

How One College Prof Learned to Love Homeschoolers

College professor Ali Gordon wasn't always a fan of homeschool students. Like many others, he believed that homeschoolers were sheltered individuals, unable to fend for themselves once they left the comfort of their own home.

But Dr. Gordon's mind began to change as he encountered homeschool students in his courses in the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering department of the University of Central Florida. In a [recent op-ed](#) penned for *The Huffington Post*, Dr. Gordon explained several reasons why he has become a proponent of homeschooling.

1. Homeschoolers are Problem-Solvers

Dr. Gordon's research labs are challenging and require students to be inquisitive, think outside of the box, and solve problems. As he explains, "Parent-educated students that I've met exhibit a strong intellectual vitality and passion for exploring difficult concepts."

2. Homeschoolers are Self-Directed

According to Dr. Gordon, the homeschooled student's ability to problem solve is related to his ability to be an independent, self-directed learner. He notes:

"It is plausible that in their homeschool environments, they've already been given a vast number of opportunities to grow their capacities for self-direction. Consequently, their inclination for independent study seamlessly transfers to the scholarly research environment."

3. Homeschoolers are High Achievers

Like any good researcher, Dr. Gordon likes to back up his observations with hard facts. When it came to homeschooling,

the high marks students receive on tests were well suited to this purpose:

“On standardized college entrance exams, the homeschooled have scored, on average, at the 65th to 80th percentile on standardized academic achievement tests compared to the national average based on public school data. University officials have more recently recognized the value added by bringing these students to their campuses and attract them with separate entrance application sites with slightly modified guidelines, such as at the University of Central Florida, Georgia Tech, Stanford and Arizona State.”

4. Homeschoolers Bring Diversity

According to Dr. Gordon, the learning process is always furthered by a variety of opinions, backgrounds, and ideas. “Homeschooled students,” he notes, “have and will continue to add to the richness of our individual and collective experiences.”

It’s interesting to note that the qualities which endeared Dr. Gordon to homeschoolers are the very ones that the education system has been trying so desperately to instill in its students in recent years. Perhaps it’s time we recognize that parents at home are just as capable of instilling these traits in their students – if not more so – than the “experts” in institutional schools?

Image Credit: University of Central Florida