A STUDY CONTRASTING THE PHILOSOPHY AND ROLES OF THE JUNIOR HIGH AND MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THEIR AFFECT ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the emergence of the philosophy and roles of the junior high and middle school through the study of historical documentation. In conjunction, delineating the institutional affects on adolescent development was investigated, noting the impact that each institution has on adolescent development in the physical, social, and emotional realms. This study was accomplished through a comprehensive review and critical analysis of research and literature encompassing the middle school and junior high philosophy and roles in adolescent development. The documentation recorded in this study was analyzed and recommendations were made to assist educational institutions contemplating a revisiting of the junior high philosophy and structure as a financial alternative in times of budgetary restraints

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The early 1900's philosophy of the junior high school, grades 7-9, was to provide a transitional phase for students from elementary to high school. The junior high focused on preparing individuals for academic success for college bound students, as well as vocational success in the job market (Manning, 2000). Skills and techniques were introduced, taught, and mastered for a rewarding and successful transformation into secondary education. There was little concentration to the emotional and social development of the young adolescent as he/she was transitioning into adulthood.

The emergence of the middle school, to serve as the "new" transitional bridge to high school, is a relatively new educational program that most school districts across America have adopted. Since its developmental pedagogy in the 1960's, the middle school philosophy is to serve, provide, and monitor both the social and emotional needs of the students "in the middle." The middle school provides the sense of family, home, and team, giving the young adolescent a feeling of belonging and purpose. Too many times adolescents experience alienation from the community as they make the transition into secondary education. Their emotional, social, and personal needs are regarded as hurdles that eventually disappear through maturity and experience.

To assist these students, the middle school philosophy of team teaching, advisory programs, interdisciplinary courses, and alternative scheduling has been incorporated into American public schooling. In 1999, there were at least three middle schools to each of the remaining junior high schools (Brockett, 1999). The traditional junior high school, grades 7-9, is slowly disappearing, being replaced by the "middle school" concept. For

instance, in Wisconsin alone, 209 of the 228 (92%) public school facilities servicing the needs of the young adolescent are classified middle schools. The remaining 19 public school facilities serving the needs of the young adolescent (8%) are classified as a junior high school (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002).

This change and reform has emerged as a public concern (Beane, 1999a). Some communities have questioned the transformation, fearing it is a "trend in education," without completely understanding the rationale for the change. In order to make the transition from junior high to middle school, sacrifices, ideologies, and structural remodeling has occurred. Restructuring the traditional junior high, either physically, professionally, or administratively to function as a middle school with teams, team planning, and adolescent concerns of social and emotional needs, requires an educational community to alter its innate philosophy of the traditional junior high to that of the middle school (Dougherty, 1997). Rooted in this change is the risk of additional expenditure of money and/or relocation or loss of school personnel to meet the needs of transitional students. This alone has created difficult decisions for school boards and administrators to make.

With the ever-growing concern of budgetary monitoring, some rural school districts in Wisconsin are struggling to balance the middle school philosophy with operating within their budget. The middle school philosophy requires an additional administrator that works collectively with the students and professionals. Along with the additional administrator, professionals trained specifically in the field of middle level education are needed to help complete the middle school concept. Additional time for daily team meetings reduces the time professionals spend for potential instruction. In

addition, time needs to be allocated for a "homeroom" where the adolescent can receive the sense of belonging to a community, something that is not necessarily offered in the junior high.

With a heightened concern on adolescent development, schools in the middle are forced to refocus their educational norms to accommodate adolescent needs. As stated in the following excerpts, adolescents were reexamined from a philosophical point of view. "Until the late 1980s, most researchers examining students' problems with school transition operated from the framework that the coincidence of major life changes were the cause of student's stress, an idea based in cumulative stress theory" (Simmons & Blyth; 1987, cited in Mullin & Irvin, 2000, p. 59). "The physical changes brought on by the onset of puberty, coupled with the resulting cognitive and social-emotional changes of this life phase, in addition to normative change in school were thought to be too overwhelming for many you adolescents to cope with successfully" (Mullins & Irvin, 2000, p. 59).

It is evident that schools are not providing for the needs of the young adolescent, as a junior high and possibly not as a middle school. A greater understanding of educational ideologies, school structure and design in conjunction with the philosophical needs of adolescents requires further research and analysis.

This researcher has experienced the transition from teaching in a junior high to a middle school over a three-year time period in a small rural school. Community members have voiced their concerns and have questioned the validity of their investment in this small Wisconsin school district's transformation.

Statement of the Problem

This study contrasts the historical development, philosophy, and roles of the junior high school and the middle school and their institutional affect on adolescent development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide rural school districts a comprehensive analysis of both the junior high philosophy and the middle school philosophy in educating young adolescents. Historical organization and development along with the educationally sound rationale for the establishment of these two distinct institutions will be addressed in this study. Is the development and utilization of the middle school, rather than the traditional junior high, worth the investment or is it just an "educational trend" spending more time and money for education?

