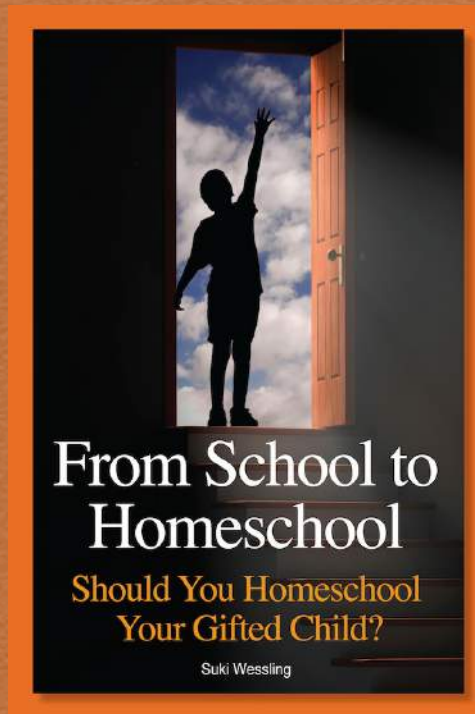


# A la carte education for homeschoolers

Breaking down the barrier between school and homeschool



Suki Wessling

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# Homeschooling

Why are families leaving school?

# Why are families leaving public and private education?

## Cultural factors:

- \* Older parents having fewer children can pay more attention to each child's individual needs
- \* Families who are more mobile don't feel connected to their community school
- \* Choice is everywhere: we take choice for granted in every aspect of our lives
- \* The Internet has broken down traditional physical boundaries — we no longer only look to our immediate community for solutions
- \* DIY culture

# Why are students leaving public and private education?

## Educational Factors:

- \* Public education's focus on testing
- \* Private education's focus on achievement and pushing out "cookie cutter" students
- \* Growing evidence that traditional schooling methods do not produce passionate, flexible learners
- \* Growing understanding of unusual learners and how educational theories ignore their needs and development

# Educational options

On the one hand...

## School offers...

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- \* Largely the same education for every child
- \* Education provided by experts and accepted by parents
- \* A location-based experience that requires the child to physically step away from real-world experiences

## Homeschool offers...

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- \* Infinite ability to fine-tune education to child's needs
- \* Intimate involvement of parents in the educational process
- \* A real-world experience where the child can interact with a variety of adults and seek out education

# Educational options

On the other hand...

## School offers...

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- \* The ability for parents to have the time to work and pursue their own goals
- \* Passionate, dedicated teachers with a lot of experience with a variety of children
- \* A community of learners who can inspire and support each other

## Homeschool offers...

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- \* The likelihood that one parent will have to cut down on or quit work
- \* “Newbie” parents who make a lot of mistakes in educating their child
- \* The necessity of finding a community to support the homeschooled child

# A la carte learning

What is it?

# A traditional view of homeschooling

- \* Mom stays at home to educate the children
- \* Homeschool modeled on school's "teacher as authority" model
- \* Mom teaches using traditional curriculum
- \* Children work within traditional grade-level activities





# A la carte education is: *tailored education*



- \* Parent acts as planner, with or without a teacher's help
- \* Child's education is provided on a subject-by-subject basis, including:
  - \* Cooperative education
  - \* Hiring private tutors
  - \* Attending online classes
  - \* Attending physical classes
  - \* Self-education in areas of strength
  - \* Parent-led education

# A la carte education is: *involved parents, flexible educators*



- \* School or homeschool-based
- \* Involved parents make à la carte schooling possible
- \* These parents don't view school as babysitting
- \* Parents have:
  - Flexible schedule
  - Lifelong learner attitude
  - Willingness to form partnership with educators
- \* Educators have:
  - Flexible attitudes toward education
  - Appreciation for parent partnership
  - Interest in serving the child's needs

# A la carte education is: *out and about*



- \* Fewer modern homeschoolers spend their educational time alone or just with siblings
- \* Rise in community education model
- \* Engagement with adult mentors in the community
- \* Full use of community resources like museums, private educators, free educational programs
- \* Ability to seek out educational options at the right levels

# A la carte education is: *-serving the child's needs*



- \* More emphasis on child-led learning
- \* More flexible definition of curriculum
- \* Emphasis on following child's passions
- \* Emphasis on learning in real world
- \* Parent as mentor, guide, co-learner, scheduler, chauffeur
- \* Teacher as mentor, guide, facilitator
- \* Children learn to set their own goals
- \* Eventual goal is self-motivated learning

# Delivering à la carte

How can students take advantage of these options?

# Delivering à la carte: *homeschool*



- \* Homeschool is the most flexible way to provide à la carte education
- \* Parent may or may not do any “teaching”
- \* Each area of a child’s learning is assessed separately.
- \* Asynchronous development is embraced
- \* Children spend the most time in areas of passion
- \* “Learning to learn” is emphasized

# Delivering à la carte: *public education*



- \* Public “low residency” homeschool program
- \* Emphasis on family education—parents are welcomed as partners
- \* Teachers act as “consultants” or “specialists” but not as “experts”
- \* Families are supported with on-campus activities and individual teacher meetings
- \* Families form a community and get the benefits of a traditional school
- \* All kinds of homeschoolers are welcome
- \* May not require testing
- \* Fulfillment of grade-level curriculum is flexible

# Delivering à la carte: *charter school*



- \* Charter is set up to support homeschoolers with financial and educational support
- \* Testing is required
- \* Families may or may not be offered community events
- \* Benefits of public education, including special education services, access to college prep resources, access to curriculum
- \* Educational specialist (teacher) works with the family to document learning



# Delivering à la carte: *private/micro-school*



- \* Very new option
- \* Hybrid school/homeschool
- \* Usually private
- \* School offers educational support in certain areas with flexible schedule
- \* Functions more like a college: students may be allowed take any class they are prepared for, regardless of grade level
- \* School may offer enrichment though usually depends on parents seeking enrichment from dedicated providers

# A la carte education

Where can you find classes?

