

<https://doi.org/10.34142/2709-7986.2021.26.1.11>

PRESENT-DAY CHALLENGES IN HOMESCHOOLING SPECIALISTS' TRAINING IN CANADA

Received: 12/12/2020

Accepted: 01/02/2021

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the results of the recent scientific research concerning training of experts for homeschooling in general and its today's challenges in particular. Canada has been chosen as a target country due to its specific attitude towards homeschooling and its significant experience in specialist and/or teacher training for homeschooling. The urgency of the problem has recently aggravated because of the present-day situation with covid-19 worldwide restrictions in education and subsequent increase in the number of homeschooling families that need expert advice from certified specialists.

*The **purpose** of the article is to highlight the actual state of homeschooling specialist training in Canada in order to decide on a possibility to apply the experience of Canada in those counties which face similar challenges.*

*To conduct the scientific results such **methods** as a continuous sampling method and a data classification method were used.*

*The present research **resulted** into revealing current challenges in the realm of teacher training for homeschooling in Canada along with possible ways of overcoming of all the revealed difficulties with the help of various institutions that provide pedagogical education or practical support within the process of specialist training for homeschooling. The article considers acquiring skills and knowledge necessary for organizing family (home) education from colleges, institutes, universities, teacher training courses, associations, homeschooling support groups, etc. Some relevant educational programs provided by these establishments are under consideration as well.*

Thus, the following **conclusions** were inferred from the results of the research: the system of Homeschooling Specialists' Training in Canada is highly-developed and well-prepared to cope with the difficulties connected with the Present-day Challenges.

KEY WORDS: homeschooling educator/teacher training, homeschooling in Canada, challenges in homeschooling specialists training.

INTRODUCTION

Homeschooling in Canada has recently been transformed from a rare phenomenon to a widely spread movement. Brian Ray, an American researcher of homeschooling, states that "Homeschooling changed from being a practice of families that some observers opined were the fringe of society to being commonly considered a viable educational option by mainstream American families" (Ray, 2017).

It should be noticed that families turn to homeschooling nowadays due to the present-day situation with Covid-19 which has caused challenges for the educational system of the country. Family education has always been legal and supported by the government. In some provinces home schools are even refunded, i.e. parents receive monthly payment for educating their children at home (see Fig. 1).

	Provisions for funding to parents or providers	Provisions for funding to schools
British Columbia	Students in grades 10-12 who are registered as home schooling and are enrolled in at least one distributed learning course are eligible to have educational expenses up to \$600 per student paid directly to the provider	\$175 per student
Alberta	Parents may receive up to 50 % of the \$1,641.27 per student funding that is directed to the schools (that is, \$820.64 per student)	\$1,641.27 (but up to 50% of it may go to parent) Also 50% of cost for distance learning courses (grades 7 – 12) up to \$1,641.27 per student
Saskatchewan	Parents receive up to \$1,000 per student, but this varies by board.	

Figure 1. Provisions for Funding for Home Schooling

The main reasons for homeschooling in Canada are living in distant areas, religious or national viewpoint, frequent changing of dwelling, etc. However recently the main reason for massive increase in the number of homeschoolers is the situation due to Coronavirus.

As a rule, in Canada parents take time to consider all the advantages and disadvantages of homeschooling, discuss the

possibility of switching to family education and have enough time to prepare programs and materials to anticipate and overcome impending challenges. While those parents who start homeschooling nowadays haven't had an opportunity to prepare themselves for such changes that is why they need professional support to a greater extent.

Thus the demand in homeschooling specialists such as teachers, educators, psychologists, coaches, methodologists, advisors and others is observed in Canada nowadays.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the actual state of homeschooling specialist training in Canada in order to decide on a possibility to apply the experience of Canada in those counties which face similar challenges.

To achieve the main purpose, the following tasks should be solved: identify the present-day challenges in the process of training specialists for homeschooling; to investigate the possibilities for teacher training in Canada; to view the ways of overcoming the challenges and to decide whether there is a possibility to apply the experience of Canada in other counties.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The problem that is under consideration has been studied by such Canadian scientists as A. B. Arai (Arai, 2017), B. D. Ray (Ray, n.d.), L. Bosetti & D. Van Pelt (Bosetti & Van Pelt, 2017) and others. It should be noticed that

the problem of specialist training has not been researched enough.

The main attention of the scientists is paid to homeschooling, its challenges and providing support to homeschooling families in general. “Many supporters of homeschooling maintain that parents are in a better position than the state to judge the educational needs of their children, and furthermore, parents should have primary responsibility for deciding how their children ought to be educated” (Ray, 2017).

