EDUCATIONS AND EDUCATIONISM: WHY ACCESS TO THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES IS AN ISSUE OF IN/EQUALITY

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Our imagination about education is curtailed. We operate in educational circles and for educational outcomes with limited knowledge and vision (Lees 2013). This paper explores, in the context of empirical data, the discovery by some UK adults of an educational alternative to attending a traditional school. It also discusses how and why prejudice about alternatives circulate and the effects such prejudice - if it exists - might be having on educational diversity and futures (Conroy 2010; Rothermel 2010; Facer 2012). A neologism is coined to describe prejudice and resistance to alternatives: educationism.

Furthermore, the how and why of equality in this regard of having wide and diverse educational concepts is explored. Are some people who are 'less affluent' not getting access to the very idea of an alternative educational pathway for their children? Are affluent people with 'capital' getting more educational options at the level of differing ways of educating, than those without significant financial and cultural resources? Is a disparity fair?

For many families, of diverse socio-economic backgrounds, elective home education has a long history of viability and take up in the UK (Rothermel, 2003). Yet, within the working class population in particular many parents seem to not even know they can opt to educate beyond or outside school attendance; they lack the everyday concept of an alternative education to state mainstream provision. Such disparity would be an issue of social inequality, of educational inequality.

Understanding education as not just being about regular school attendance is discussed here as an ‘event’. The paper focuses on the moment of this discovery as informing our idea of an inclusive, socially just educational realm. It is suggested that including alternatives in the idea of education is useful to widen our concept of educational inclusion and social justice at a structural level.


