside and beyond schools, where the conditions of life provide more natural motivations and learning is less abstract. Never let your schooling get in the way of your education, advised Mark Twain, who never attended school. (Guterson, 1989, p. 153)

Home schoolers seek relationship on the basis of networking and a form of mentorship described by William Rosenbach (1993). Although he spoke to the notion of organizations, he addressed an ideal form of mentorship in relationships amongst people:

In the *Odyssey*, the Greek poet Homer described the loyal and wise Mentor who was entrusted by Ulysses with the care and education of his son Telemachus. For generations, mentors have provided guidance, counsel and discipline to young people and helped them become mature and effective leaders. The concept of mentorship has become familiar in academia, the military, the professions and even in professional sports. Homer's Mentor helped his young protege understand the world and human nature, learn courage, prudence, honesty, and commitment to serving others. Mentoring allows followers to become intimately familiar with a well-developed style of leadership that should enable them to better develop their own style. (p. 141)

Jane Martin (1992) proposed a solution to John Dewey's (1956) dilemma that when homes change radically so must the schools. With home, family and gender roles dramatically altered in the last decade, new dilemmas faced us. In

the lives of more and more children no one was home. Martin advocated "removing the barriers between the school and the home making school a metaphorical 'home,' a safe and nurturing environment that provides children with the experience of affection and connection otherwise missing or inconsistent in their lives" (p. 4). The traditional schoolhouse was transformed into an idyllic "schoolhome" where learning was animated by an ethic of social awareness.

Her global vision encompassed the philosophies of Dewey and Montessori to conceptualize a school that embodied the values of the home with those of social responsibility, cultural diversity, gender equality to educate the "whole child," and went beyond to educate all children in the culture's whole heritage. For Martin (1992) the schools faced an enormous challenge since no common tongue binds all our children in North America, and no common culture makes them kin. Dewey posed the question in 1989: What radical change in school suffices when home has been transformed? Martin asked a century later: How can we create a moral equivalent of home in which all our children feel at home? The inclusion of new voices and viewpoints predominated fostering communication and social discourse into a larger community which did not exclude the lives, works, history, and perspectives of those who were now excluded, and our "cultural capital" would have more than doubled in Martin's opinion.

Her major thesis was that unless we change schools to be more like "home schools," the function of preparing our young to carry out the economic and political task and activities located in a public world will have become an erroneous task. If we learn to take our place in a public world, we may experience a diminution of intimacy in family life and a continued turning away from the everyday world of the home. The curriculum of the future encompasses myth, ritual, and custom and initiates the young into ways of perceiving, feeling, thinking, acting, behaving toward others and toward nature itself. The glue of a prior era was composed not just of knowledge or even of knowledge and skill combined. It was mixed with the three Cs of care, concern, and connection to others to cement the bonds of kinship. Martin (1992) summarized by asking, "Is the end-of-century America, or (Canada), in any less need of a broadly-based curriculum" (p. 84)?

#### Summary of the Literature

Chapter 2 has reviewed selected research and literature relative to home schooling in North America in order to paint a description of American and Canadian perspectives. Besides examining the historical perspective of the development of home schools, it was necessary to describe the development of public schools and the departure with what was once the educational affirmation of the status quo.



The growth of home schools, and a summary of the illustrated characteristics of those who operate them, has been presented. The literature also reviewed the law, academic performance, and socialization aspects of home education in light of change and the freedom of choice to home school guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The literature highlighted several theorists and futurists who suggested that while home schooling may be a volatile issue in the nineties, it certainly holds the potential of becoming a wave of the future in a postmodern world. Saskatchewan has been recognized as one province that has attempted to counteract animosity and conflict among home schoolers and educational authorities.

Chapter 3 describes the design of the study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Case Study Methodology

For this study the researcher used interviewing and document reviewing to assess the longitudinal effects of home schooling on home schoolers. The case study methodology provided the researcher with the opportunity to collect descriptive data, gather opinions and perceptions, and gain a greater understanding of the process of home schooling. Flexibility was needed to conduct a follow-up study, and the naturalistic approach of case studies allowed the researcher to study the process of development over a decade of reflection.

The exploration of the home schoolers' sojourn lent itself to the case study method because of its descriptive and qualitative nature as well as its flexibility. The process was fluid and the exploration was unlimited due to the methodology selected.

Given that this representative sample population previously had been interviewed by the researcher and a trust relationship had been built, it was with relative ease and enthusiasm that the respondents agreed to participate.

Since Hill's (1988) completion of the master's thesis, "An Investigation of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan," the original twenty families selected from a larger sample of fifty families became the target population. Ten home-schooling families were determined to be the representative sample for this study and became the unit of analysis. Four families continue to home school in 1995 with younger children or the children they had home schooled in the grade-age equivalent primary years.

The flexibility of the case study method allowed the researcher the opportunity to present predetermined questions and modification of the format according to the feedback participants shared. As this study dealt with home-schooling growth, a qualitative design for investigation was employed.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) believed that researchers are a vital part of research as they are the data collection instrument. They see the researcher working in a natural setting using a variety of methods to observe normal occurrences and arriving at a reasonable interpretation of that data. Guba and Lincoln (1989) also attested to the notion that change is multifaceted and that the case study approach encouraged the presentation format to deal with multiple social realities. Yin (1984) emphasized that the "case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence--documents, artifacts, interviews,

and observations" (p. 20). This meant that the researcher gathered data by observing and recording what had happened in the lives of the home schoolers by interviewing a number of people and examining the documents and records they had maintained. These documents included communications with school boards, other home schoolers and their networks, extension school curricula and program offerings. Home-schooling policies were shared as well as local agreements with school jurisdictions, minutes of meetings, correspondence, newsletters, and material distributed by schools, teachers, parents, or other professional community liaisons. Documents that had been preserved were examined, with the participants' permission. They were recorded in order to discover trends, show relationships that existed, highlighted values and beliefs, and, in general provided support for data gathered in relation to the research questions (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Robert Stake (1988) observed that people come to understand human affairs through reflection or personal experience. The researcher previously gained rapport with these families, observed some of their activities, and shared materials. However, in many of the interview sessions, the researcher had not met or observed the children. The present study afforded the opportunity to meet them, observe and listen to their real-life stories

about home and schooling as they have perceived and evaluated it over time.

### The Site

The researcher conducted this case study in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Located geographically in Central Canada, Saskatchewan has both an agrarian and urban population within its boundaries. It is renowned for international grain and potash exports. Due to the province's expansive nature and distance from community to community, the researcher investigated both urban and rural populations and selected families who were in closest proximity to the home base of the city of Prince Albert.

The investigation was carried on in the rural or urban locale in which the home schoolers resided in Saskatchewan and in other provinces or states. The knowledge gained by reputational approach determined that these families either remained in the province or relocated to other provinces or states.

### Profile

In total, ten families were interviewed which included eight sets of parents and over twenty-five children or young adults, most of whom were directly involved in education or related business areas. Six of the ten families had one or more of their children integrated into the public school system at some point in the home schooling, and two families

aligned themselves with independent or correspondence schools. Three families had moved to other provinces, and two families had moved to the United States--New York and Wisconsin--since the time of their original interviews. The demographics of the home schoolers were not a focus for this study. However, many of the families shared their present occupations and the vocational aspirations and achievements their children had accomplished over the span of a decade. This valuable information helped to create a more detailed picture of the end results of the process and home-schooling efforts.

#### Pilot Study for the Interview Schedule

When the researcher returned to Canada with the research questions intact in late August, 1994, a group of home schoolers was organized to act as a pilot to trial run an interview session based on their own experience in the Prince Albert area and to give critical feedback on the schedule of questions. Due to the researcher's time constraints, this session occurred in December, 1994. There was some hesitancy about the nature of research question 2, but it was clarified when subsidiary questions were asked along with it. Their suggestions were incorporated into the schedule and presented to the target population in the spring.

### Data Collection

Multiple methods of collecting data were employed in these research interviews, and document review formed the basis for studying the long-term effects of home schooling. Content of the survey questions and interviews was based on the literature review of the philosophy of home schooling, the legal framework for home schooling in the Province of Saskatchewan, home-schooling praxis in terms of founding principles, instructional strategies, curriculum, assessments and evaluations. Further examinations led to the study of home schooling in light of holistic education perspectives, futures education, and postmodernism. Three recurring themes in the literature were choice, networking (relationships), and self-reflection; therefore, the research questions were directed at these three topics.

### Interviews

It must be noted that semi-structured interviews allow for individual responses defining each family's unique experiences. To appreciate and inform the appropriate format for questions out of a range of possibilities, the researcher reviewed the work of Spradley (1979), Stake (1988), Guba and Lincoln (1987, 1989), and Yin (1984).

It became difficult to delineate prior knowledge about the home schoolers as well as preconceived determinations the researcher experienced in 1988. Demographic information

was not the focus of this study, but it certainly added a frame of reference for both the interviewer and participants. Probing questions gave the respondents cues as to the level and depth of responses that were highly personal and interpersonal.

Six interviews were completed in the home schoolers' homes or in the immediate vicinity. Informants were given the opportunity to select an interview location, i.e., their home, workplace, or the researcher's home. Five personal interviews were conducted in their homes and one in a restaurant, while the four telephone interviews were conducted via telecommunications to their homes. Time was taken to develop a social conversation and updates on lives and career paths before the formal question and answer sessions began. Similarly, interaction occurred on the telephone and assisted in developing the rapport and trust needed for the renewed communication.

The actual recorded time of the interviews was approximately one to five hours. Six of ten interviews were transcribed, and transcriptions were returned to the interviewees for verification or modifications (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Two families informed the researcher that the first interview would suffice and a transcription was not needed.

The focus for the interviews was on the family's reasons for home schooling, the practices they developed,



and the assessment strategies they employed over time (see Appendix A for protocol). Additional questions were asked when it became apparent that participants wanted to share new insight or perceptions.

Interviewees were not concerned with their anonymity. Codes were represented by a number scheme from 1 to 10, chronologically depicting each interview as it occurred. Two follow-up interviews clarified sections of protocols that were inaudible or confusing. Each of these interviews were conducted by telephone.

The open-ended question and answer periods were interactive. As the dialogue was relatively informal, insight into the three research areas formulated further questions and incidental responses, because of our mutual experience and knowledge about home schooling and common understandings. An absolutely neutral interviewer stance was difficult to maintain based on these factors, and it is conjectured that the approach was appreciated as being out of genuine personal interest in addition to academic pursuit.

#### Data Analysis

Data were analyzed after the first three interviews, and the column of the responses became a reassuring concern that the ten families' experiences would address the research questions with a broad spectrum of responses.

As the interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed them and produced a printed copy which was sent to the interviewees who wanted to review them. They were asked to add, delete, or change anything they wished and to return it to the researcher within a week, if possible. Revisions were made and final copies were confirmed.

Interview sessions were coded, ordered numerically from 1 to 10; thank you letters or telephone calls were made. The questions were analyzed according to their numbers, themes, recurring ideas and language patterns identified under targeted literature review areas: principles, strategies, curricula, assessments and evaluation. More data were provided than in the first Hill (1988) study. Compilation of both the interview and document data in chart form are represented Appendices B, C, and D.

As Merriam (1988) suggested, when the interview data were analyzed and the documents were surveyed, categories, typologies, and themes evolved. Recurring statements and categorizations are presented under common headings or themes.

#### Limitations

There are no absolute truths in the acclamation of interview data. There was, however, no reason for doubt that the information shared was factual and not embellished for the purpose of description based on the research's previous experiences with the accuracy of the original

interviews. The stories they told and their honesty of the successes and failures that the home schoolers experienced highlighted the general progress, in most cases, of the home-schooling programs which appeared to have grown at exponential rates. However, it was determined that two of the families home schooled for less than two years during the decade which did alter the richness of the data collected. It did, however, shed light on the nature of the pressures, responsibility, and personal and economic sacrifice involved in having one parent at home.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FINDINGS

#### Analysis of the Findings

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data collected through the qualitative processes of observation and interview technique. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the sample for this ten-family study was obtained from a target population of home schoolers in Saskatchewan who participated in a former study entitled, "An Investigation of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan (Hill, 1988). The data from these ten sets of selected home schoolers and their children were obtained from interviews conducted from April to June, 1995. In addition to the interviews, observations of these home-school families were made when possible.

In this chapter, family interviews were identified through the abbreviation "Int," followed by a family number P1, P2, and date of the interview. If the respondent was a home-schooled child or young adult, they were identified in a similar manner with S1, indicating for example, "student 1." This coding method assured the anonymity of the participants. The epilogue, which follows Chapter 5, addresses Ingrid Dancer's home-schooling experience. The

names of the home-schoolers in this case study are fictitious.