However, it is evident that families will face difficulties acting without any professional support of highly qualified specialists.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct the scientific results such methods as a continuous sampling method and a data classification method were used. The search of literature with further data analyses enabled us to systemize and classify facts concerning the training of teachers and other specialists for homeschooling (see Fig. 2 – 3).

№	Provinces and Territories	Name
1	Canada-wide	French for Homeschool; Homeschool Swap: Canada; Christian Canadian Homeschoolers; Canadian Secular Homeschoolers; Homeschooling Your Unique Learner in Canada.
2	British Columbia	BC Unschoolers/Homeschoolers; British Columbia Homeschool Chat and Swap; Greater Vancouver Local Support Groups; Homeschoolers of Northern BC; BC Registered Homeschoolers
3	Alberta	Homeschoolers Central Alberta; Alberta Homeschoolers Group; Lethbridge Homeschoolers; Edmonton Homeschoolers; Edmonton West-End Homeschoolers; Drumheller Homeschoolers; Fort MacMurray Homeschoolers; Drayton Valley Homeschoolers; Ponoka Homeschoolers; St. Albert and Area Homeschoolers; Lacombe Homeschoolers
4	Saskatchewan	Prairie Spirit Home Educators; Homeschool Potluck in Regina; Saskatoon and Area Homeschoolers; Battlefords and Area Homeschoolers
5	Manitoba	Manitoba Association for School at Home; Winnipeg Homeschoolers; Winnipeg Homeschooling Network; Interlake

		Homeschoolers; Steinbach Area Homeschoolers
6	Ontario	Ontario Homeschoolers; Heritage Homeschoolers of St. Thomas; Christian Toronto Homeschoolers; Thunder Bay Christian Homeschoolers; Elgin County Homeschoolers; Homeschooling Parents of Ottawa; Durham Region Homeschoolers; Northern Ontario Homeschoolers; Peterborough and Area Homeschoolers; Niagara Area Homeschool Group; Cambridge Ontario Homeschoolers; Sudbury, Ontario Homeschooling Parents Group; Toronto Muslim Homeschoolers; Hastings and Prince Edward County Home Educators and Learners.
7	Quebec	Association québécoise pour l'éducation à domicile; Centre Communidée – Montreal Homeschooling Community Centre; Ecole à la Maison de Montreal – Montreal Homeschool.
8	New Brunswick	Fredericton Secular Homeschoolers; Moncton Homeschoolers; Moncton Christian Home Educators; Fundy Home Educators; River Valley Home Educators.
9	Nova Scotia	South Shore Homeschoolers; Special Needs Homeschooling Nova Scotia; Cape Breton Homeschoolers Antigonish Homeschool Group; Annapolis Valley Community Playgroup
10	PEI	PEIHomeschool.com
11	Newfoundland & Labrador	Homeschooling Freethinkers in Newfoundland
12	Northern Canada	Northern Canada Home Based Learning
13	Homeschooling Methods Groups	Charlotte Mason Canada; Classical Education Homeschooling Canada; Montessori Homeschooling.

Figure 2. Canadian-homeschooling-support-groups-Facebook

Nº	Name	Description	Contact
1	Association of Christian Parent-Educator	A religious group that offers support to homeschooling families.	http://www.acpeq.org
2	British Columbia Home Educators' Association	A registered, inclusive, non-profit society that has been supporting home educators since 1988.	https://bchea.ca/contact/
3	Calgary Homeschool Activities	This group facilitates the organization and coordination of homeschool activities, get-togethers, playdates and field trips.	http://groups.yahoo.com/group/calgary-hsactivities/
4	Canada's Homeschool Directory & Magazine	Canada's Homeschool has been in home education and alternative learning for over 10 years. It's the only national directory of home education resources in Canada/	http://www.canadashomeschool.ca
5	Cochrane Home educators	A support group is inclusive to all and are a volunteer-run group.	http://www.cochranehomeeducators.com/
6	EMBRACE – Sarnia/Lambton	A homeschool families' group in Lambton County (activities including gymnastics, skating,	http://embracelambtonkent.weebly.com/

