

Structure in education

Education



The purpose of this study is to show institutional structure differences and similarities between Elementary Montessori schools, Secondary Charter schools, and Higher Education Technical schools. To support this research background information will be provided for each educational structure listed. The study will also include targeted population, class sizes, and educational philosophies for each structure. Montessori School Montessori school was established over 100 years ago by Dr. Mary Montessori.

The population Montessori schools focused was economically challenged elementary age students who were diagnosed with mental retardation. In the late 90s this particular school structure began to expand to middle and high school with intention to continue to serve their current student population. The availability of federal funding contributed an increasing boost to enrollment in Montessori schools. Montessori schools currently account for over 4, 000 schools in the Unites States. Approximately 200-300 of the schools are classified in the public sector while the remainder is comparable to public schools.

Settings in which Montessori schools are found include but at not limited to inner city, large magnet school areas, and areas where at-risk preschool students are placed. Lopata wrote that in the child-centered environment emphasis is placed on “ total development” of the child and his or her overall work procedure (Lopata, 2005). According to Lopata the stated goal of Montessori schools was development of strong self-directed young adults who pursue a lifetime love of independent learning (Lopata, 2005). This goal within itself is proven a tremendous difference between this school structure and any of the others.

Montessori classroom design was created to accommodate students of multiple ages in one classroom with a need to meet the students were they are emotionally or behaviorally. The average educational institute focuses on academic gains and student achievement. The difference between Montessori schools and other schools is the physical environment. The classroom is not the traditional desks in rows or even the table groups. The desks are arranged in “raft” so students can promote individual or small groups independently (Lopata, 2005). This option provides students with choices in how he or she wishes to learn.

The set up also provides a different attitude when it comes to the classroom. Educational environments were traditional designed to be teacher centered, the teacher is the focal point, but Montessori schools are very supportive of “student centered” structure. Instructional methodology is the third difference found in Montessori schools. Montessori schools have their own specific curriculum written by Montessori persons. The curriculum does not permit the use of worksheets, grades, textbooks, or punishments or rewards for achieving academic success or failure.

Students usually spend 3-4 hours in self-selected individual or small group work and less than an hour in whole group this practice is totally opposite of other educational structures (Lopata, 2005). Educators are trained to conduct a 15-20 minute lesson to introduce the lesson and students move into individual or small work groups. Lopata included some valued points of view in Montessori structure such as: students direct their own learning versus teachers being the authoritarians; student achievement is seen as a

comparison versus competition, and human potential versus skill development (Lopata, 2005).

Charter Schools In the state of Minnesota the first legislation was passed in 1991. There are approximately 5, 000 charter schools in the United States of America, this equals to 2. 4 % of all. There are more than six states with over 200 charter schools. The laws vary greatly from state to state along such dimensions as the year of passage, number of schools allowed number and identity of chartering authorities, eligible charter applicants or sponsors, types of charter schools allowed (Lawton, 2009).

Charter schools are public schools that must comply with most of the federal and state regulations that apply to traditional public schools (Lawton, 2009). Charter schools have the privilege to develop their own policies as it relates to discipline, personnel, and attendance, this autonomy awards Charter schools have what is referred to as “ zero tolerance”. Charter schools are choice schools that parents elect to send their children to this educational institute, the educational structures have a discipline plan in place but for major offences students are expelled and are encouraged to return to his or her home school.

The demand for parental involvement was created to minimize behavior problems but some cases this does not deter the problem. Charter schools participate in gathering data from “ The National Assessment of Educational Attainment (NAEP). This data along with state mandated competency tests are used to drive the instruction in Charter schools. The success or lack there

of is hard to determine due to techniques used to compare reliability of the tests vary from state to state.

Charter schools receive the regular per student amount from the state, but to ensure that students have opportunities that may not be available in traditional schools their board seek outside financial support heavily from community partners and other funding sources such as grants and private investors. Lawton wrote, factors that positively impact a charter school whose mission is to address the needs of at-risk populations may very well differ from those that benefit a charter school whose mission includes strong but narrow academic focus (Lawton, 2009).

Some districts are seeing a rise in charter schools with over 80% having a academic focus such as: MAHS in Memphis, TN that has a focus on health and science, Memphis Business Academy (both elementary and high) that have a business focus in Memphis, TN, and Mountain Education Center in Blairsville, GA that provide evening schools for students seeking a regular Georgia Diploma but the traditional setting is not accommodating. Each environment has approximately 1: 20 student teacher ratio. Technical Schools Artifacts found to support this research combined vocational and technical education in the post secondary structure.

The growing need for technical positions Mupinga and Livesay referenced technical and medical field positons as the highest paid fields therefore the need to attend four year colleges will become obsolete. The researcher found this statement interesting because most educational structures both public and private goal is preparation for college. Vocational-Technical

schools provide courses related directly to the program of study. Traditional programs will not always provide content specific needed to compete in occupations that they are preparing for.

A few occupations found in vocational-technical schools are: auto mechanics, barber/beauticians, shoe repairs, child care, computer repair, and heating and air-conditioning. Proponents of a college preparatory structure for high school students have long sneered at vocational education (Mupinga & Livesay, 2004). The occupations listed above are important to the day to day life for many and four year colleges and universities are missing the mark in preparation for these careers. In the past technical work has been associated with blue-collar work is slowly dissipating in today's work force.

Other occupations such as plumbers and construction workers are always in high demand and these are two of the many programs offered in vocational-technical programs. Mupinga and Livesay pointed out that despite the time spent in vocational-technical school or community colleges the course has been more rigorous and demanding than some traditional post secondary schools. The smaller classroom student-teacher ratio is nothing close to that of a four-year college or university when there can be as many as 200 students in a classroom.

Vocational-Technical schools usually focus on three areas: service (barber, and cosmetology; 64%), health and life science (medical/dental assistants, medical office administrative staff; 61%), business and marketing (administrative assistant, bookkeeper; 60%). The programs generally are 12 to 24 months with extensive hands-on practical experiences. The programs less

than 24 months provide opportunity for the students to become certificated in his or her program of study. The students that complete a two year program can earn an Associate's degree.

Mupinga and Livesay wrote four-year institutes will often offer associate degrees in various fields, but rarely offer these career-oriented certificate programs. Vocational-technical schools have an advantage over traditional post-secondary schools because they provide satellite campuses. The convenience of the satellite campuses provide students opportunity to attend a campus that does not require him or her to travel or live in close proximity of the campus. The partnership that vocational-technical schools are building with local business is increasing to provide a job supply of students that graduate from the programs.

Conclusion Education is similar to many other industries such as automobile sales, tooth paste ads, and real estate. Everyone advertise they have the best product and offer the service when in actuality the best is what meet your needs. The three different educational structures offered areas that were strengths to their environment like Montessori schools meeting students were they are while Charter schools traditionally offer smaller classrooms to provide more support to students, Vocational-technical schools provide career oriented opportunities that are not offered in traditional schools.

The differences are environment as it relate to Montessori versus Charter schools. Montessori environment is carefree but Charter is more structured

with a focus on curriculum. All three structures allowed for individuality with emphases placed on both academic achievement and human development.