#### Limitations of the Study

There were four a priori limitations to this study. First, a number of home schoolers may not have been identified for the purposes of this study since:

1. There may have been no record of them.
2. Some contacts may have chosen not to disseminate names of the families.
3. A limited number may have chosen, for personal reasons, not to become part of the study.

The researcher found informative commonalities, strands, or as Spradley (1979) described them, domains or categories of data, which emerged in compilation of information for the ten case studies. With this in mind the data were discussed.

#### Basic Demographic Data of Home Schoolers

Basic demographic information of the home-schooling families had been obtained through the reputational approach of contacting former networks of home schoolers and government officials who were connected in some manner with the majority of the representative sample.

The ten families selected were from different areas within the Province of Saskatchewan. Family 1 was selected from a mid-size urban area who held the responsibility for a

correspondence and distance education school for over 5,000 families in Canada. Family 2 was selected from the same area but from a family who resided in the suburbs and had never had their four children in school; they had strong affiliations with the Saskatchewan Home Schooler Alliance. Family 3 was from a larger urban center where the mother was a psychiatrist and the father was a school board member and an entrepreneur. Family 4 was a single-parent mother with teacher training and who worked as a business management computer consulting firm. Family 5 was a Christian family residing in Wisconsin where the father had once held a ministry in a small northern town. Family 6 lived in a southern city where the mother was a homemaker and the father worked for the Department of Education. Family 7 had a single-parent mother, a teacher in an alternative school in a northern city. Family 8 were crafts people who lived in a remote area of the province. Family 9 were both engineers who had an overriding concern about global environment, especially as it concerned their profession and how they could dedicate their lives to the causes of global safety and futures education. Family 10 were both professionals originally from the United States who formerly had taught in Saskatchewan schools and at a university in an adult development and continuing education facility. These ten families were chosen because they were demographically varied, and they provided the researcher with a greater

understanding of the home-schooling process as a result of the findings of a former study.

The parents interviewed had been home schooling their children for a minimum of two years and a maximum of ten years. Four families continued to home school some of their children in 1995. The families had two to ten children, ages five to twenty-seven, four of whom were born after the time of the original study by Hill (1988). For purposes of this study, the researcher notes that only children who were part of the former study and who were of school age from 1984 to 1988, were the focus of the present study.

Incidental demographic information that evolved during the course of the interviews indicated that most of the fathers had continued in professional positions with the exception of one family. As the home-schooling program developed, although the responsibility was shared, the mothers appeared to be the dominant figure in home-schooling instruction.

There was a commonality of ethnic background and an equal emphasis on "Old World" and "New Age" values and consciousness, which became part of their decision to home school their children. However, the religious affiliations did not lie within the confines of an established religion, rather they were non-traditional churches which might be labeled as "nondenominational" or "evangelical" by the four

families who spoke about their faith as it related to home-schooling practice.

Two families still resided in the rural area of the province, while three families had moved to other provinces and the United States since the time of the original interviews. The remaining families had moved to larger urban centers and were able to access schools or universities for their children. Their lifestyles appeared to be somewhat on an upward advance compared to the eighties. The researcher observed the visible changes in many of the home-schoolers' lives in terms of the kinds of homes they lived in and the leisure activities and organizations to which they belonged.

Four of the parents as children had been educated at home, for at least part of their education. For these parents, home schooling was described as an extension of their own experience, and their capacity for curiosity to create a home-school program for their children which superseded the home-schooling they had experienced.

The demographic data varied widely throughout the interview sessions. Information gleaned was not asked directly by the researcher but was offered incidentally by the participants during the course of their interviews. A common theme prevalent in the data supported the research that Christian families, or those who declared themselves to be Christians, focused on their responsibility to provide an



academically sound and moral education in accordance with much of the literature. More specific results are the responses shared in the interview sessions that answered the research questions and addressed areas of the baseline data collected.

### Research Question 1

#### What were the founding purposes of home schooling?

Upon reflection a key reason for home schooling originally had been to protect family unity, to control or influence their children's lives, and to ensure positive educational ideologies they believed were better suited to the home. Over time their convictions were steadfast, but articulation of the reasons for home schooling were more refined as experience in the process was achieved. Reasons included educating to their own convictions, instilling their own set of values and beliefs, and building noncompetitive learning environments. Further beliefs were creating positive social climates through networking, propelling individualized instruction and mastery learning, addressing special needs concerns, and the development of a renewed sense of satisfaction in knowing that home schooling did more for their children than give them an equal opportunity.

Examples of beliefs and goals were determined by belief statements such as: "Our children do not belong to the State and it was our responsibility to attempt to direct the needs of our children, mentally, socially, physically,

spiritually, and academically." Other belief statements spoke to the merits of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guaranteed that parents were the prime educators. If home-schooling occurred, the right factors related to committed parents, positive home environments, and "caring relationships" (Noddings, 1984). In addition, home schoolers felt that their founding principles changed over time and were strengthened as individually designed programming allowed each child to progress at his own pace in every subject: science, mathematics, language arts, physical education, and a variety of elective areas presented in Appendix B.

#### Practices

In every instance, home schoolers described home and community-based instruction as an adventure or sojourn into learning through discovery. This attitude built the entire family's self-confidence about opting for home schooling toward the development of becoming creative and critical thinkers. Four of the home-schooled reentered high school for the sciences and new mathematics programs and to be more involved with their friends, to socialize, and to team with people involved in sports and clubs which only public schools offered.

The key element involved in these school entries was that intergenerational learning was adequate, but for some

participants, there was not enough stimulation and peer involvement in the home study. As students matured, their needs and attempts to distance themselves from their families at times fluctuated over the course of their program development.

In addition, the reasons for home schooling or the founding principles inherent in their beliefs satisfied the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan for three families out of four who were continuing to home school and who attempted to register their educational plans with their respective school jurisdictions. However, upon reflection and based on dialogue and the interactive nature of the question and answer sessions, the participants shared their hidden agendas for home schooling and the educational goals which created meaning in their lives. To summarize, a number of these treatises may have been determined by the process data shared in research question 2. Those findings became the reflection upon past experience and intuition of which curricular programs worked and which attempts to individualize instruction were deficient. Through heightened "flashbacks" of past experiences, the interviewees were afforded the luxury of becoming reflective practitioners who introspectively determined the connections among the theories and their home-schooling practices.

## The Process Data

### Research Question 2

#### What home-schooling practices did each family employ?

The shared experiences predominantly were developing learning materials, making daily and weekly "schedules" to satisfy the educational plans of the educational authorities which addressed varied yearly plans, units of study, and modes of operation and delivery.

Cynthia Tobias (1994) of the Hewitt/Moore Research Foundation described how learning to recognize and appreciate learning styles assisted home schoolers to identify the natural strengths and tendencies each learner possessed. Tobias mapped out a framework that identified how the majority of home schoolers saw the world. By perception they perceived the concrete and the abstract, and the way these home schoolers used the information, especially at the initial stages of their instruction, was called ordering. Ordering was done in two ways: through random and sequential development (pp. 19-20).

As parents/teachers, many of the families felt a need to recognize their own natural learning styles, based on their school reflections, then proceeded to recognize how they learned new information to better understand what came naturally. Carroll and Smith (1990) also believed that the factor for successful practice appeared to be how easily identifiable the differences between the parents and the

children were to alleviate the level of frustration and misunderstanding that often occurred in a large group setting, such as a classroom with high pupil to teacher ratios. Tobias (1994) recommended The Gregorc Adult Style Delineators as a means of parents identifying their own learning style characteristics which three families had adhered to in this study (p. 20).

Many home schoolers focused themselves on their children's learning styles. Tobias (1994, p. 20) summarized the areas of focus in determining how children learned. Many families spoke of Gardner's seven intelligences (cited in Cynthia Tobias, 1994, p. 142): linguistic, logic and mathematical, spatial, musical, interpersonal, kinesthetic, and intrapersonal development and how they studied those areas. Other curricular areas included the teachings of Gregorc Mind-styles, Multiple Intelligences (Gardner), and Analytic/Global Information Processing (Witkin). The work of Dunn and Dunn (1978, cited in Tobias, 1994, p. 20) in environmental preferences was a more complicated analysis which two of the home-schooling families had examined over the years.

## The Values Data

### Research Question 3

What assessment strategies were used by each home-schooling group in this case study to determine the success of their efforts?

By reviewing transcription testimonies, lesson plans, and packaged curricular materials utilized by the home schoolers, the study verified some of the findings in the literature review. The belief in child-centered and independent learning and the "back-to-basics" concepts inherent in mastery learning were an integral part of their home-schooling programs. Unfortunately, new home-schooling thought did not refer to the work of Raymond and Dorothy Moore (1991). It was Moore's premise that it was better to learn academics later in life, especially in the case of young males. Early childhood education set the stage for integrated and lifelong learning skills and interests.

### Evaluation

The evaluation or assessment strategies to determine the efficacy of their home-schooling varied widely. A frequently occurring category was one that addressed the concept of whether home schoolers should be given grades as in the traditional school setting. In spite of the inherent weakness that was perceived by the interviewees that sets learner against teacher, home schoolers agreed that totally

abandoning the system would be a deterrent had they decided to reenter public or private schools or post-secondary institutions such as technical schools and universities.

Grades were perceived to be a convenience in some programming and a necessity for packaged learning related to mastery learning encompassed in other programs such as the Accelerated Christian Education programs (ACE). More importantly, there was a clear expression that considerations to grade or not to grade students' work continually led to discussions of the broader issue of evaluation. Various home-schooling evaluations included examinations and grading which assisted parents and students to see their results and to determine the extent to which goals and objectives (founding principles) were met. In addition, evaluation of curricular materials and continuous evaluation of the process usually set a course or direction for further study.

Beyond the logistic functions, evaluating became a channel for reward, achievement, and satisfaction. At the initial stages of home schooling, especially for families who home schooled for four to ten years, evaluations were set around standardized or teacher-prepared tests to satisfy educational authorities. When it became apparent that the advent of home-schooling legislation was no longer necessary to consider one's educational program as a subversive activity, reliance on formalized testing became a starting

point. The criteria of home schoolers changed developmentally over the years. The more interdisciplinary the assessments and judgments, diaries and anecdotal records as to how the children reacted to the instruction became more complex and the primary standards rose to meet higher academic achievement and more complicated evaluation instruments. If testing addressed measurement, then parents promoted learning by a stimulated study which acted as a vehicle for reward. In a parallel construction it was determined that the frequency and nature of examinations depended on the subject and maturity of the student. Young learners need to be observed, but formal examinations, whether written or oral, were better suited to older children in the home-schooling experience.

### Expectations

A key question home schoolers asked themselves was, "What is satisfactory achievement for my child?" The responses were relative to each family's experience. In the assessment, the most common response was self-evaluation, which received lengthy commentary. Following a discussion with the student about what was to be accomplished, parents encouraged their "learners" to determine whether or not they had met their objectives. Expectations needed to be realistic, and effective learning was achieved when parents were satisfied that the guidance and direction set in place became the child's responsibility. The criteria most often



described were the necessity for program regularity, though oftentimes incidental in nature, punctuality, efficiency, self-direction, and thoroughness in task completion. The processes of learning were of equal importance in relation to content learning.

### Feedback

Continuous feedback was the desired outcome of home-schooling practice. What appeared to motivate learners was praise specific to task accomplishment. Mastery learning in various forms was the focus of at least seven home-schooling families' curricular program. The multi-directional nature of home schooling warranted that both parents and home schoolers demanded feedback regarding their performance. Participation in support groups and networks was the greatest single factor which provided home schoolers the opportunity to learn from other home schoolers. Subscriptions to home-schooling periodicals were a particular source of continued learning.

Skills development and work education were taught simultaneously. While developing a high school curriculum and choosing a high school correspondence course, supplementing it was even more taxing. The choice of course selection depended on the quality of instruction offered, the services provided by the school, and the costs of packaged curriculum and textbooks. Such packaged learning offered self-check exercises, keys, workbooks, audio and

videotapes, laboratory equipment, and other learning materials. As lessons were mailed, the receiving schools logged and graded the lessons and returned the results by mail. Over the years, public school transcripts needed to access Saskatchewan universities "relaxed" in the sense that home schoolers could write entrance examinations. Two families shared that this gave them access to post-secondary institutions. In both cases, their home schoolers scored in the 75th to 85th percentile on the CTBS and other entrance tests.

Social success was aptly described by Wade and his colleagues (1995). Wade's goals for his pilot study were repeated throughout the course of these interviews and, in general, were embedded in the data collection.

#### Social Development Goals

The following development goals (Wade, 1995, p. 286) were addressed:

1. Social graces--courtesy and good manners that make an individual pleasant to have around.
2. The ability to make and enjoy friends.
3. Respect for authority--parents, adults, superiors, government, and Creator (whatever faith or existentialist perspective) [comment added by the writer].

4. Sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others and the ability to transmit gracefully one's own unselfish feelings.

5. Conversation and correspondence skills.

6. The ability to give and take in a normal relationship with other people, and the grace to cooperate when things do not go one's way.

7. Skill in defusing tense situations.

8. Prudence in developing business or social relationships, that is, faithfulness, avoiding misunderstandings, and tactful precaution when dealing with dishonesty.

9. Development of leadership, a skill which included good "followership" and the ability to share in decision making, helping everyone to feel they are part of the team.

10. The sensitivity and faithfulness to become a good life partner.

The presentation encompassed the work of John Wesley Taylor (cited in Wade, 1995, pp. 287-288) who asked the question, "How does the self-concept of home-schooled children compare with other children?" On a Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, 224 home-schooled children were administered this test. Taylor found home schoolers to be "anything but mousy" (p. 287). One-half scored above the 90th percentile and approximately 10% were below the national average.

Similarly, in the present study, twenty-four young adults interviewed demonstrated through their speech, body language, and presence a degree of confidence and self-esteem that would be the envy of the personal and character development of many school students. Their vocations ranged from marketing and education-related fields, medicine, diplomatic relations, law, and health-related professions. Of the six home schoolers who re-entered high school or university, all of them graduated with honors or distinction with a minimum 80 percentile in their Grade Point Average (GPAs).

#### Summary of the Findings

The themes of choice, networking and self-reflection, were evident throughout the interview sessions with the ten home-school families. Documents were reviewed and a discussion followed regarding the influence home-schooling had on their lives. The comments may be fundamental to the influence the decision to home school had for the home-schoolers': feelings of change, reflection, and introspection of having the opportunity to validate their feelings and experiences.

The interviewees shared many ideas which were not acknowledged in this analysis. Unfortunately, the document review was not as rich as first anticipated. The rationale for this is due to the fact that some of these families

home-schooled a number of years ago and were never instructed to keep records for a follow-up study. If the researcher had had the resolve to inform such a decision at that time, the results of this study might have been far more quantitative in nature. In retrospect, a combined qualitative and quantitative design may have expanded the nature of the present findings. However, the participants were highly enthusiastic, even if they had home schooled for a short period of time. The frequency of positive remarks in the selection may appear biased, but the interview and document review attested to the fact that participants perceived their home-schooling program had influenced them in a positive manner.

The interviews were conducted in a spirit of exchange. This facilitated the opportunity for home schoolers to review their founding purposes, instructional practices, assessments and evaluation strategies, and to express their transformation in the process as well as the efficacy of their home schooling. The growth-enhancing experiences that Jean Miller (1986) documented through her studies on women were the kinds of dialogue and conversations which were similar testimonials related to the mothers' perceptions and changing roles. In great depth they highlighted the personal sacrifices they had made in order to become their children's primary educator. A number of these sacrifices related to a sense of loss of personal time and space,

economic loss due to a single income, and the psychological and social pressures that surrounded the negative side of being a home schooler for considerable lengths of time.

Three themes emerged when respondents described how home schooling had influenced their concept of whether or not their practice had been a success: choice, networking, and self-reflection. These themes were predominate throughout the interview sessions in all three research areas. In determining whether their home-schooling efforts were successful, an elaboration on these themes emerged. To the interviewees, parents and children alike, home schooling meant understanding each other's needs by creating and practicing the values of care, concern, and connection to each other and the greater community, whether that was determined to be a church community, an environmental community, or a global community of learners.

The open-ended nature of the interview allowed for the flexibility and introspection for a majority of families to be considered reflective practitioners for the purpose of a formal examination of one aspect of their life's work, interpreted by the researcher in Chapter 5. Recommendations to stakeholders in Chapter 5 are intended to encourage them to continue to make a difference, to continue ongoing reflection, assessment, and to engage in the evaluation of home schooling in Saskatchewan.

## CHAPTER 5

### INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to build upon previous research conducted by Hill (1988) by interviewing a sample of the same home-schooling families and their children who were now in their late teens and mid twenties. The parents and some of their children who were excluded from the original study, evaluated a decade of home-schooling practice. Three potential areas of evaluation were studied:

1. Founding principles--reasons for home schooling and corresponding changes in these purposes.

2. Instructional strategies and methodologies and the evolution of the programs which included criteria used in evaluation.

3. The assessment and assessment strategies employed that determined whether or not home schooling was successful or unsuccessful.

The literature review and data collection were organized under those headings and prefaced by the historical development and political framework that encompassed the practice beginning with the North American

origins of schooling and the current political framework for home schooling in Saskatchewan.

### Method

A total of ten families were asked for in-depth interviews concerning their long-term, home-schooling experience. Participants invited to participate in this study fit the criteria of having participated in a former study in 1988. The criteria set for participation in this study included a minimum of one year of home-schooling experience, identification as having been participants in the former Hill (1988) study, a willingness to share documents that could be evaluative, and, whenever possible, an agreement that the children would participate in a reflection of their personal experiences. Interviews lasted from one to five hours.

Eighteen parents and twenty-five children were interviewed. They reported their perception of the founding principles they held for home schooling, the home-schooling practices that evolved, and the assessment strategies used to evaluate the total experience. Participants reported that the right to choice, more than any other factor, was their primary reason for home schooling. The kind of practice most frequently described, in terms of curricular content, was a moral or technologically-based education, and often a combination of both programs. The issue that made



them feel relatively successful in their home-schooling decision centered around change, feelings of self-reflection and introspection, and the power of relationship-building in terms of networking that allowed them to feel like pioneers in the province.

This chapter was framed under the assumption that the process of working from the data to the literature would integrate bodies of information (Cullinane, 1995). By working outward, or from the general to the specific, connections to the themes derived from the interview and documented data to the literature review on choice, change, self-reflection, and introspection could be projected. In order to accomplish this framework and connection, this chapter is presented in the following order: (a) "sense-making" of the data gathered in Chapter 4, (b) discussing the three themes highlighted in the data relating to the targeted literature, and (c) making recommendations to stakeholders.

#### Sense-Making of the Findings

The findings of this study were in some ways atypical of the general home-schooling populations studied in the past. These advocates, for the most part, were satisfied with the choices they had made for and with their children about how they would be educated. They were "growth-enhancing experiences" (Miller, 1986) for the entire family

and continued to influence their decision making and sense of confidence in life choices. Further examination of the findings was a detailed account of how and why these experiences continued over a two to ten year period.

One criteria that made home schooling in Saskatchewan worthy of study was the long-term development of the political milieu that surrounded the early stages of the practice. The controversy, fear, and mistrust that engulfed it and the corrective channels which the stakeholders embarked upon to create a model for home schooling that involved many researchers, federal agencies, and statesmen, can only be extrapolated.

Another factor was the incredible determination of the home schoolers to make home schooling a legal educational option by fighting for, prescribing to, and defending their right to choice. Their demands were "heard and seen" (Gilligan, 1982) by government, although their reasons for choosing to direct their attention to the home-schooling population may never be determined. What has been determined is that now there is a plan for home schooling in the province. A governmental mandate had been determined to set a time frame for completion of a document to address home schooling. It was determined that the criteria of program outcomes would focus on relationship-building between home schoolers and school jurisdictions.

In the final analysis, the evolution and development of home schooling held different meaning for different people, which was home schooling's greatest strength. Evolution occurred despite the changes in government, despite the roadblocks set before home schoolers, and despite their sometimes overzealous and unique spirits. The spiritual development report varied and was categorized into three predominant themes: the right to choice, independent and resource-based learning, and mastery learning.

#### The Right to Choice

The right to choice was the right to have parents direct their child's educational program based on their own constructions. Most often these constructions were within the legal parameters set by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, and occasionally as the mood and spirit of holistic inquiry struck them.

#### Independent and Resource-Based Learning

A program which allowed for independent research stemming from personal interest and set in a comfortable home environment provided successful home schoolers with a window to the world. Home schoolers accessed this world by faith, technological and computer access, and through the hundreds of education and social networks they created.

### Mastery Learning

Home schooling meant learning things well when one understood the concepts of mathematics, reading, social studies, home economics, and human psychology. If the motivation to learn was not imposed, the attraction to reenter a system that often was forced to perpetuate structured learning to large groups became a detractor. The attractors to home schooling are the intimacy in learning and teaching as a family, affording the time and space "to learn how to learn," and learning generationally and in community.

### Answering the Research Questions

The study questions asked by the researcher were designed to provide information which would shed light on the influence of home schooling over time in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. The answer to the questions have been presented in the discussion in this chapter; however, they are briefly summarized in the following section.

Question 1: What were the founding purposes for home schooling? Over the course of a decade since the time of the original study, home schoolers primarily home schooled as a matter of choice. They noted that other factors had influenced them as well. How they felt about their own public or private education, the quality and nature of schools and teachers who became prime educators and

significant others, their children's personality change after entering a public school, and the quality of instruction and guidance they feared might be missing in public school were all important factors. Many of the professionals--the professors, the teachers, and the engineers--were determined that they could better prepare their children for a vocation or profession in life than an institution such as a school system. While they recognized that there were some excellent teachers and doctrine occurring in public and private schools, they originally had been motivated out of a sense of need or urgency to take responsibility for their lives and the lives of their children. Home schooling had been only one avenue they hoped would achieve this idyllic state. To lesser and greater degrees, each participant described how successful they were in their quest.

Question 2: What home-schooling practices did each group in the case study employ? The range of strategies and methodologies were vast and are categorized in Appendix C.

A description of typical courses of study included language arts, science, mathematics, health and wellness, history, calculus, physics, chemistry, biology, economics, and Christian ethics.

Typical modes of delivery for instruction were utilization of instructional services available from public and private schools, universities, and computer networks

such as Internet and the "superhighway" connections to the world of educational resources, organizations, and resource-based learning.

Question 3: What assessment strategies were used by each home-schooling group in this case study to determine success of their efforts? From a range of individualized to packaged to integrated instruction, home schoolers varied in the descriptions they shared and in the verbatim comments that identified the degrees of success that were relayed in the interview sessions. A number of these directed responses which concerned accounts and samples of the kinds of language that surrounded home schooling appear in Appendix D.

### Implications

This study was similar to many research studies found in the review of the literature. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, very few studies can attest to a decade of practice and reflection. The literature search included dissertations, periodicals, and historical documents systematically tracking the development of home schoolers in a particular area. Tracking the documentation was difficult due to the highly transient nature of home schoolers and the multiplicity of their educational programming.

When the matter of choice entered the educational realm, it set fires burning that infiltrated into the status quo, forcing educators to become critical thinkers about their own personal and professional lives and the degree of happiness and resolve they found in perpetuating an educational system that may or may not have been working effectively to meet the needs of every student. Educators needed to realize that when lobbying groups like home schoolers set a mission for themselves, they held the power to be one of the greatest organizations, or alter egos in Freudian terms, to affect the nature and direction of education. This is especially true if home schoolers continue to receive a portion of the "educational pie" in the new funding arrangements in this province.

Out of a stage of "flux and transformation" (Morgan, 1986) and into the "organismic or holographic" design of an ever-changing and ever-evolving process, the metaphors of home schooling have arisen like a phoenix out of the ashes in Saskatchewan. Since the time this researcher experienced these families in the eighties, incredible sojourns have been embarked upon in the kinds of vocations the home schooled are involved with and the kinds of businesses and organizations they lead.

The growth and maintenance of home-schooling families have been credited to the consensus decision-making model

designed by the stakeholders themselves. The home schoolers, the school boards, and the government determined that there had to be a more positive vein for conflict resolution over the parental right to educate and the state's right to protect the child, and they made that change happen.

The case studies presented were verbatim accounts that attested to the strength, determination, and resolve to achieve such a state. One home-schooling family's efforts to reflect, assess, and continue with their sojourn has been reproduced as a biographical sketch at the end of this chapter. Their descriptions provided a summary of the conviction and determination of a family who assisted in the research follow-up. Not only did they answer the research questions pertinent to this study, but they provided detailed accounts of their reasons for home schooling, assessments, and evaluations over specific time periods in the home-schooling process.

Based on illustrations and commentaries of a typical biographical sketch, the researcher's acclamation of follow-up information, the synthesis and reflection on the descriptions which were shared by the participants, and the issues that may concern them in the future, recommendations are made to the stakeholders in this study.