		meetings, coffee night, field trips)	y.com/our-group.html
7	Greater Vancouver Homelearning Network	Support groups, events, ideas and resources and for the homes learning community. A non-religious and all-inclusive group.	http://sites.google.com/site/gvhomelearners/home
8	Hamilton Homeschool Association	A network of homeschooling families and support groups offering resources, activities, and information for homeschoolers.	http://www.pennsylvania.ca/homeschool/
9	Home Educators of New Brunswick	A local homeschooling support group.	http://www.henb.org
10	Home School Legal Defence Association of Canada	Home School Legal Defence Association of Canada (HSLDA) defends and protects the rights and freedoms of families across Canada in their right to home school their children.	http://www.hslda.ca
11	Ontario Christian Home Educators Connection	Enables networking among its members	http://www.ochec.org
12	Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP)	An inclusive, non-profit group run by volunteers that provides information about home learning.	http://www.ontariohomeschool.org
13	Prince George Home Educators' Association (PGHEA)	A non-denominational, Christian group supporting all home educators in our area. We have monthly meetings, a member resource library, information packets, website.	http://www.pghea.com
14	Saskatchewan Home Based Educators Inc.	Serves as a link between the homeschooling community.	http://www.shbe.info
15	South Delta Home Learners (SDHL)	Diverse in philosophies, religions, and educational needs.	http://southdeltahomelearners.webs.com

Figure 3. *Canadian-homeschooling-support-groups*

RESULTS

The present research revealed current challenges in the sphere of teacher training for successful management of homeschooling in Canada. Besides that, some possible ways of overcoming difficulties were mentioned. The help is often provided by various institutions that offer pedagogical education or practical support within the process of specialist training for homeschooling.

The article investigates the ways of acquiring skills and knowledge necessary for organizing family (home) education from

colleges, institutes, universities, associations, homeschooling support groups, teacher training courses, etc.

DISCUSSION

The present research shows that the interest to homeschooling had slowly but steadily been rising till the first lockdown in Canada. Whereas it has got a sharp increase during year 2020. It is obvious that the main reason (and at the same time the main homeschooling challenge) for this phenomenon is the contemporary pandemic

situation which influences dramatically the educational system.

As far as the challenges of homeschool specialist preparation are concerned, it is necessary to mention the following ones:

1. Small number of official programs and courses in pedagogical educational institutions.
2. The lack of confident specialists for homeschooling teacher training.
3. The difficulty in access to educational programs for homeschool specialists in geographically vast Canada.
4. An extensive variety of programs for homeschooling to face the families' needs and preferences due to absolutely different reasons for homeschooling.
5. The quarantine restrictions in higher institutions.
6. The pandemic threats to the participants of the training process.
7. Traditional programs tend to overwhelm the students.
8. Half of parents felt overwhelmed by their responsibilities to educate their children at home and one in four felt they did not have the resources they needed for at-home education (Regents of the University of Michigan, n.d.).

Homeschooling in Canada is decentralized. A state homeschool board only advises and gives recommendations whereas the local educational authorities in provinces and territories deal with the organization and manage all the details concerning homeschool teacher training.

Certainly there is a shortage of specialists in this type of educational process. Thus, a teacher who works with a travelling circus team teaching their children witnesses that: "Coop classes – the last one we did – I organized and I was the only "teacher" – if we do homeschool classes now it's through a homeschool board who organizes them and hires the instructors" (Lisa Marie, 2020).

The possible answer to questions connected with the present topic can be found in

numerous colleges, institutes, universities, teacher training courses, associations, homeschooling support groups and other organizations. Some of them are worth a closer attention.

Some of them serve the whole Canada, others spread their attention within certain provinces or territories (see Fig. 2-3).

Homeschooling Your Unique Learner in Canada is a group open to parents who homeschool or are considering homeschooling their children that have unique needs, with or without a formal diagnosis. By unique, we mean those who learn differently than the 'regular' child, and who have academic or behavioural struggles.

The primary purpose of this group is to encourage and support Canadian homeschool families. The group builds a community of Canadian Homeschoolers that help and encourage one another on this journey, share concerns and struggles, successes and accomplishments, curriculum choices and/or therapies that really worked – all with the intention of discovering strategies and creative ideas to help a student continue on the road to lifelong learning.

An experienced homeschooling mother and expert Lisa Marie suggests another perspective to the problem: "If you are looking to connect with homeschoolers in your local area or province (or even country wide), Facebook is a great place to do so. Here is a list of some of the groups I've found that you can join. Remember – these groups are often small and personal – so you will likely need to request membership" (Lisa Marie, 2020).

In Fig. 2 the most prominent Facebook groups are enumerated (The Canadian Homeschooler, n.d.). Though they do not provide official education, they deserve attention.