At the conclusion of this study, recommendations are formulated to assist school districts in setting up guiding principles and programs that provide essential needs for the adolescent as he/she transitions through the "middle grades," from elementary to high school. These recommendations include the aforementioned dilemma of ideology, structural remodeling, and sacrifices for "schools in the middle."

This study has been conducted through a comprehensive review and critical analysis of literature and research based on historically successful and unsuccessful practices about schools "in the middle" and their affect on adolescents.

Research Questions

There are three research questions that this study addresses and answers. They are:

1) Is the transition from junior high to middle school a change simply in name or does it include a change in philosophy?
2) Is the middle school philosophy an effective way of educating adolescents in the social and emotional components of development?
3) What ideal model(s) need to be maintained for a balanced and functional middle school?

Definition of terms

The following is a list of terms that need to be defined for the clarity of understanding in this study. These are:

Junior High School - Transitional school from elementary school to high school, consisting of grades 7-9. The junior high is developed as a departmentalized instructional facility of secondary trained professionals. Classes are typically larger, with little or no concern to the emotional and social needs of the adolescent. Typically it is revered as the "survival of the fittest."

Middle School – Transitional school from elementary school to high school, consisting of grades 6-8, occasionally 5-8. The middle school exists as an adolescent centered facility built upon the foundation of teams and/or houses. Typically this institutional model is labeled as a competency-based model of education with a central focus on adolescent development.

Assumptions

It is assumed that school systems have adopted the transition from junior high to middle school as the best way to serve the adolescent.

Limitations

A limitation to this study is that the recommendations will be of central concern for smaller rural communities who are contemplating restructuring their present middle school, reverting back to a junior high school model.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter discusses the historical, philosophical, and developmental ideologies of the junior high and middle school. In addition, defining the appropriate techniques for meeting the social and emotional developmental needs of the young adolescent defined by each institution, are delineated for the reader.

Emergence of the Junior High

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, education was "predominately formal and traditional" (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967, p. 13). There was little variation in classroom structure and instruction. The traditional elementary program, first to eighth grade structure, along with the high school structure, grade levels nine through twelve, existed as the acceptable forms of public education in America (Bossing & Cramer, 1965). This 8-4 grade level structure was eventually challenged, as educators were increasingly recognizing the different developmental needs of the adolescents, ages 12-15 (Koos, 1927; Brimm, 1963).

School, and the work that it required to be successful, was a cumbersome duty in a child's life with little or no meaning. The average and below average child found that it was particularly difficult to be successful in school (Koos, 1927). Students saw little or no connection to the purpose of a textbook education and the relevance to the out-of-school experiences and interests (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967). Many individuals educated with as little as an eighth grade education were extremely successful in the workplace communities (Bossing & Cramer, 1965). The demands were high and the

success rates were low. With an emphasis on academic standards as a measure of knowledge in the late 1800s, students who were struggling because of individual differences were "left-back" to succeed on their own. Those students became known as left-backs (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967). "About one third of the school children of the early twentieth century were left-back at some time during the few years they spent in school. About one out of every six children in any grade was a repeater in that grade" (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967, p. 13). There was a multitude of contributing factors that led to this failure in the schools. These factors included late entrance, illness, home conditions, low economic status which forced youngsters to work for family survival, and mental retardation (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967). Many of the factors contributed to the extreme heights of academic failure, but educators viewed that the educational institution did not seem to meet the needs of the troubling students.

The first notable attack on the 8-4 system of education in America came from the viewpoint of the universities and colleges, not the elementary and secondary school system. President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard acknowledged, "…two-fifths of the freshmen at entrance were over nineteen years of age" (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956, p. 7). This was unacceptable at the time, as the faculty and staff at Harvard believed that the entering age should not go beyond age eighteen (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956). Elliot proposed to shorten the period of elementary education and secondary education in attempt to bring the entering age of college students down, as age entrance was creeping up slowly over the years. This recommendation led to the investigation and reorganization of secondary education.

Two well-organized committees convened to discuss the issues of the educational system. It was inevitable that these two committees proposed recommendations to the problems in the school system (Brimm, 1963). These two committees, inadvertently, developed the framework for the establishment of the junior high.