Recommendations to Saskatchewan Education,  
Employment and Training

The following recommendations are offered by the researcher to the Government of Saskatchewan and specifically, to the Independent Schools, Home-Based Education Branch:

1. The Government, regardless of the political persuasion of the times, has a political and social responsibility to continue to offer home schoolers funding arrangements and agency support as taxpayers for whom they hold responsibility. The Government has taken a positive direction in the lives of home-schooling families with regard to their ability to legalize practice, seek public networks and alliances, and develop partnerships with key stakeholders. The consensus/decision-making model and the Advisory Committee structure have been effective in developing policy, making connections, and building a network of relationships and communications. These decisions have influenced the lives of home-schoolers in Saskatchewan and, inadvertently, have influenced the content of the Core Curriculum initiatives under implementation for all children in Saskatchewan.

2. The Independent Schools, Home-Based Education Branch should reflect and applaud their efforts. This researcher suggests that they expand their role to include public and private school integration inclusive of soft exit

and reentry policies, and celebrate the success of all citizens who take control of their learning and progress.

3. The Government should consider supporting the development and implementation of curriculum materials from kindergarten through grade 12 which are locally designed. Some school jurisdictions quickly discovered that Forestry Management, ordered out of the British Columbia Correspondence School as one elective accredited course available to an equivalent Division III or IV transfer home-schooled student, was neither a relevant nor transferrable credit to students living in the prairies of southern Saskatchewan. Locally-developed options may be interpreted to mean that Saskatchewan educators can effectively design their own curricular programs inclusive of programs needed for distance and home-schooled education.

4. The Government should consider and support the continued networking among the stakeholders to maintain and improve the skill levels and curricular choices and best practices of both public schools and home schools as there is continued value in the exchange and interchange of ideas.

5. The Government should consider and continue to encourage leadership to support the common principles and practices shared by the participants of this study. Home schooling or home education offered designs relevant to all educational programs. It is recommended that the Government continue to reflect on the quality, content, delivery, and

leadership in school jurisdictions so that they too can become more "organismic, flexible and webbed" (Wheatley, 1993).

By developing and organizing public schools which are open and semi-structured, and based exclusively on students' educational needs, school jurisdictions can continue to make their organizations "healthy" and openly receptive to home schoolers. Home schoolers have an enlightened perspective which can teach the public sector about mainstreaming, integration, and the generally successful attempts to create points of intersection between theory and practice (praxis).

#### Recommendations for Home Schoolers

The following recommendations are made to home schoolers:

1. Home schoolers should celebrate their successes gained thus far.
2. Home schoolers should remain constant and flexible in their dealings with the Government and the administrative functions organized for the vast majority of children in Saskatchewan. The public school system's structures, curricula, and strategies are changing. The researcher suggests that the very existence of home-schooling doctrine has infiltrated the public and private school systems in this province. They were forced to examine the meaning of "equivalent instruction," a nebulous term for even the most

acute reflective practitioner as it related to public educational standards.

3. Practitioners may find it more beneficial to modify demands for home-schooling curriculum and meet Government demands "to not violate the general goals of education." The long-term assessments have provided evidence that there is merit in home schooling and outcomes of alternative instruction. There is value in the interaction between the educational partnerships which have accrued over the last decade.

4. Home schoolers, alliances, and networks should continue to work to influence provincial curricula and learning styles which home-schooling strategies have embodied for years. Home schoolers may find an effective role to work as catalysts, storehouses of information, and change agents in their respective areas.

#### Summary

This follow-up study described the home schoolers of Saskatchewan, some of whom have now emigrated to Ontario, Wisconsin, and New York State in the migration of home schoolers. The primary question was, "What are the long-term effects of home schooling?" These data were determined by examining the foundational principles for home schooling, the materials and instructional strategies employed, and the nature of the assessment of evaluation that called into play

self-reflection and introspection about a life choice to educate at home or in the "community of learners" at large.

The present study produced findings somewhat different from studies in which participants have formally tracked their programs. However, the progress and assessments were valuable in terms of record-keeping, projection, and comparison. Had the researcher and the home schoolers of the former Hill (1988) study ever intended to follow the development of home-schooling programs over a decade ago, a more quantitative design may have provided statistical data and correlations that would have enhanced the qualitative description and verified the findings in the eyes of the mixed methodologists.

Families in this study exerted a powerful influence on their children's learning through home schooling. Their curricula embodied the value of family learning, philosophies, and attitudes which placed learning at the center of family life (Bennett, 1988). The benefits of developing a home-schooling curriculum showed an affectionate concern for learning, stressed family values, and turned daily learning conversations and routines into learning experiences. Each family's experience and case study, elicited by the curriculum they chose, created a unique set of experiences.

Home learning attitudes and conditions which determined student success can be altered in a short time (Bloom,

1988). In order to achieve quick and lasting change in achieving their goals, parents generally adopted a middle-class mindset toward learning, even though a number of the families' economic status was not middle class (Clark, 1987). Home curriculum was built on the mindset similar to Carrol and Smith's (1990) examination of four components for home-schooling success: (a) an enriched learning environment; (b) vital mental nourishment; (c) enthusiasm for learning; and (d) desire to learn (p. 115).

The mindset which was crucial to successful home schooling can best be summarized by the following four elements which encouraged the process that: (a) made education a family priority; (b) expected children to be successful in their home schooling; (c) promised children support, monitoring, evaluation and, more importantly, recognition; and (d) engaged families in a range of activities from structured to nonstructured home-school settings. These settings varied in disciplines, responsiveness, commitment, and challenges. As in the Bennis (1993) study, a comprehensive home-schooling curriculum included strong values and environmental components which introduced children to rigorous academic subjects (e.g., literature, mathematics, science, and the arts).

Each family prepared their children to benefit from a strong liberal arts education. They emphasized motivation, structure, supportive interaction, and a rich learning milieu based on their individual needs and interests. Each case study reflection allowed participants to articulate their feelings concerning the foundational principles for home schooling. Their practices, the methods they employed, and the determining factors which acted as standards, measured the degrees of success they experienced.

In addition, their reflections afforded the researcher the opportunity to reflect and report the families' introspections regarding their choice to home school, the descriptions of methodologies and philosophies of learning which they employed, and their evaluation of both the short- and long-term successes of their home-schooling practice.

Qualitative research enabled the researcher to probe into the lives and progress of ten home-schooling families over a decade of practice. Choice, networking, and self-reflection and introspection were studied. In light of the research on founding principles, practices, and assessments of home schooling within the North American and Saskatchewan contexts, new insight has been gained. The home schoolers described with relative ease their resources, achievement results, aspirations, and frustrations with the process.

Not surprisingly, the home schooled indicated that they had been validated by the follow-up study. They shared that the researcher was one of the few contacts who had inquired about their practice or the growth-enhancing experiences (Gilligan, 1982) that dominated their lives. What emerged were the themes of care, connection, and concern for each other and for the greater community, however they chose to define it.

In addition, two types of home-schooling families were identified: evangelical Christians and "free school" thinkers who prescribed to the beliefs of Holt and Illich. The six families who labelled themselves "evangelical Christians" found that the philosophy of secular humanism apparent in school curricula conflicted with their religious beliefs. Family #1 believed in the Biblical view of man and how he should express his humanness. Secular humanism saw man as a self-serving individual who "looked out for number one" rather than loving and showing concern for his fellowman.

Conversely, Christian humanism, according to Family #1, was moral, advocating an attitude of respect between husband and wife, parent and child, government and citizen. The objectives for home schooling were short term. The future purpose for home schooling was to solidify and to establish moral values based on the belief of the presence of God in real life. The parents wanted to establish convictions



concerning the existence of God and His relevance to the way people lived. There were no indictments of teachers or specific schools, but rather a perspective that character and academic development meant the achievement of morals, values, ethics, and respect for fellow individuals through the medium of home schooling. Academic achievement and character-value setting were their main evaluation criterion.

Families #4 and #5 shared the following perceptions about the development of an expanded version of a home schooling definition for the twenty-first century.

Some parents, they felt, were unprepared to face the consequences of delegating education to others. Generally, parents needed to become more active in their children's education and aware of alternatives available to them. However, some individuals' personalities, they felt, would not be able to "bear up" under the responsibilities and demands of home schooling. They also felt the need for a pluralistic approach toward family responsibilities, at least in terms of the availability of both public school resources and home education. Public and private resources should be integrated, they thought, since if society allowed religious freedom, it should allow pluralistic educational systems. Such allowances would demonstrate their effectiveness in the development of the abilities of the nation, province, and community.

They warned, however, that if the profitable members of a community failed to encourage individual initiatives with the same commitment received by the public school system, society would continue to degenerate at its present rate, and the province and the nation would suffer major societal upheavals in the next generation. This fear of degeneration became the major philosophical basis to encourage government leniency for differing educational systems.

The "free school" home schoolers supported and enacted the practices of Illich and Holt. They demanded a more holistic learning approach which asserted a logical and credible alternative to public education which had the potential to educate children to become full, constructive participants in society. They questioned traditional forms of educational institutions and continually challenged them.

### Conclusion

Both types of home schoolers called for a redefinition of home schooling to mean an obligation for families to become more conscious of time and personal responsibilities, and to be more sacrificing. As Family #7 phrased it, "We just wanted to find out what it was really like to 'cocoon'." These attributes were described as long-term advantages disguised as immediate short-term disadvantages. Both groups shared the general belief that closer family bonding and better development for educational and character

value systems were ways of selecting the direction of education and child development toward the creation of either a secular or nonsecular community.

It was to those "greater communities" that these research findings were addressed. Futurists stated that change at the individual level was a fundamental requirement to system or organizational change (Morgan, 1993). It is apparent that our world is changing. The educational sector, as part of the global institutional network, needs support to keep pace and meet the needs of all children as well as supporting a growing generation of lifelong learners. Therefore, if the development and growth of home schooling, or the transformation of those involved in its delivery are positively influenced, the field of education undoubtedly will benefit from their training and experience.

In a world dedicated to communitarianism (Etzioni, 1992; Sergiovani, 1991, 1992) and to the interdependence that Gilligan (1982) and Morgan (1986) addressed, it is projected that home schoolers will have a positive impact on those with whom they interact and connect: traditional learners and nontraditional learners alike, parents, and the general masses. Individuals in this study are certainly capable of leading change, modeling reflection, and networking to "make sense" of their lives. Their contributions were a guide to the understanding gleaned

from the growth of alternative education, in general, and home schooling, specifically.

## THE EPILOGUE

### The Sojourn Continues

Ingrid's family made a commitment to home school which, for their purposes, meant that people could not divorce education from the rest of their lives. Home schooling required a realignment of priorities, a reappraisal of education, and a whole new way of thinking about learning. The family believed that the human rights issue was especially important in the process. They presented the argument that if people lacked an awareness of alternatives and choices, they began to lose the "habit of freedom" and, thus, accept the erosion of their fundamental and qualifiable rights.

Ingrid radicalized the delivery of one aspect of physical education at the University of Toronto's health and sciences department. She continues to teach dance and fitness at the University's Athletic Center. Her workshops are structured by the Mitzvah Technique for body mechanics and mind and body tension release. It was befitting that she dedicated her life to "holistic" medicine and its practices. It was also befitting the Mitzvah Technique took its name from the Hebrew word meaning "a good deed returning good to the doer." Through her practice, Ingrid shared the

knowledge of her home-schooling experience and transferred her skills to nurture those individuals who sought her services and who were in physical and spiritual need.

Finally, Ingrid Dancer's case study spoke to the patterns of meaning that have guided her life. By having the opportunity to choose home schooling and through networking with her family and community, the challenges she met and the changes that occurred in her life, she portrayed many of the ideals which young people from the home-schooling movement in Saskatchewan embody: care, concern, and commitment to oneself and to one's community.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORMS**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**PROTOCOL**

**THANK YOU LETTER**

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A Decade of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan, Canada  
(1984-1994): A Case Study  
Sandra C. Hill University of San Diego

### Purpose of Research:

As part of the research on home schooling, the researcher will interview home-schooling families in order to gain knowledge and insight into the founding purposes, practices, and assessment strategies in successful home-schooling efforts.

### Understandings:

1. The principle method of research will be through in-depth interviews. The interviews will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient to the informant and should take no longer than one hour.

2. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and I may withdraw at any time in the course of the interview.

3. The interview may be recorded using audio or video tape, if so, I will receive a complete transcript of the interview or video tape if requested. If not recorded, I will, upon request, receive a complete set of the paraphrased recording of the interview. I have the right to turn off the recording device at any time and make any comments that are "off the record." I also have the right to edit the transcript and ask that any notes or recorded tapes be destroyed.

4. Prior to signing this consent form, I will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and receive responses to those questions from the researcher.

5. The transcribed content of the interview, as well as an analysis of the interview, will be used in completing a dissertation as partial fulfillment for the doctoral program, at the University of San Diego.

6. A copy of the recorded tapes, notes, and the resulting dissertation will be kept by the researcher for the duration of the study or approximately one year before they are destroyed. Names and code numbers will be kept in the researcher's home and will be coded automatically in a HyperQual computer program.