For instance, French for Homeschool is announced as a "place for Canadian

homeschoolers to share resources, curriculum, ideas, activities, blogs, living books, etc. Also a place to connect with and encourage others pursuing this shared goal. Please indicate if a resource is suitable for French parents or is user friendly for English first parent. Please keep commentary kind, helpful and encouraging. As I am getting more and more requests from individuals outside of Canada, I have added a question to help in the screening process” (Sabo, 2018).

“The Home School Legal Defence Association of Canada (HSLDA Canada) is a national membership-based organization that empowers, protects, and encourages homeschooling families across Canada. HSLDA is working diligently to support homeschool families by providing everything needed to succeed. Expert legal support, insurance coverage, and advice from the experienced staff are just some of the many benefits of joining HSLDA” (Stock, 2020).

They offer a program both for teachers and for parents who intend to take an active part in their children’s education. The program supposes that the attendees will:

- “Listen to speaker sessions from homeschooling experts and teachers.
- Hear from homeschooling parents just like you, new and experienced alike.
- Get word-of-mouth recommendations from people who’ve actually used the products.
- Find homeschool support groups.
- Feel connected to people in your new tribe.
- Browse curriculum and programs in person.
- Enjoy convention discounts on bundles and curriculum purchases!” (Gaddy, 2020)

As far as we can judge they raise urgent questions and provide relevant information and practical support. “These conventions provide a unique opportunity to meet other

homeschoolers, learn educational styles and techniques, attend workshops, explore the many resources out there, purchase curricula for the next year, and more. Homeschooling Freebies! Free Student Homeschool Planner, Free Year-Long Copy Work Curriculum (eBook), Homeschool Help Printable Pack, Free Coronavirus Book for Children, What to do if your curriculum is working.” (Homeschool.com. The Original Homeschooling Community, n.d.).

These establishments are open and willing to share their experience with those who plan to raise their level of teaching skills. “Find inspiration and advice from homeschool mentors! With dozens of podcast interviews from experienced homeschoolers and education experts you’re sure to find answers to your questions (Homeschool.com. The Original Homeschooling Community, n.d.)!”

In Canada the attempt to overcome the challenges is made through organizing various theme events as meetings, conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops and other ventures. One of the most vivid examples is The Mega Homeschool Vendor Hall. It “has partnered with some amazingly-experienced, super-knowledgeable curriculum experts. They are ready to setup a free 30-minute video coaching session with you over Skype or Zoom to point you in the right direction” (Baker, 2020).

Another popular way to acquire a certificate or even a diploma is a teacher training program like, for example, CGMS (the Center for Guided Montessori Studies, n.d.), AMI (Association Montessori Internationale, n.d.), CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) Canadian Educational Foundation, TESOL (Teach English to Speakers of Other Languages), etc.

“CGMS is a new Montessori teacher training program intended to make Montessori teacher education more effective and more

accessible. All CGMS graduates will receive diplomas from the International Montessori Council. We have also begun offering continuing education and refresher courses in partnership with the Montessori Foundation” (The Center for guided Montessori Studies, n.d.).

Montessori Teacher Training Certification Curriculum includes various subjects to choose from as Child Development, Children With Special Needs, Classroom Leadership, Cosmic Education, Early Childhood Orientation, Language Arts, Math, Music, Observation, Peace Education, Philosophy of Montessori, PhysEd and Motor Development, Practical Life, Sensorial, Visual Arts, Pedagogical Approach and many other.

Their educational components include reading materials, videotaped lessons and lectures, both individual and group assignments, discussion groups. They also provide e-learning which takes place on their moodle website, but for some tasks students are required to either use a digital video camera, or to use free voice chat software such as Skype(tm).

As instructors demonstrate materials they take the time to emphasize fundamental principles related to that area as well as drawing attention to the essential qualities of lesson presentations. At their own leisure, students have the opportunity to review lectures and lessons at any time.

A cohort is a group of students learning together and supporting one another’s knowledge and skill development. All students within a cohort start and complete the course at the same time, and study the same subject area together.

These same technologies also allow students to collaborate more effectively, and review Montessori theory and practice more thoroughly and with greater repetition over time.

An AMI diploma is respected worldwide for its authenticity, high standards, and quality.

The hands-on Montessori training provides the framework and tools for successfully teaching what works for each child, regardless of their socioeconomic status and stage of development.

The principles of Montessori education help foster a hands-on, self-paced, collaborative, and joyful classroom at any school, anywhere in the world. Courses are offered over one academic year, during summer vacations or in study modules according to the format approved by the AMI Scientific Pedagogy Group.