# Online resources that support à la carte education

There are too many different providers to list all of them, but here are some popular examples of each type:

- \* **Self-paced**: Khan Academy (all levels, free), MIT Open Courseware (college level, free), ALEKS (K12, fee), CTY (test, fee), EPGY (K12, fee)...
- \* **Self-paced with teacher supervision option**: Khan Academy (teacher not provided), UCScout (9-12, free/fee), eIMACS (6-12, fee), Big History (9-12, teacher not provided), CTY, online community college classes...
- \* **Teacher-led class**: Athena's, Online G3, Lukeion (K12, fee), eIMACS...
- \* **Tutor-led independent study**
- \* **Collaborative** (new but growing option): MIT's Scratch (free), Duolingo (free), CoderDojo (free, cooperative)

# Physical world resources that support à la carte education

- \* Independent tutors, therapists, educational centers
- \* Private classes (both afterschool and homeschool)
- \* Parent-run cooperatives
- \* Availability of certain public school or private school services to non-enrolled students
- \* Community colleges
- \* Mentoring relationships with adults in business or education

# A la carte education

What does this mean for students leaving public and private schools?

# A la carte solutions for homeschoolers

## School offers...

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- \* Largely the same education for every child
- \* Education provided by experts and accepted by parents
- \* A location-based experience that requires the child to physically step away from real-world experiences

## A la carte offers...

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- \* Classes and studies tailored to a student's need in each area
- \* Educators must replace traditional school role of parents with role of parents as partners
- \* Real-world education tailored to child's needs

# A la carte solutions for homeschoolers

## School offers...

---

- \* The ability for parents to have the time to work and pursue their own goals
- \* Passionate, dedicated adults with a lot of experience with a variety of children
- \* A community of learners who can inspire and support each other

## A la carte offers...

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- \* Increased flexibility for parents without the all-or-nothing school approach
- \* Support for parents who don't want to take on the full homeschooling burden but do want to be intimately involved in their child's education
- \* A less comprehensive community for families with unusual learners – children get community time without having to be part of the community in all aspects of their education

# Benefits of à la carte programs for schools

- \* Private schools have the flexibility to offer limited programs to homeschoolers
- \* Public schools pull funding back into their districts by bringing homeschoolers back
- \* Homeschoolers often shift between homeschool and school, and à la carte options offer them continuity
- \* Homeschooling parents are an added value for schools looking for involved, active parents



# How to approach your district

## Teachers/administrators:

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- \* Homeschoolers are desperate for more à la carte options, public and private
- \* Welcome homeschoolers into the process and develop programs based on their needs
- \* Offer staff that enjoys collaboration
- \* Offer the best of public schools: access to sites for group activities, access to curriculum and equipment
- \* Don't expect homeschoolers to embrace all aspects of school, especially testing

## Parents:

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- \* Let your district/school know you're out there
- \* Get involved
- \* Search out alternative-friendly teachers and administrators
- \* Advertise the benefits of offering options to families who have left school
- \* Be flexible and take a step-by-step approach

# A la Carte Education Resources

## About à la carte options:

- \* Hoagies' distance learning: [www.hoagiesgifted.org/distance\\_learning.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/distance_learning.htm)
- \* "For teachers who want to tutor" (esp. read "Facing downright hostility"):  
[a2zhomeschooling.com/methods/tutoring/teachers\\_as\\_tutors\\_home\\_school/](http://a2zhomeschooling.com/methods/tutoring/teachers_as_tutors_home_school/)
- \* "Helping teens navigate MOOCs":  
[blog.sukiwessling.com/2013/04/helping-teens-navigate-moocs/](http://blog.sukiwessling.com/2013/04/helping-teens-navigate-moocs/)
- \* "Boutique distance learning":  
[www.examiner.com/article/boutique-distance-learning-offers-variety-for-gifted-kids](http://www.examiner.com/article/boutique-distance-learning-offers-variety-for-gifted-kids)

## About homeschooling:

- \* Home Education Magazine's Welcome to Homeschooling:  
[homeedmag.com/gettingstarted.php](http://homeedmag.com/gettingstarted.php)
- \* Info-graphic on homeschool demographics:  
[www.collegeathome.com/homeschool-domination/](http://www.collegeathome.com/homeschool-domination/)
- \* Homeschool facts from Homefires:  
[www.homefires.com/facts.asp](http://www.homefires.com/facts.asp)
- \* "When Schools Fail: Is Homeschooling Right For You and Your Highly Gifted Child?":  
[www.hoagiesgifted.org/schools\\_fail.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/schools_fail.htm)
- \* Sandra Dodd's "Deschooling for Parents":  
[sandraddodd.com/deschooling](http://sandraddodd.com/deschooling)