### Consent:

I, the undersigned, understand the expectations and limits of this project, and on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Community

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Interview Questions**  
University of San Diego  
Decade of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan, Canada (1984-1994):  
A Case Study  
Interview Questions  
University of San Diego

This guide is presented as a framework for the interviews. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of questions.

**Thank you for giving me your valuable time. This interview is going to focus on three themes: the founding purposes, practices and assessment strategies you employed in your home schooling over the last number of years.**

**Founding Purposes**

What were your founding purposes for home-schooling?

- How have your founding purposes been modified or remained constant over the period you home-schooled?
- If there have been significant changes in these purposes, what are these changes and why did such changes occur?

**Practices**

What home-schooling practices did you employ?

- How have these practices changed or evolved over the life of your home schooling?
- What criteria were used to develop these practices?

**Assessments**

What assessment strategies did you use in your situation to determine what aspects of your practice were successful?

- Do you believe that you were successful in your home-schooling efforts?  
Why?

September 10, 1994

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665-28th Street East  
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan  
S6V 6E9

Dear

For the past ten years I have lived in various parts of Saskatchewan. During that period I have had the privilege of interacting with and learning from individuals who have cultural, philosophical, political and religious perspectives different from my own. Much of my own thinking in recent years as a public school administrator has been influenced by the research I collected during the extended five year period of my masters' study *An Investigation of Home-schooling in Saskatchewan* (1988). My reflections on what it means to home school have influenced my beliefs about teaching and learning, and my role as a leader. I have learned that home -schooling thought offers balance and harmony in education that we can all learn from and grow.

I feel that it is important to extend my knowledge of the home- schooling practice that I learned about ten years ago from families such as yours and for whom I have held a special interest and curiosity in the nature of their development. For that reason I am asking if you would be willing to share with me some of the important stories that describe your founding purposes, practices and assessment strategies that you feel need to be heard and remembered. If you are willing to share your stories with me I would like to record and study them in order to identify the ideas and concepts that I and others can use to be more effective in meeting the challenges that face us in education as we move towards the Third Millennium.

If you are willing to share your knowledge and practice with me I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours truly,

Sandra C. Hill

June 10, 1995

Dear (home schoolers):

This letter is written as an appreciation for your participation in the study *A Decade of Home Schooling in Saskatchewan, Canada (1984-1995): A Case Study*. Thank you for the reflections that proved to be invaluable.

It was an honor and a privilege to be entrusted with the beliefs and perspectives you hold for your educational practice. I would also like to wish you all the very best of luck in your professional and personal lives. Many of the unanswered questions about home schooling that I had in the eighties have been resolved through the confirmation of your incredible successes.

Your knowledge and wisdom have genuinely helped me to change my perspectives about how I deal with people, and especially, students. How I operate as an administrator has altered my perspectives on the managerial role of school administration. My style has evolved into a leadership role that creates venues for learning rather than teaching. Thanks to your contributions and the synthesis about the rationale, practices and assessments you engaged in over the years I have grown more confident in the way I think about possibilities.

Thank you once again for your contributions to my research.

Sincerely,

Sandra C. Hill

**APPENDIX B**  
**FOUNDING PRINCIPLES**

## Appendix B

### A Summary of the Founding Principles for Home Schooling

"To have the right to practice a structuralist's desire to replicate religious schools in a home environment"

"To procure a life sustained by family through its children"

"To develop an education that is varied, alive and whole"

"To develop a life that includes people of all sorts and ages"

"To feel free to learn about and discuss sacred matters such as work, play, love, and self"

"To modulate one's persona in the great shifting tide of humanity"

"To alter the place schools have had as irreplaceable agents of enculturation"

"To pride ourselves that we are learning under ideal conditions in terms of pupil to teacher ratio in groups small enough to make learning happen"

"To expand the role of home schooling to repair some troubled families"

"To create quality time with a reassessment of our role as parents"

"To have education embedded in the community and enhance democratic ideals"

"To have your home and your community become your educational resource center"

"To teach out of a sense of love for one's children"

"To keep our children away from the negative academic and peer pressures in school"

"To enhance family relationships"

"To foster the family's values"

"To meet their children's needs and interests"

"To partake in their children's education"

"To individualize instruction"

"To have children grow spiritually, physically and academically"

"To take on the expectation that God gave us to train our children"

"To develop morally and ethically as a family"

"To incorporate domestic work and related study"

"To be able to really know what it means to think locally and act globally"

"To be an independent and life-long learner"

"To strengthen the bonds of kinship"

"To have the time to be a club member in debating, mechanics, and computer programming"

"To act out the notions of care, concern and connection not just rhetoric"

"To become an entrepreneur early in life"

"To learn how to develop meaningful and inclusive curriculum"

"To think of the whole world as our home and our key resource"

"To be part of an organismic, and ever-changing kind of education that is in synch with the times and is paced along with the business community"

"To be able to rethink assumptions about the relationship of school and home and see value in both"

"To avoid the mindless repetition of meaningless tasks"

"To create a home school that teaches us about the relationship to children and the children's relationship to one another"

"To create what Montessori called Casa di Bambina, 'The House of Childhood'"

"To respect people who decide to live by certain principles to find a way to make home schools work"

"To build a stronger child and provide for the best academic achievement of that child"

"To do as good as, or a better job than, the schools are capable of doing"

"To develop our own comprehensive curriculum with CD-ROM and Internet link-ups which open the world of resources and connections to you"

"To take gymnastics and art classes in the day not being confined by the school day"

"To interpret Christian ethics to mean--reading, writing and arithmetic and we will 'culture' ourselves"

"To create learners who are encouraged by autonomy not authority"

"To create an atmosphere of one-to-one learning"

"To make religion and education a virtuous life and part of our family culture"

"To teach skills not just knowledge"

"To teach integrated disciplines and to have the time to study one of them all day long if the desire is there"

"To help your child to enjoy reading and really understand numeracy that gives meaning and transferability to curricula"

"To be able to guide learning to build character"

"To be able to use your community as your library"

"To have the choice to teach when you want, what you want and how you want"

"To have the challenge of teaching younger and older children simultaneously"

"To be able to see your children mature and help them find answers to their questions about their growth and development as human beings"

"To teach your children how to like themselves and how to love others"

"To develop a stronger ethic of care, concern and commitment"

"To appreciate that continued learning means that attitudes, achievements, and opportunities make the greatest difference at home"

"To control learning through efficient methodologies and developing autonomy and creativity"

"To have the freedom to wait for readiness in all subject areas"

"To have children devise their own program, explore and experiment at their own pace"

"The emphasis is on providing rather than pushing"

"To know that continued learning means to explore personal interests through information processing-skills and general knowledge from wide reading"

"To empower ourselves to place the emphasis on cooperation rather than competition"

"To create a balanced development and plan for effective living"

"To ensure a better chance of quality input of reading, listening and watching"



**APPENDIX C**

**SUMMARY OF HOME-SCHOOLING PRACTICES**

## A Summary of Home-Schooling Practices

A description of typical courses of study included:  
language arts, science, mathematics, health and  
wellness (health and physical education), history,  
calculus, physics, chemistry, biology, Christian  
ethics, and economics.

Utilization of instructional services, locally, provincially  
and internationally

Correspondence schools as a basis for secondary education

Reviewing the multitude of "how to" books on home schooling

Teacher training and internship manuals

Curriculum guides and supplementary teacher manuals

Previewing and subscribing to home schooling periodicals

Early education and learning theory

Engaging in studies of child and adolescent development

Attention to learning styles

Bible studies

Instructional strategies like cooperative learning,  
resource-based learning and computer software

Internet communications with families and organizations

References to mathematics and critical thinking

Entrepreneur classes

Access to teaching aids and home schooling suppliers

Accessing materials through funding arrangement with the  
school board if needed

Enrichment resources are the key

Surrounding children with a wide variety of print materials-  
periodicals, books, magazines and newspapers

Quality activities needed to emphasize intellectual activity

All new learning must be related to established concepts,  
long-range objectives must provide a framework

Accessing the Education Channel

Field trips as experimental stations

Museums

Weyerhaeuser pulp mill

Western Development Museum

The Center of the Arts

The Legislative Assembly

Court cases and provincial laws and policies

Resource people as guest lecturers

Local and provincial libraries

The Saskatchewan Home School Network and its resources

Local school resources and regional library services

The universities and technical schools

Utilizing support groups

Courses and classes offered in middle year and high schools

Social events and activities

Curriculum and book fairs

Seminars

Accessing testing instruments

Enrollment in conjunction with private schools that offer a  
full range of access

Home study under guidance from a local school

Home schooling under guidance of an independent school

Informal multifamily networks

Developing units of study with our children

Organizing for convenient operation

Determining which of our children were the Doers and Thinkers (Learning Styles)

Work experience

Mentorships

Accessing testing series

Creating units of study

*Canadian Association of Home Schooler's Magazine*

Identifying deficiencies and developing remedial plans of action

Evaluating textbooks

Developing a realistic view for phonics

Utilizing ideas from the *Canadian Home Schooler* and *The Catholic Home Schooler Magazines*

Encouraging children to make their own decision both curricular and personal and take responsibility for them

Listening and sequencing

Development of motor skills

Building in creative and critical thinking skills

Utilizing tutorial services

Accessing distance education and television programs

Prairie Public Broadcasting

University and library lectures

The Planetarium

The Eye-max Theater

Persephone Theater

**Globe Theater**

**Taking provincial math tests and competitions as a standard for success**

**Science exploring and explaining both process and content**

**The new K-6 Science Curriculum for Saskatchewan Education**

**Investigation and inquiry**

**Science and technological literacy**

**Core curriculum areas of study**

**Interpreting what the Common Essential Learnings mean to home schools**

**Quality schools**

**Private school tutorship and distance education programs**

**Integration of a host of resources that are then filtered into the educational plan**

**APPENDIX D**

**ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR DETERMINING SUCCESS**

## **Assessment Strategies for Determining Success**

**Both formal and informal assessments**

**Ideas stemming from the basic premise that student evaluation encompassed the nature of the learner, the teacher and process within the context of the larger goals**

**Locally developed options similar to those in the Core Curriculum which met or exceeded those standards**

**Home schooler exchanges of evaluation strategies that worked**

**Peer coaching and student self-assessments helped to create positive outcome**

**Mastery learning and coaching led to both positive and negative feedback**

**Meeting the learner's individual needs and having them succeed**

**Having student's experience the trial and error approach to learning**

**Helping students graduate with an equivalent and recognized grade 12 certification**

**Develop a sense of interculture awareness**

**Evaluation was the reflective link between the dream of what should be and the reality of what is**

**Process was self-renewing**

**Developing evaluation action plans that led to academic success**

**An acquired understanding of school district goals and objectives**

**Appraisal of student achievement**

**The evaluation of home schooling's effectiveness and how we communicate that to the public**

**Monitoring of academic performance and having officials recognize the success**

**Knowing the program well enough to articulate that information to school authorities in an educational plan**

Knowledge of public school required credit areas and course registrations for universities

Ensuring that each family could develop and implement a home schooling strategy

Children had the inherent ability to dialogue and debate issues that affected judgments on their academic performance

Home schoolers were happy and enthusiastic learners for the most part

Family bonding

Inherent strength in understanding the merits of volunteerism

Working from criteria-referenced tests and handling the consequences of the results as though they were a corrective plan for improvement

Post-secondary access

Creation of children that others enjoy and respect and learn from as well

The choice to choose a curriculum and the choice as to how to deliver it

Seeking out diagnostic tests and criterion-referenced tests as a frame of reference and a predictor

Employing formative evaluations without the experts



**APPENDIX E**

**LETTERS OF PROGRESS REPORT FOR INGRID'S  
HOME-SCHOOLING PROGRAM**

502 White  
River, Saskatchewan S9J 2M2  
January 4, 1985

Mr. Brian Harper, Principal  
Plains Collegiate  
1904 Clarence Avenue  
River, Saskatchewan S9J 2M2

Dear Mr. Harper,

This letter is to inform you of a change we have decided with regard to the education of our daughter, Ingrid Dancer, who has been a grade nine student at Plains Collegiate this fall. We hope that after you read our reasons and our plan for embarking on this new approach, you will understand and support this decision.

For some time now (and increasingly during late November and December) the conviction has been building in Ingrid and in ourselves, her parents, that Ingrid would progress better with an individualized approach to her learning at this time, building on interests and concerns which are grounded in her own experience and assisted by people available to work with her on an individualized basis. Despite her affection and high regard for her teachers, Ingrid has come to experience her school program as one lacking in clear purpose for her. We do not see this as reflecting on her teachers' capabilities but simply as an unavoidable problem some youngsters can encounter with a curriculum designed for a broad range of young people. Ingrid also tends to find her school program draining on top of her demanding schedule of dance classes plus her various self-initiated learning activities. Because of our deep concern for Ingrid and our desire that these precious years be well spent, we have decided to withdraw Ingrid from the institutional setting for the present and to support her desire to engage in home-based independent study.