The course programs include lectures, seminars, reading sessions covering Montessori philosophy, child development, and information on the presentation of Montessori materials.

Each course also includes significant components of observation and teaching practice, supervised practice using Montessori didactic materials, classroom material making, and preparation of individual classroom manuals.

TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) Canadian Educational Foundation, TESOL is the optimum certification program to Teach English to Speakers of Other Languages, specifically to Teenagers and Adults. Our affiliated institutes offer TESOL with the highest global standards.

Cambridge CELTA is regarded as the gold standard teaching qualification. CELTA is a qualification for teaching English as a foreign language. It focuses on developing practical skills with face-to-face and online teaching practice, which provides the participants with the techniques and confidence necessary to begin teaching as soon as they finish the course. CELTA is the most widely recognized English teaching qualification in the world.

It is the qualification most often requested by employers: three out of four English language teaching jobs require a CELTA

qualification (Cambridge Assessment English, n.d.).

Brian Ray, encouraging parents for homeschooling claimed that “the experience of millennia of humankind in all nations around the world teaching children by parent-led home-based and neighborhood-involved education and research on forty years of the modern global homeschool movement suggest that parents and families are very capable of successfully educating children” (Ray, 2017).

This statement cannot be applied to those countries where the tradition was lost many years ago, like, for instance in Ukraine. Moreover, the scientist declared that “they [parents] are able to do this without institutional or conventional schools, without university-trained and state-approved teachers, and without government-approved or state-selected techniques, ideas, values, and curriculum” (Ray, 2017).

Taking into consideration all the results of the present research it becomes absolutely evident that the process of responsible homeschooling requires professional support.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the system of Homeschooling Specialists’ Training in Canada is highly-developed and well-prepared to cope with the difficulties connected with the Present-day Challenges.

Some relevant educational programs provided by these establishments are under consideration as well. It can be inferred from the research that revealing current challenges in the realm of teacher training for homeschooling in Canada along with possible ways of overcoming of all the revealed difficulties with the help of various institutions that provide pedagogical education or practical support within the process of specialist training for homeschooling.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

FUNDING

The authors declare that this study received no specific financial support.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

СУЧАСНІ ОСВІТНІ ВИКЛИКИ В ПІДГОТОВЦІ ФАХІВЦІВ ДОМАШНЬОЇ ОСВІТИ В КАНАДІ

У статті розглядаються результати нещодавніх наукових досліджень, що стосуються підготовки фахівців для домашнього навчання в цілому, та особливості сучасних проблем. Для проведення дослідження було обрано саме Канаду через її специфічне ставлення до домашнього навчання та значний досвід у підготовці спеціалістів та/або вчителів для домашнього навчання. Актуальність проблеми загострюється через сучасну ситуацію зі світовими обмеженнями через Covid-19 в освіті та подальше збільшення кількості сімей, що навчають дітей вдома та потребують консультації експертів і сертифікованих фахівців.

Мета статті – висвітлити фактичний стан підготовки спеціалістів з домашнього навчання в Канаді, щоб визначити можливість застосування досвіду Канади в тих країнах, які стикаються з подібними проблемами.

Для проведення наукових результатів використовувались такі **методи**, як метод суцільної вибірки та метод класифікації даних.

Результатом цього дослідження стало виявлення сучасних проблем у галузі підготовки вчителів для домашнього навчання в Канаді, а також можливих шляхів подолання всіх виявлених труднощів за допомогою різних установ, що надають педагогічну освіту або практичну підтримку в процесі підготовки спеціалістів для домашнього навчання. У статті розглядається набуття навичок та знань, необхідних для організації сімейного (домашнього) навчання в коледжах, інститутах, університетах, асоціаціях, групах підтримки домашнього виховання, курсах підвищення кваліфікації вчителів тощо. Також було проаналізовано деякі відповідні освітні програми, що надаються цими закладами.

Таким чином, результати дослідження дозволили сформулювати наступні **висновки**: система підготовки спеціалістів для домашнього навчання в Канаді є високорозвиненою та добре підготовленою для подолання труднощів, пов'язаних із сучасними проблемами.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: підготовка вчителів/викладачів домашнього навчання, домашнє навчання в Канаді, проблеми у підготовці фахівців з домашнього навчання.

CITE THIS ARTICLE AS (APA style):

Svyrydova, T. (2021). Present-day Challenges in Homeschooling Specialists' Training in Canada. *Educational Challenges*, 26(1), 121-131. <https://doi.org/10.34142/2709-7986.2021.26.1.11>