The Committee of Ten and the Committee of Fifteen, 1890 through 1896, met to discuss issues concerning the educational system and its structure. The original organization of these two committees developed with the dissatisfaction of the elementary school program (Brimm, 1963). As they discussed their issues further, the committees re-directed their purpose and proposed that some high school courses should be taught earlier. The reasoning for the proposal was in hopes of preparing the young individual for the extreme pressures and demands of high school, hopefully attracting more students to finish their high school career (Brimm, 1963). In conjunction with the recommendation of introducing high school courses earlier, the two committees also deliberated about the effectiveness of the elementary school program. This issue posed a level of tension between the two committees, as they held different views. There was a mutual agreement that elementary education did not seem to be the reason for pupil failure and the lost of interest in education, but individuals on the committees questioned the validity of the elementary structure (Koos, 1927; Brimm, 1963; Bossing & Cramer, 1965). Charles W. Eliot, who was then elected president of the Committee of Ten, expressed "that the elementary school program should enrich the students in the upper elementary instead of the constant review of material that was learned in the earlier years" (cited in Brimm, 1963, p. 1). This repeated learning could be better-spent learning new material, material that would strike an interest in continuing secondary education

(Brimm, 1963). There seemed to be an apparent time in the educational process in which students lost interest. "These young learners were characterized as the twelve to fifteen year old students" (Brimm, 1963, p. 11).

The Committee of Fifteen, which was made up mostly of larger city superintendents, on the other-hand, was hesitant about shortening the elementary program at first, but emphatically declined support for the introduction of some high school courses in the later elementary years (Brimm, 1963). This led to a disagreement between the two organizations about the appropriate and effective techniques in educating the adolescent student. As a result, this headed up the organization of a new committee to address the issue.

In late 1899, the Committee of College Requirements was formed by the National Education Association recommending a change in the existing 8-4 structure to a 6-6 plan of educational programming. The 6-6 plan seemed to provide a practical way to encourage a high school education in the educational system (Koos, 1927). They asserted that "the seventh grade, rather that the ninth, is the natural turning point in the child's life, as the age of adolescence demands new methods and wiser decisions" (Koos, 1927, p. 5). The few students who reached the ninth grade level were introduced to the high school format with little or no preparation in the 8-4 structure. Multiple teachers, along with the intense study on specialized subject matter, posed an extremely devastating impact on the educational system with the present 8-4 structure (Koos, 1927). With students treading in a pool of continued failure, educational foundations were diminishing, as the student lost interest in education and dropped out. This 6-6 structure, grades one through six and seven through twelve, seemed to provide an alternative that

addressed the dropout issue. The recommendations were instituted in a number of schools, eventually resulting in review, which proposed more educational reforms.

Schools needed direct attention, and as a result, administrators and educators were convinced that basic school program and structure was at the center of this growing problem (Brimm, 1963). Several studies were conducted on the issue of left-backs and drop-outs.

> E.L. Thorndike, the distinguished psychologist, gathered data on drop-outs in twenty-three cities of 25,000 or more population. His findings, reported in *The Elimination of Pupils from School*, were shocking. Leonard P. Ayres studied the problem in fifty-nine cities and wrote the dramatically titled and influential *Laggards in Our Schools*. This was followed shortly by a comprehensive study conducted by George D. Strayer of Teachers College, Columbia University, who based his conclusions on data gathered from 319 cities.
>
> Even to the layman, the findings were clear. All three studies showed a high percentage of dropouts beyond fifth grade. Only a little more than one third of the students entering public school ever reached ninth grade: and just slightly more than one in ten first graders stayed to complete high school.
>
> (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967, p. 12-13)

These astounding studies left a sense of urgency in the hands of the public school system. There was a definite problem that needed to be addressed.

After repeated deliberation and study on the issue of dropout rates, the uncertainty of correcting the problems from earlier recommendations, and the increasingly high concern of low student achievement, studies provided evidence to suggest that a special

concentration on students in the seventh through ninth grade years should be considered (Koos, 1927). This was a time in which the young student voiced a non-interest feeling in education, when in turn it was the most important.

The Committee of College Requirements (1899) was the first to define advantages for introducing secondary education earlier at the seventh and eighth grade level. The Committee of College Requirements suggested that:

> (1) the seventh grade as compared with the ninth grade coincides more closely with the changes in growth of the child, (2) the transition from elementary to secondary education could be made more gradually, and (3) there would be greater retention of pupils in the upper-elementary grades and the high school. (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956, p. 11)

This premise eventually became the basis for the establishment of the junior high nearly a decade later.

In 1907, the Department of Secondary Education appointed the committee to defend the existence of the 6-6 plan (Gruhn & Douglas, 1965). The following is a list of advantages that they developed in support of such a change.

1. Pupils could be taught by teachers specially trained in the various subject fields.
2. Departmentalized instruction would give seventh and eighth grade pupils contact with several teacher personalities.
3. The 6-6 plan would make laboratories available so that elementary science could be introduced earlier.