Our past experience observing Ingrid learning leads us to believe she will do very well with this approach. We have found Ingrid to be a girl who seeks out challenges and sees them through when she finds them worthwhile. She is naturally attracted to many types of learning and self-improvement and does not need to be rewarded or pushed to work hard. We see in Ingrid an individual intent upon developing her talents and creativity and seeking out new opportunities for growth. We believe a home-based education will encourage and strengthen in her these qualities of self-knowledge, self-direction, resourcefulness and competence, qualities we expect she will bring to her chosen vocation one day. As educators, we have often puzzled over

how to nurture these qualities in our students. After reflecting on some of Einstein's penetrating comments on education, including his admonition that "intuition is the prime factor in our achievements," we have concluded that a good measure of freedom--even freedom from teaching, paradoxically enough--is necessary to achieve these ultimate aims of education.

At the same time, we naturally do not want to encourage a form of education in which our daughter would become isolated from others or narrow and self-centered in focus. Our research into the area of home-based learning has reassured us in this regard. We find that self-directed learners reach out to others in many ways, taking selected courses, joining interest groups, attending community functions, etc. Reports indicate that they tend to become enthusiastic and responsible members of the groups they join and are young people who develop an admirable capacity to relate comfortably to people of all ages. Although we as her parents plan to serve as Ingrid's primary tutors or consultants in this new arrangement, we will continue to help her find other mentors, learning groups, sources of information, classes, courses of study, etc., as specific needs arise.

Just last summer we were able to arrange Ingrid's involvement in two experiences which she found offered a meaningful form of participation for her. At the Saskatchewan School of the Arts Dance School at Fort Qu'Appelle she was deeply touched by the teaching presence of John Marshall, a dance instructor from Scotland who is known worldwide. We'll not soon forget the sparkle in her eyes when we went to collect Ingrid at the end of the course or her determined vow, "I have to return here next summer!" The very next morning in River she could hardly wait to report to the River School of Ballet for another rigorous regiment of classes taught by Madame Yvonne Cartier from Paris. Ingrid's home base in dance is the Kathy Bond School of Dance, but the instructors there always inform the students about the workshops given for local dancers by visiting dance companies. We couldn't keep Ingrid away from these sessions if we tried! Of course our attendance at the performances of all visiting dance companies (National Ballet of Canada, Royal Winnipeg, Sadler's Wells, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal, etc.) is a must. Through all of these activities, as well as through the dance festivals, competitions and performances Ingrid takes part in, a camaraderie has developed among Ingrid and her fellow dance students which is an important element in her dance experience.

We also have confidence our new learning arrangement will ensure the breadth of Ingrid's education. Although ballet and other forms of dance have been Ingrid's first love in recent years, this activity itself has stimulated an interest in a surprisingly wide variety of areas. It is doubtful whether Ingrid would have joined a Saturday morning drama class without the self-confidence she acquired from pursuing dance classes. (Dance is an area she decided on her own to take up at the age of twelve.) Attendance at the drama classes has stimulated an interest in attending productions by the various theatre groups in the city, in some of which her drama instructor performs. The satisfaction she finds in dancing has also led her to seek out novels and stories about dancers and thereby helped rekindle her interest in reading which had been flagging in recent years in school. Ingrid is also becoming curious about the playwrights whose works we are seeing performed and about reading some of their other works. At a recent workshop sponsored by Dance Saskatchewan, Ingrid attended a session on the history of dance. She was introduced to the origins of ballet in the sixteenth century French court and its spread to Russia, Denmark, England and around the world. One of her early independent learning projects will be to investigate more closely the social conditions out of which ballet grew and to become familiar with the careers and teaching styles of some of the great ballet artists through the years. She also plans to study the history of dance through the ages in its many varied manifestations in different cultures. We see such exploration as an ideal entree into the broader study of history. The fact that most ballet terminology is in French has given Ingrid a keen interest in this language, so she plans to continue her study of French as well.

The areas of interest opened up by dance are by no means limited to the arts and humanities. We find Ingrid developing an interest in anatomy as her ballet instructors teach her to identify and control all the various muscles in her body and as she discovers the limitations family genetics have imposed on her in her effort to master the demanding ballet curriculum. Ingrid is engaged in a serious study to distinguish between harmful and healthy types of exercise and calisthenics as she works to refine her daily dance workout. To broaden her background in this area she has been taking aerobics classes at the YWCA. In addition Ingrid has become interested in the relationship between diet and health and regularly seeks out new findings related to the optimum diet and lifestyle for dancers. Unlike most of her friends her own age, she has voluntarily eliminated from her diet many items commonly referred to as junk foods such as soft drinks, sweets and fried foods. She is not

swayed by peer pressure at social gatherings to make an exception. We believe this commitment results from her diet being a personal choice rather than one we have imposed or urged upon her. Ingrid has taught herself to prepare for the family many of the foods she now prefers such as fish, lean meats and a variety of vegetables. Ingrid's interest in diet and body chemistry has led to a concern regarding harmful additives and contaminants in our food supply. She is developing an interest in the way food is grown, refined and promoted by the food industry. We find this area to be a good one for beginning to draw connections between science and society. We will encourage Ingrid in the months and years ahead to continue to explore the ethical dimensions of science, business and other aspects of modern social life.

We have gone on at some length about the interests Ingrid has developed through her self-chosen pursuit of dance because, as educators, we have been thrilled to see a curriculum grow organically in our daughter's life. We are reminded of Alfred North Whitehead's insight that ". . . one of the ways of encouraging general mental activity is to foster a special devotion." This is not to say, however, that all of Ingrid's interests and activities develop exclusively from this one area. We find curiosity stimulated by a number of other factors as well: her own maturing mind, contact with a wide range of friends, the media, events in the community, family travels. Whenever possible our entire family accompanies Ingrid's father when he assumes a short term work assignment away from River. Ingrid has lived for approximately six months in such places as Quebec, North Carolina, England and Germany. Family relatives are scattered across the United States. Thus we have some natural opportunities to build up awareness of geography and some of the reasons people live where they do. Our acquaintance with several people engaged in provincial and federal politics provides occasion to make these processes real to our children.

We will make use of all these areas of Ingrid's interest as points of departure in her learning program. As well, of course, we will provide opportunities for her to augment her skills in such areas as mathematics and writing. Ingrid will have a major role in determining the structure and pace of her learning. We are confident that we will achieve the positive aims of the school program but in a more lasting and effective way for Ingrid.

We might mention that we don't regard Ingrid as a "gifted child," as that term is generally used today, because we regard every child as endowed with special gifts and unique potential (a "treasure of eternal possibility,"

in Buber's words). We see Ingrid rather as a person who is enthusiastic about life and learning and who is becoming aware of her capacity to be autonomous. In the area of her education this means she is becoming capable of shaping her learning and deciding when and where to seek assistance.

One of the aims of most educators is to encourage in young people a feeling of responsibility for others and for their community. We have already seen Ingrid manifest such concerns and will continue to assist her to find avenues for expressing her oneness with others. Just last August Ingrid took an interest in the national elections. She volunteered some of her time by serving in a candidate's office as well as by distributing leaflets to homes. The tragedy of unemployment for many families was one of the election issues of great concern to her. Similarly at dance competitions we have attended I have noted Ingrid expressing concern that the competitive element at such events never obscure the basic purpose of dance which is to bind the human family together in a celebration of the joy of living.

Very recently, as we have been discussing making this change in educational arrangements, Ingrid has begun to take an interest in her own learning processes. She has been reading some of the works we consulted about home schooling. The writings of John Holt regarding home-based, self-directed learning have been of particular value to us by validating our concerns and helping us to find a new direction. Ingrid has been interested to discover that in choosing this form of education she is following in the footsteps of such individuals as anthropologist Margaret Mead, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, writers Beatrix Potter and Agatha Christie and photographer Ansel Adams, to name a few. As well, we are in touch with several other families in River who have engaged in or are currently involved in home-schooling, so Ingrid does not feel totally isolated in her chosen path.

Some may ask us how we will evaluate our daughter's learning in this non-institutional setting in a way that is consistent with our underlying philosophy and assumptions about learning. Our conviction is that no test scores or degrees could ever please us as much as regarding Ingrid's progress as the evidence provided by the daily choices she makes, by her growing understanding of the world she lives in, by the genuine pleasure she exhibits in authentic learning, by her willingness to be an active participant in those classes and groups she chooses to join, by the fact that in her life learning is an integral part of living so that one often can't tell where the one ends and the other resumes. In addition there is the fact that in dance she

has found a "special devotion." Whether or not dancing develops into her career is not the important thing to us. "Even if it does not become her career," writes historian Theodore Roszak about the place of dance in his daughter's life, "it will still have been the true school of her early life, the tough and lovely discipline from which she learned the music of her body, the meaning of art, the wealth of the imagination." These, then, are some indications of the types of standards and expectations against which we will measure the success of Ingrid's educational environment. In terms of more traditional measures, we find that studies indicate home schooled youngsters generally test considerably above their grade level on standardized achievement tests.

We have no preconceived ideas regarding the extent to which we will make use of credit-bearing courses as we proceed with this independent study plan. We know that such courses can serve a need. But we do not want the pursuit of credits to become Ingrid's primary concern. On the other hand, should Ingrid later wish to resume study in an institutional setting such as Plains Collegiate or at a post-secondary institution, we would support her decision in this regard.

We have discussed with Ingrid the question of eventual college/university entrance. If she continues a home-based approach to studies throughout her high school age years, she may at the end lack a high school diploma (unless we decide to make extensive use of correspondence classes). Should Ingrid decide to make application to a university later on, we recognize that some institutions may not accept a home schooled applicant. But at present we are prepared to accept that risk and to live with the knowledge that an increasing number of colleges and universities (Antioch College, Brigham Young University, Harvard, Yale, University of Texas, etc.) are now admitting home schooled young people on the basis of interviews, equivalency exams, etc. We also know of the possibility of using measures like the G.E.D. exam, Correspondence School, Department of Advanced Education and Manpower Adult Grade 11 and 12 courses and mature student entrance as other possible avenues of entry into university study should the need arise. In any case, our primary aim is to encourage in Ingrid the way of life in which education is a lifelong odyssey of self-discovery and self-development and not primarily a matter of doing requirements and earning certificates.

When told of Ingrid's plans, a friend asked us if her decision to leave the school group and learn independently wasn't perhaps a selfish action. After mulling over this

question our conclusion is that under the present circumstances Ingrid can provide a better example to others by selecting a learning path which is best for her and pursuing it conscientiously and enthusiastically rather than by denying her unease and remaining in a situation in which she feels thwarted. In a country in which the cultural mosaic is the ideal, we feel that pluralism in the educational sphere can only enrich the experience of all and can serve to revitalize rather than weaken the public school option.

The nature of our family's religious orientation is an additional factor that leads us to be receptive to the concept of home-based learning. We are a part of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), a denomination without a clergy in which the responsibility to seek for truth and to express spiritual insights is shared by all. This accords well, we believe, with home schooling's emphasis on learners' responsibility for shaping their education. Quakerism places a high priority on living out one's values. Similarly, home-based education emphasizes that learning be grounded in personal experience.

Some school officials may inquire as to our qualifications to guide and assist in our daughter's education. It is our belief that parents often underestimate their capacity to teach their own children and in fact tend to overlook the rich array of educational experiences they do provide in the course of daily family life. The most important qualities a parent/teacher can have, we believe, are a genuine affection for the child, a deep respect for that young person as an individual, a desire to share one's life with the youngster and to share in the child's expanding world. These are the most important qualities we consider that we bring to the educational encounter with our daughter.

Both of us also bring considerable experience of an academic nature. Robert currently serves as Professor in the Department of Communications, Continuing and Vocational Education at the University of Saskatchewan. He holds the Bachelor of Science degree (Communications) from Temple University (Philadelphia) and the Master of Science (Adult Education), Master of Arts (History) and PhD (Educational Policy Studies) from the University of Wisconsin. Louise is presently a full-time homemaker. She has served as a high school teacher of German and French in Oregon, in Wisconsin and in River with the River Board of Education. Louise holds the B.A. degree from Manchester College (St. Paul, Minnesota), the B.Ed. degree from the University of Saskatchewan and the M.A. degree from the University of



Wisconsin. She has the Saskatchewan Professional "A" teaching certificate.

Louise will draw upon experience gained with the River schools in serving as a resource to Ingrid. We will make use of the curriculum guides and texts for the various subjects. If you are agreeable, Ingrid might continue using the texts she presently is using until June.

