Social Justice Issue and the Context of Adolescents:

Teens' wellbeing, joy, and love of learning, decline in the current schools' setting. Teens are stretched beyond their limits. We see alarming signs of their unmet needs, such as depression, suicide, and high-risk negative behavior (Abeles & Congdon, 2010).

The ESSENCE of Adolescence:

- → Emotional Spark
- → Social Engagement
- → Novelty
- → Creative Exploration

Homeschooling:

- → Personalized education, to meet child and family needs.
- → Growing 2-8% per year.
- → On 2010 it was estimated that 2.3 Million school aged children are homeschooled in the United States.

Rock-It-Science

Founded and directed by John McChesney, aka Mr. Mac.

It is a science program for children and teens to learn science in a safe and encouraging environment, via story, play, hands-on exciting activities, while collaborating with peers and sharing mutual joyful learning.

Methodology

- → Qualitative research, semi-structured interviews.
- → Research question In what ways does Rock-It-Science provide for the ESSENCE of homeschooled adolescents?

Participants

Five parents of homeschooled teens in the Rock-It-Science teens' classes

Results

From the parents' perspective, Mr. Mac created an environment that supported all the ESSENCE, and provided support for both parents and teens.

Rock-It-Science's environment was:

- → Emotionally safe and joyful
- → Supported a sense of competence
- → Judgment free community
- → Set for successful social interactions
- → Provided real social challenges
- → Provided structure meeting friends
- → Became a place of social personal growth
- → Provided exciting experience
- → Supported parents' values
- → Provided what parents could not
- → Taught via a creative and interactive story
- → Invited and accepted all ideas
- → Inspired further independent exploration

Conclusion

- → Supporting adolescents' wellbeing in an educational setting is possible.
- → When a teacher and students are free from standards and testing, real learning and educating can happen.
- → Mr. Mac's personality created an environment that supports autonomy, belonging, competence, and the ESSENCE.
- → Mr. Mac created a socially, emotionally, safe environment.
- → Teens enjoy and need play and learning through a story.
- → Homeschooling is only one option, and it is one that supports the freedom to find such teachers and environment.
- → When the teacher's and the parents' values are aligned, they create a collaboration that supports the teen in an even better way.
- → Rock-It-Science was a wonderful setting for this research, as it enabled me to learn about the ESSENCE.
- → Mr. Mac personality was key to the successful experience parents felt and reflected on about their teens.

Praxis

- → I plan to write a synopsis of my study and share it with Mr. Mac, and the Rock-It-Science online community.
- → I will also share it with professionals who have helped me in this thesis.
- → I will aim to publish in in the CA homeschoolers' magazine.
- → I will also implement my knowledge as I continue to mentor and support the homeschooling community and parents to children with special needs.

~~~~~~*~~~*~~~*~~~*~~~

Success

To laugh often and love much;

To win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children;

To earn the approbation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

To give of one's self;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a beautiful child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; To have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation;

To know even one life has breathed easier because y have lived -

This is to have succeeded.

From: *Brainstorm:The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain.* Siegel, 2013, pp. 306-307.



Homeschooled Adolescents Find Their Essence at Rock-It-Science

Thesis Presentation by Sharon Barkan













May all the children we know, raise, and the one we once were, succeed.