

Kiera Underwood

ENG 1101

22 September 2020

Professor Jennifer Sears

“Home-Schooled Weirdo”

The most significant event that impacted my view on education and the educational system was, being homeschooled for majority of my educational career. Due to health reasons, I started home schooling in the third grade. Originally, I was planning to go back to public school for fourth grade, however my local school (the only school in the area) did not allow me to return because they did not want to be held liable if anything medical related happened to me on school grounds. I was angry not only because that meant saying goodbye to my friends and teachers, but also because I felt totally disregarded as a human being. Most people are aware of racial discrimination and sex/gender discrimination but many people are not aware of disability discrimination. Just as there is racism and homophobia, there is ableism. It was in that moment in my life that I realized prejudice came in all different forms.

Having no other schools nearby and not being able to travel far, I was forced to remain on home schooling. I continued doing so up until middle school graduation. I was able to graduate with a random class from a random school with random kids, who of course were not so welcoming of an intruder. Despite being uncomfortable due to the

circumstances, it was there at “my” middle school graduation, that I realized it was time for me to go back to a physical school setting. I talked (more like begged) my parents and my doctors to allow me to return for high school. I mean it was high school, right?! You only get to experience it once. My parents knew this all too well considering they never got to finish high school themselves. With this in mind, they agreed to let me go back if it was really what I wanted. So, with my parents permission, along with clearance from my doctors, I went off of home schooling and went back to a real school starting ninth grade. I was extremely nervous, but way more excited that I was going to be able to interact with people again, make friends, have different teachers for different subjects and just, feel like a normal kid again. To be honest, I was even excited about having to commute further than my dinning room table for school. It was the little things other kids my age forgot to appreciate.

I found out early on that the whole “high school experience” was nothing close to what I had envisioned it to be. I had realized that with home schooling, even though I was on my own after hours with no one but myself to help me, I was quite spoiled and privileged. This new environment was completely different. I was no longer being taught one on one in a quiet, secluded space. My teachers attention was being divided with, more or less, 27 other students and I had to learn how to drown out distractions from my very disruptive classmates. Quickly, this became a struggle for me to adjust to. My health started to become a factor again, both physically and mentally. My teachers didn't seem to care too much about what they were teaching and who they were teaching to. I was being bullied and my school failed to address it properly. My phys-ed teachers gave me a hard time and continuously tried to fail me even with direct doctors

notes stating that I could not participate in physical education due to my health condition. I was immediately reminded of my elementary school days and taken back to that girl who felt like a disregarded human being. I stuck it out to the best that I could, until I couldn't anymore. For the ending of junior year and the beginning of senior year I returned to home schooling, appreciating it a whole lot more than I did before.

Through my personal experiences, I've learned that educational environments can have a major effect on how you view education as a whole. This is specifically true right now during this ongoing covid-19 pandemic. There are people who are adjusting well to remote learning and people who are struggling with it, but either way, we are all being affected by it. Whether we're on campus or in our own homes, all educational experiences can teach us a thing or two.