We hope that this summary of the alternative educational plan we are developing with our daughter explains effectively what our philosophy, goals and approaches are to be. We believe the efficiency of this individualized approach offers particular advantages in Ingrid's case where dance practice and classes take up a large amount of her time. The flexibility and one-to-one guidance and consultation we as parents can provide Ingrid as she works in the various subject areas are the ideal working arrangements we know all teachers would like to provide for young people if they could. Ingrid's sense of engagement in her learning is deep, and her interests are broad, so the potential for Ingrid to grow and contribute seems limitless.

Ingrid wishes us to convey her warm regards to you and to all her teachers.

Very sincerely yours,

Louise Dancer

Robert Dancer

502 White Crescent  
River, Saskatchewan  
S9J 2M2  
August 23, 1987

B. A. Harper  
Superintendent  
River Board of Education  
405 Third Avenue South  
River, Saskatchewan S9J 2M2

Dear Mr. Harper:

As agreed when we spoke by phone at the end of May, we are writing to provide an update regarding our daughter's independent study arrangement and to indicate something of her plans for the coming year. You will find enclosed a separate letter from Ingrid.

For a number of reasons we are all happy with Ingrid's decision to experiment with home and community based learning. We see the timing as particularly advantageous for Ingrid because she will have the security and familiarity of her home environment to sustain her as she takes an educational path a little different from that of most of her friends and acquaintances. The experience of making a unique personal choice and following through on it has been very valuable for Ingrid. We believe, comparable in many ways to the benefits one can derive from a sojourn in a foreign country. We know she will draw upon this experience in independence and self-direction in the future.

Finally, the intensity of interest and the range of exploration Ingrid is developing in her dance activities and the additional learning experiences she seeks out seem to us major benefits of an independent study arrangement based on considerable freedom of choice. In Ingrid's case we know we would not see this level of concentration and involvement if we or other teachers pre-selected and planned her various explorations. We can cite a few examples of how Ingrid's initial interests lead her to examine a broad scope of subjects: 1. Attending classical ballets has influenced her to seek out other forms of dance expression such as musical theatre which in turn has interested her in the legitimate drama staged by the various local theatre groups. 2. Her regard for classical ballet opens up the exquisite artistic traditions of set decoration and costuming which in turn leads to an interest in the wider world of representational art. 3. Ingrid's interest in the classical ballets leads to an appreciation for the dance sequences in operas and operettas which in turn brings her into contact with these and other musical forms and M. R.

traditions such as symphonies and choral works. We have seen progressions such as these take place often enough now that we are convinced that Ingrid is on the right track at the present time, ensuring a comprehensive educational background, a lifelong enthusiasm for learning and a sense of the interrelatedness of all the areas we too often regard as separate and distinct subject fields.

In her study of great dance performances, we find Ingrid absorbed not only by the imaginative works themselves but also by the standards of excellence the dancers set for themselves and the dedication they exhibit. We know that she ponders and explores what these standards might mean in her own life and that acquaintance with excellence in this area is giving her an appreciation for work done to a high standard in all fields of human endeavor.

Similarly, Ingrid has been benefiting from exposure to a number of dance instructors of rich and varied backgrounds. During the June session at her studio, she had classes in modern dance taught by Linda Rubin from the University of Saskatchewan dance program, formerly from Vancouver, and in jazz dance taught by Amy Bahr, who brought fresh ideas from her recent studies in London, England. On August 11 Ingrid returned from the three week summer school of the Saskatchewan Arts Board at Fort San charged with enthusiasm for the high calibre program there and with new ideas regarding her goals for her coming year in dance.

Ingrid did not seem to experience any significant problems in leaving behind the greater social contact she had as a regular high school student and adjusting to work on her own for a greater portion of the time. We feel this is because she has now found what for her is a better balance between involvement in classes and other group activities, on the one hand, and solitude and freedom to work independently on the other hand. The dance school provides opportunity for her to forge some close friendships because she and her classmates not only meet together several times a week at class but also perform periodically at community functions, travel to festivals and attend summer camp together and get together socially from time to time. We credit the director of Ingrid's dance school for creating a rich milieu for her students and for awakening in Ingrid a passion to achieve as much as she is capable of in dance.

Analyzing Ingrid's activities in terms of her former schedule of school classes indicates that she continues to have an involvement in most of the same subject areas. Her home economics course, for example, focused on developing

sewing skills in grade nine. With her involvement in dance Ingrid of necessity is being drawn into learning to help make and repair her many costumes and outfits. Ingrid's year-round dance schedule gives her the equivalent of a good physical education program, we believe, one which, with some adaptation from time to time, can be enjoyed throughout her life. From time to time Ingrid explores new related areas to see what they have to offer. For a time this spring she joined a T'ai Chi group at the university. She has also been following the courses in yoga offered over PBS. Ingrid continues to probe the present state of theoretical knowledge in fitness and health through readings in such areas as nutrition and avoidance of sport and dance induced injury.

Ingrid likes to become informed about a wide range of scientific and current affairs topics by way of television documentaries and series such as A Planet for the Taking, The Fifth Estate, The Nature of Things, NOVA and the House of Commons proceedings, to name a few. When these telecasts occur in the evening during her dance classes, Ingrid records them on our VCR (a valuable tool for home study) for later viewing. Ingrid also watches for local displays and presentations she can visit such as the showing of the work of Nobel prize winning scientist Dr. Gerhard Herzberg earlier this year at the Diefenbaker Center. In February Ingrid attended the annual provincial convention of the Y.N.D.P as well as a River Constituency Nominating Convention. In May she spent a week in Quebec City gaining exposure to some of the major historic sites in that city. We are confident Ingrid is growing in her understanding of social, historical and scientific events and issues.

In addition to making use of library books, Board of Education textbooks and television documentaries, we are gradually building up a home library of books and materials which seem particularly helpful as references in various fields. We are currently drawing up a list of items we want to acquire for the coming year.

Both as parents and as people interested in the process of education, we find the presence of a "home schooler" in the family to be quite a joy and an inspiration. Neither of us had much prior knowledge about the field of dance, so Ingrid is opening up new vistas for us in that area. She is also challenging us to re-examine many of our assumptions about young people and learning. We find now that her instinctive desire to use an area of personal interest as a passageway into the world makes good sense to us and seems very effective. The main requirement of us as parents of a self-directed learner is simply trust in the natural human

impulse toward understanding, self-improvement and self-expression, given a supportive environment. While home-based-education thus seems sound from a developmental standpoint, we see this movement also as part of an important social trend toward greater empowerment of the individual in his or her work, education, health care, community life and other areas. The growing trend toward placing greater responsibility in the hands of the learner in the educational sphere leads us to see particular value in Ingrid's present balance between unstructured learning time and the necessarily highly structured nature of some of her dance classes.

We all appreciate very much your cooperation in our effort to find a suitable alternative learning arrangement for Ingrid. We hope that our letters today manage to convey some feeling for the experience Ingrid is having as a self-directed learner and for the educational philosophy that is guiding us.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Dancer

Robert Dancer

502 White Crescent  
River, Saskatchewan  
S9J 2M2  
August 23, 1987

B. A. Harper  
Area 3 Superintendent  
Department of School Services  
River Board of Education  
405 Third Avenue South  
River, Saskatchewan S9J 2M2

Dear Mr. Harper:

This letter is to bring you up-to-date on our daughter's activities over the past year. It will describe some of the directions in which Ingrid has grown and progressed. We continue to be gratified with her response to the independent study option she has been utilizing.

Not only has Ingrid explored a number of subject matter areas in depth and become a more discriminating reader and thinker she has also been able to benefit from active service as a volunteer or apprentice in several different settings. In addition, she has developed informal linkages with some individuals with whom she can share and exchange information on matters such as health issues. In her dance studies Ingrid has made notable progress. Probably of most importance is the fact of Ingrid's strengthening sense of personal identity and the confidence and capability with which she can identify and pursue her own learning objectives.

As part of the personal identity she is developing, Ingrid is working to understand the social and ethical implications of the areas she is studying, including the dance profession, industry and the environment, the healing arts, and Canadian social policy. We believe that Ingrid's genuine interest in human welfare and human rights arises from the fact that we, her parents, and you, as Superintendent for the River Board of Education, have shown concern for her rights and welfare as a learner and take her seriously as an autonomous individual. We have thus seen Ingrid's character strengthened by her educational milieu and by the opportunity this milieu has given her to function in the real world. In this report we would like to comment a bit more on the nature of Ingrid's recent learning experience and then provide details on some of the reading activities she has undertaken.

Bertrand Russell wrote on education that "all through education, initiative should come from the pupil as far as

possible." Russell believed that an outcome of operating on this principle was that the student's sense of personal initiative was "cultivated instead of being diminished." As you know, we decided to take this advice of Russell seriously in Ingrid's education. As we indicated in previous letters, we have not used established school curricula in determining what materials to provide for Ingrid. Rather we have encouraged her to tell us what she thinks she needs to know, what materials she requires, and the people to whom she needs access. Over the past year we found, in Ingrid's case, that Russell was right. Her "sense of personal initiative" has indeed strengthened. Ingrid has written letters, phoned strangers, joined groups, utilized the University of Saskatchewan library, subscribed to publications, ordered materials and sought out opportunities to volunteer her services as part of her natural desire to learn more and become more competent. Her control over the content, timing, pacing, location, and choice of associates in her learning ventures has been crucial, we believe, to the progress she made.

Our role has not been to dominate this process but to share our interest, to encourage, to offer a tip occasionally, to assist with funds. In this we are drawing upon John Bremer's insight that "it is not our job to tell the student the significance of things, anymore than it is our job to give the student pre-packaged materials that will program him into being essentially an automaton . . . . Our job is to encourage and support him through his emotional life to create the meanings that things can have." We encourage Ingrid to take all the raw materials available to her--her talents and information, ideas, and assistance from many sources (including her family and community)--and to use them to create a pattern of meaning. As educators working with Ingrid, we have had an opportunity to test a new definition of our task. From feeling responsible for structuring materials, establishing time-lines for dealing with the material, and continually evaluating the student's mastery of subject matter and growth in critical skills, we see ourselves now primarily as consultants and resources in what is an ongoing lifelong process. Our energy is directed toward helping this learner find opportunities for personal growth and for meaningful participation in the community and helping that person struggle with problems and issues arising out of his or her involvement.

Charles Eliot and Bertrand Russell identified what seem to us key characteristics of a meaningful education. Russell wrote that "throughout education, from the first day to the last, there should be a sense of intellectual adventure." Eliot talked of the individual's need for "joy

and gladness in achievement." Throughout her independent study period we have tried to provide a setting and an atmosphere in which Ingrid could experience the pleasure of embarking on her own intellectual search and of gaining in wisdom and competence.

The satisfaction gained by working on projects of deep concern to her probably accounts for the fact that Ingrid's interest has never flagged and that we have never heard her talking of "needing a break." Even on Sunday mornings she often sets her alarm clock to awaken before 8:30 a.m. so she can hear an informative CBC radio program called "The Food Show." Last fall there was a dance workshop in Moose Jaw over the long October weekend. Although many dancers chose not to give up their weekend to attend the classes, Ingrid was most concerned that she not miss this opportunity to work with instructors Keith Ditto and Belinda Sobie from Vancouver. She explained to us that "dance workshops have to be held during holidays because that's when the instructors can leave their regular jobs and put on a workshop." This consistent enthusiasm for all her different ventures has never lessened although she has worked on them seven days a week year-round.

In previous letters we have indicated in some detail how Ingrid's genuine interests in dance and fitness have drawn her to explore the widest range of subjects, including literature, theatre arts, history, human anatomy and physiology, ecology, contemporary social issues, and politics. Without being repetitive we will try to suggest in this report some of the recent initiatives Ingrid's organically developing curriculum has prompted. We will also include our perceptions regarding the ways Ingrid is growing and the ways we feel a flexible learning situation and opportunity for assuming responsibility have prompted her development in a wide range of areas. The standards Ingrid continually sets for herself form the basis for ongoing evaluation of how well her learning arrangements are serving to advance her progress.

In the area of dance itself Ingrid has been fortunate to have gained exposure to some fine new teachers and to have been able to devote more time to an important area of dance expression, that of modern or contemporary dance. Over the past two years Ingrid has been able to work with an excellent local teacher of modern dance. In addition, she attended modern dance workshops put on in River by Denise Fujiwara from Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise and in Regina by Terrill Maguire from Toronto Dance Theatre and



Sallie Lyons from Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise. This work culminated this summer in attendance by Ingrid at a modern dance workshop at The School of the Toronto Dance Theatre in Toronto in July. Here Ingrid learned from such outstanding dancers and dance educators as Pamela Tate, Murray Darroch, Nancy Ferguson, and Merle Holloman. The summer classes she experienced in Toronto were of such a high calibre and of such compelling interest to Ingrid that toward the end of the workshop she decided to audition for the school's three-year professional dance training program. She was gratified to be accepted into the program.

