

Different Homeschooling Approaches

School At Home

- Often the first method tried by new homeschooling families
- A familiar way of learning for parents (and students, if they began in public school)

Can offer:

- Confidence to homeschool educators; 'proof' their child is learning in worksheets
- Direction to the day & the school year as a whole
- Predictability/consistency in schedule and structure for you and your child
- Definite ideas about content your child will learn
- Similar timeline and content to public school curriculum

Possible drawback:

- Ex: if have 3 children, each learning 7 subjects....that is 21 subjects to prepare/teach
- Can be expensive purchasing completed packaged sets of curriculum/textbooks
- Can be more tedious or unpleasant for children than joyful

Unschooling

- aka: Natural Learning.....Delight-Directed Learning.....Child-Lead Learning
- Goal: Self-directed learners
- Children who accept the responsibility of their own life-long learning
- Seeing that learning happens everywhere, all the time, not just between certain times in the day, or when engaging in certain activities

Can offer:

- Learning embedded in the real world; apparent and connected learning to actual life
- A lot of room for individual expression
- A step away from systems and methods

Possible drawback:

- Not on grade level; for ex: sometimes children who do not read at age 10
- Difficulty in assimilating in public school settings (structure & deliberate learning)

Charlotte Mason

- Parent sets a goal of helping the child develop a deep love for learning
- Goal: to help children become lifelong learners; to have lasting knowledge that they can tell/explain without looking at books or notes
- Huge emphasis on reading "living books"; raising a well-read child
- Emphasis on being outside in nature a lot; trips to museums
- Use of Narrations

Can offer:

- Economical schooling
- Enjoyment of learning
- Many opportunities for children to become very observant & create lasting knowledge

Possible drawback:

- May not know how to do textbook learning

Classical

- The “*Trivium*” is central. (*Trivium is Latin for three-fold road*)

Grammar (elementary school)- learning the basics. Bldg a solid foundation of factual information. Memorize facts in history, math, science, english, Latin, geography

Logic (middle school)- understanding. Analyze & discuss the relationship between facts and rules; how facts relate to each other

Rhetoric (high school)- applying. Learning to argue one’s case and answer opposing viewpoints

Can offer:

- Intentional training of the mind to think, reason, argue cases
- Thinkers who can stand for and defend their beliefs
- Exposure to a lot of literature

Possible drawback:

- Can be overwhelming to a parent; need to start slowly and learn as you go
- Struggle for those who do not like a lot of memorization

Literature-Based

- Great books are the centerpiece for learning
- Instead of reliance on textbooks, there is a careful, strategic selection of literature
- Great stories lead to great conversations, awareness, sensitivity, connections

Can offer:

- Ease in teaching all of your children (of different ages/grade levels) at same time
- Relevant context for facts as stories are read
- Enjoyment for children as they are read to
- Significant conversations as books are read together

Possible drawback:

- Difficulty if children are not used to the idea of sitting and listening to you read
- Time: A lot of out-loud reading time and conversations

Montessori

- Students learn at their own pace; Parents personalize the learning for each child
- Not a “one size fits all” approach
- Focus is not on grade-level; focus is on what his/her individual potential is
- Students use all their brain power when they use all their senses
- Providing a complete, multi-sensorial experience to use the whole brain

VISUAL- neurons from retina,

TACTILE- neurons from fingers & skin,

KINESTHETIC- neurons from muscles AUDITORY- neurons from ears

Can offer:

- Self-confidence for the child
- Freedom to child to learn at his/her own pace

Possible drawback:

- Child’s pace may not be on grade level

Online

- Off-shoot of the textbook method
- Curriculum is online or on a purchased CD-rom
- Students log on and engage in instructional activities
- Learning without an active teacher
- Children advance at their own rate, learning skills/facts whether their parents have the knowledge of the material or not

Can offer:

- Minimal teacher prep
- Independence for student; minimal parent guidance/interaction
- Work distributed according to start/end dates

Possible drawback:

- May not be challenging enough for student
- Lack of retention and understanding of concepts; student may need actual person
- Potential technical problems (links, OS requirements, internet speed....)
- Once newness wears off may be rote/monotonous/boring

Unit Studies

- aka: Thematic Studies aka: Integrated Learning
- One topic is the focus/central theme of the learning for all subjects "Horses"- reading fiction about horses, studying horse breeds and anatomy, calculating grazing acreage and feed needed to keep horses, reading about the history of horse racing, a museum visit centered around horses in artwork, viewing movies about horses, writing poems and stories about horses, drawing horses....

Can offer:

- The entire family can study a topic together; each child studies the topic at his/her own level. Everyone can go on fieldtrips together, do projects/writing assignments together
- Appeal to any learning style
- Interest to the children
- Connections; depth of study

Possible drawback:

- Parent can be overzealous; scaring the child off from talking about a new interest
- Can require a lot of time to sift through ideas/books/internet and creativity to pull the pieces together to create the unit

Eclectic

- A little of this & a little of that, combining several homeschool styles; mix & match; leaving what doesn't fit with your family

Can offer

- A tailored, perfect-fit of the 'best of all worlds'

Possible drawback:

- Might create gaps
- Requires more preparation time and more research effort on the part of the homeschooling parent (than would be needed to follow a prescribed curriculum)
- Can be expensive in the gathering of materials from different approaches