During the past year Ingrid also continued her participation in ballet and jazz dance classes and workshops. The year's dance work led to participation in a number of dance festivals: the Battleford Dance Festival in April, the Moose Jaw Festival of Dance in May, the Dance Gala River Heat in May, the Dance Gala Provincial Finals in Regina in June, the Dance Gala National Finals in River in June, and the Saskatchewan Dance Festival '87 in River in late June and early July. At the latter festival Ingrid received the Dance Specialist scholarship. The North Battleford Festival awarded Ingrid second place standing in her age category for her jazz solo. At the Dance Gala Zone Heat Ingrid gained first place for her demi-character ballet solo and third place for her jazz solo. Ingrid placed second in the demi-character solo category in the Dance Gala Provincial Finals and third in the National Finals.

Over the past few years Ingrid has found that the discipline of yoga has contributed to her dance training. For some time she has been recording for use later in the day a PBS yoga program which is broadcast at 6:00 a.m. This past year Ingrid augmented that work with in-person attendance at a yoga class held at the YWCA on Wednesday evenings.

An additional source of information on techniques for increasing strength and flexibility for dance has come from the former National Ballet of Canada principal dancer, Lillian Jarvis, the originator of the "biosomatics" program. Ingrid learned of Ms. Jarvis via a television interview which revealed that she had done a series of articles on biosomatics for the *Toronto Star*. At the University of Saskatchewan main library Ingrid was able to photocopy from microfilm this lengthy series of articles. She indicates that the exercises require time and concentration but produce some distinct physical benefits after a time. while in Toronto in July, Ingrid phoned Lillian Jarvis and made

initial inquiries about eventual attendance at classes conducted by Ms. Jarvis there.

Over the past year, Ingrid reports, her understanding of the nature and importance of proper body alignment in dance has increased considerably, in large measure because of her participation in modern dance classes and workshops. Ingrid finds she can judge performance by other dancers more accurately now and identify what factors are involved when they have difficulty accomplishing basic dance movements. Modern dance instruction, in particular, has enabled Ingrid to refine her own performance in all types of dance by helping her improve her balance (alignment) as well as her strength and flexibility. Ingrid hopes to build on her current knowledge of alignment and anatomy next year in her dance and anatomy classes at Toronto Dance Theatre. Recently, Ingrid has obtained Ken Laws' book, *The Physics of Dance*, which she believes will be helpful in the coming year. Other readings helpful to her in the area of dance have been *Taking Root to Fly* by Irene Dowd, *Form Without Formula: A Concise Guide to the Choreographic Process* by Patricia Beatty, *Conversations with a Dancer* by Kitty Cunningham with Michael Ballard, *Martha Graham: Portrait of the Lady as an Artist* by LeRoy Leatherman, and *The Intimate Act of Choreography* by L. A. Blom and L. T. Chaplin. *Dance in Canada* and *Contact Quarterly* journals to which Ingrid subscribes have proven to be excellent sources of information.

Closely related to Ingrid's concern for an understanding of anatomy to improve dance performance is her interest in human physiology arising out of her search for health-promoting dietary and other lifestyle practices. Recent books advocating major alterations in the standard North American diet based on analogies with eating patterns of other animal species as well as evidence from scores of scientific studies have spurred Ingrid to read even more extensively in this area. The books, *The McDougall Plan* by John A. McDougall, M.D., and Mary A. McDougall and *Fit for Life* by Harvey and Marilyn Diamond, provided some new hypotheses of great interest to Ingrid and suggestions for further reading. *Fit for Life* introduced the basic arguments of the natural hygiene movement concerning diet and disease. In order to probe further into these theories Ingrid took out a subscription to two periodicals, *Health Science* from Tampa, Florida, and *Healthful Living* from Austin, Texas. She also subscribed to the newsletter, *Keeping in Touch with Fit for Life*, from Santa Monica,

California, and ordered numerous other publications as well. She made some use of articles in such medical journals as *The Lancet*, the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and the *American Heart Journal*. She augmented this reading with related material concerning challenges and alternatives to traditional medical understanding and practice such as Norman Cousins', *Anatomy of an Illness*; Andrew Weil, M.D., *Health and Healing: Understanding Conventional and Alternative Medicine*, and Dr. Robert Mendelsohn, *Dissent in Medicine, Confessions of a Medical Heretic*, and *How to Raise a Healthy Child in Spite of Your Doctor*. Dr. Mendelsohn's newsletter, *The People's Doctor Newsletter*, provides much information, as do such CBC radio programs "The Medicine Show" and "Ideas."

At Ingrid's strong urging, she and Louise attended one day of the week-long International Natural Living Conference at Brock University this summer. Here Ingrid was able to hear physicians and nutrition and exercise specialists expound on new directions in disease prevention, healing, and diet.

In addition to dealing with issues regarding dietary and healing practices appropriate to our biological development much of the material Ingrid has been using goes into the question of dangers posed by the frequent use of chemicals and additives in growing and refining food. She is aware of the growing demands by consumer groups for access to food that is fresher (locally or regionally grown, where possible) and unadulterated. Programs like "The Food Show" (CBC Radio) and readings like "Safe Food Group Breaks New Ground" (*New Options*, Sept. 29, 1986) and "Farmers to Sell Chemical-Free Food" (*Star-Phoenix*, March 3, 1987) have been helpful here. Interest in ensuring the quality and long-term viability of our food supply has led Ingrid to explore a considerable volume of information regarding the concept of ecologically sound, sustainable agricultural practices. Two PBS programs, "Down on the Farm" (a NOVA program) and "Common Ground" (a National Audubon Society special), provided a good overview of this area. Additional material Ingrid found helpful included such articles as "Getting Off the Chemical Treadmill" (*Harrowsmith*, June-July, 1985), "Small Organic Farms Can Solve the Farm Crisis" (*New Options*, December 23, 1985) and "Environmental Information Abounds" (*Star-Phoenix*, December 20, 1980).

In response to all this new information, Ingrid has made some lifestyle changes and has been active in some

groups working in these areas. These actions are important in and of themselves, of course, but also serve to reinforce her learning in the area and to refuel her curiosity about the many issues involved. Lifestyle changes include the elimination of all meat products from her diet, the use of more raw fruits and vegetables, and supplementing shopping trips to the supermarket with visits to farmers' markets and natural food stores. Groups in which Ingrid has been active include Steephill Food Cooperative, the Saskatchewan Council for Alternate Therapy (SCAT), and the American and Canadian Natural Hygiene Societies. Some long conversations with Biggar farmers John and Shirley Sarvas about their long-term commitment to regenerative agricultural practices helped bring this issue closer to home.

The amount of time Ingrid has devoted to readings in science and science-related subjects in the last few years has come as a surprise to us because Ingrid manifested so little interest in science when attending school, even when taught by individuals we knew to be particularly good teachers of the field. We believe this is an area where home schooling approaches were especially appropriate for Ingrid. By removing the prescribed curriculum we allowed time for Ingrid to develop her own significant questions of a scientific nature.

Once having developed some questions in the course of pursuing other of her learning objectives, she has passionately sought out scientific information and understanding. Often all we had to do was serve as interested listeners as Ingrid condensed and summarized the information she was reading. Not having set assignments to complete or tests to prepare for was advantageous for Ingrid. She was able to focus her energies on working out her own uses for the material she was encountering. Closely related to this was the advantage for Ingrid of working outside of the grading system. This circumstance helped her a great deal in developing her intrinsic motivations and in experiencing the joy of sustained, self-directed learning.

In the area of aesthetic appreciation we believe a major accomplishment of Ingrid's years of self-directed study has benefited the development of a genuine aesthetic sensibility. Ingrid is drawn to search for life's meaning as explored in works like Thoreau's *Walden*, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, and Robertson Davis' *What's Bred in the Bone* as well as in dramas like "Macbeth" (seen in the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan ten), Joanna Glass's "Play Memory" (seen at

25th Street Theatre), and Barbara Sapergia's "Matty and Rose" (seen at Persephone Theatre). Ingrid likes to hear authors reading their works, as she did when Barbara Sapergia and Geoffrey Ursell appeared in the "Canadian Authors at Kelsey" series. Of course, she views all the dance productions to which she can get access, both live and televised performances. Among recent dance evenings she has attended were Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal's Mixed Program; the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Mixed Program and "Romeo and Juliet"; Toronto Independent Dance Enterprise's "Blueprints for Motion"; Regina-River Dance Exchange's "Experimental and Modern Dance"; Juliet West's "Dance ABC"; Savoie and Simard's "Duodenum"; Davida, Parent, and Dosne's "Piece de Resistance"; Desrosiers Dance Theatre's Mixed Program, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Song and Dance." Ingrid is also an avid listener to the CBC radio program, "State of the Arts." It is our sense that the development of Ingrid's capacity to appreciate works of artistic expression bears a close relationship to her own growth as a dance artist as well as to her developing intelligence and sense of personal identity.

We notice significant growth, also, in Ingrid's facility in oral and written expression. Over the past year she has had various occasions to communicate her views on subjects of importance to her. Last fall a colleague of Bob's asked Ingrid and Louise to speak to an education class on the topic of home-based learning. Ingrid was interviewed at some length on this same subject by broadcasters from the CBC-TV French network's "Ce Soir Plus" program and more recently by the administrator at The School of the Toronto Dance Theatre. When Ingrid served as a door-to-door canvasser in last fall's provincial election, she gained experience in responding to difficult and sometimes hostile questions. Friends and colleagues who know about Ingrid's interest in diet and nutrition often challenge her to lay out the theoretical basis for her dietary and health choices and defend them, requiring her to draw upon the wealth of reading she has done in these areas. In all these situations requiring oral expression we find Ingrid increasingly poised, knowledgeable, and able to communicate her views effectively to each particular audience. The crucial reason for such growth in communication skills, we believe, is that Ingrid is developing her own distinct point of view on a wide range of important issues and is working out her views not only at the theoretical level but also in personal daily experience. To put it very simply, she now has something to say.

A variety of occasions for written expression have presented themselves. One of the ways Ingrid was able to be of value to the Saskatchewan Council for Alternate Therapy was in helping with the newsletter and in responding to mail. Ingrid often writes about her projects and learning experiences in letters to friends and relatives. She also maintains a notebook in which she records important concepts from her many dance classes and workshops.

Opportunities to serve in a volunteer or apprentice capacity have been an important facet in Ingrid's educational program because of the occasion they provide to learn through active participation. For the 1986-87 school year Ingrid served as Linda Rubin's assistant in teaching three dance classes at the University of Saskatchewan on Monday nights: Ballet/Jazz (children's class), Adult Jazz, and Adult Modern. We have already mentioned some of Ingrid's work for SCAT. In addition, she attended meetings of the Executive in a non-voting capacity and set up a phoning tree for the organization so that the entire membership would be phoned before each meeting. Ingrid also took an interest in the Steephill Food Cooperative. When she learned that members receive a savings in their purchases if they work in the store three hours per month, she decided to take on this role for our family. As mentioned before, Ingrid took an active role as a canvasser in the last provincial election.

Although Ingrid was able to find enough classes, workshops, groups, service and leadership opportunities, and resources outside of the high school, she believes that some other independent learners might choose to attend one or more selected classes at school to supplement their own work. She appreciated knowing that the door was open at Plains Collegiate for her to do this.

We would like to indicate once again that we were all touched and gratified by your understanding response to Ingrid's special educational needs. Louise witnessed similar instances of sensitivity by River educators when she was teaching, and we know of further examples of teachers serving young people well through our son, Eric, who is currently a student at Plains Collegiate. It is our hope that home schooling families and River's educational institutions will continue to dialogue regarding new ways to help young people learn about the world and make the transition to the world of work or to post-secondary schooling.

When you and Louise spoke by phone in August of 1985, you had some good suggestions about ways you might be able to assist Ingrid in her future should she wish to apply for admission to a university or other higher education center. You indicated that you could provide background information regarding preparing for departmental exams or for the G.E.D. exam if Ingrid needed that type of qualification. You spoke of the alternate possibility that some post-secondary institutions might grant Ingrid a probationary year on the basis that independent study can be preparation equivalent to the background represented by a high school diploma. You mentioned that you would be glad to write Ingrid a letter of reference to a university or other post-secondary institution if she needed such support to gain admission. We have kept these suggestions in mind over the past two years. It was reassuring to know that these various avenues would be open to Ingrid in the future if she required them.

We hope this brief description has conveyed a sense of the happy, purposeful life Ingrid has been leading as a home-based learner. Thank you again for serving as our consultant at the Board of Education.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Dancer

Louise Dancer