4. Manual training shops would be more readily accessible to the upper grade pupils.
5. The work in the modern languages could be begun earlier and continued longer than at present.
6. The transition form elementary to secondary school would be less abrupt.
7. More pupils would likely to enter the ninth grade than under the traditional plan.
8. An equal division of the twelve years would make the system more nearly self-consistent, as is shown by the European secondary schools.
9. The six-year secondary course would give pupils more time to prepare for college.
10. The lengthening of the high school course to six years would help extend the curriculum to include some of the newer subjects.

(Gruhn & Douglass, 1956, p. 12)

At this time, the very existence of the junior high was methodically laid out. Even though the Committee of College Requirements validated the 6-6 plan, they inadvertently developed the format for the junior high to come.

Eventually, the Committee on Economy of Time convened in 1913 and suggested a 6-3-3 structure in education (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956). This committee felt that the second half of the 6-6 structure should be divided into two distinct parts and concentration (Bossing & Cramer, 1965). The present 6-6 structure did not provide for the means of the twelve to fifteen-year old. They determined that there needed to be a "…junior high school of three years, extending from the twelfth to the fifteenth year: and

a senior high school, also of three years, covering the period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth year" (Bossing & Cramer, 1965, p. 20). This committee's recommendation is the first to give reference to an establishment of schools serving the needs of the adolescent. It is interesting to note that even though this recommendation did not come until 1913, schools in America were already operating under the junior high philosophy. To encapsulate it all, it was not just work and suggestions of this committee that formed the junior high system, but the work of all committees, which met to discuss and reorganize the educational system (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956).

As this committee's recommendation emerged into the public, schools were taking claim that they had established the 6-3-3 structure with great success. The first three-year junior high school resemblances appeared in 1909-1910 (Bossing & Cramer, 1965). It wasn't until 1910 that the junior high began to appear in some of the larger cities in America (Brimm, 1963). The superintendent of schools in Berkeley, California, claimed to have the first established three-year "intermediate school" in January 1910 (Bossing & Cramer, 1965), even though a second "junior high" school emerged at the same time in Columbus, Ohio (Faunce & Clute, 1961). It is not particularly important to know who established the first junior high school. The fact of the matter is that schools were recognizing, developing, and reorganizing their present structure in effort to service the adolescent.

In order to establish such a distinctive educational program, stipulations were set forth for recognition. One such stipulation was that the three-year junior high school was to be housed in a separate building or a portion sectioned off in another building, either the senior high school or elementary school. This was an attempt to break up the

present 8-4 or 6-6 distinction (Bossing & Cramer, 1965). An interesting fact about the development of most junior high schools was that they were organized to accommodate the over-crowded high school. This broke up the high school and provided opportunities to focus on needs of the adolescent (Gruhn & Douglass, 1956).

Adolescent Development Practices in the Junior High

In support of the recommendation for the establishment of a junior high school, a renowned psychologist of the time, G. Stanley Hall, denoted the importance of adolescent development in education. He stated: "Adolescence was a time of abrupt and radical changes [that] took place in all phases of an adolescent's life - physical, mental, social, moral, and emotional" (cited in Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967, p. 15). Hall defined adolescence as "…a new birth, for the higher and more complete human traits are now born" (Hall, 1908, p. 6). Hall also made reference that the rate of development increases two-fold or even more. Some children develop at astounding rates in physical and emotional realms, while others linger behind, waiting for their growth spurt to occur (Hall, 1908). Because of these factors, educating the adolescent with appropriate strategies and techniques was crucial. The junior high emerged into the educational society in order to provide a transition from the period between childhood and maturity.

> It [the junior high] secures better adaptation of subject matter, methods, and discipline to the adolescent age. The pubescent, or early adolescent, period begins with most children at the age of twelve or thirteen. With this period come important changes in physical structure and function, with decided corresponding changes in mental development. The boy of twelve or thirteen is not what he was at nine or ten. His childhood may still be in sight, but he has rounded a corner

> [sic]; he has passed a new milestone of life; by fourteen or fifteen he has gone over a hill and left his childhood days and ways behind. (Koos, 1927, p. 68)

The junior high school was theoretically designed to provide young adolescents the necessary skills to make the transitional bridge from elementary school to high school a successful educational process (Alexander, 1995). "The junior high school needs to be a separate institution because adolescents require a kind of educational program and environment different from that of either the elementary or high school" (Faunce & Clute, 1961, p. 30). The formation of a new educational institution had to fulfill the gap that existed in education. The idea of providing a transitional bridge between elementary and high school seemed to be the logical solution to the education problems (Alexander, 1995). The period of adolescence is a very crucial time in individual development. Inadvertently, what an instructor articulates, demonstrates, and recommends for those fragile individuals can influence their outlook on education.

> In many ways the period of adolescence is the most important one in the entire existence of the individual. It is richer with blossoming possibilities and fraught with more dangers than any other age and hence it is a time upon which we look with great hope, a period of holding out much promise and, at the same time a season of the deepest concern. (Bolton, 1931, p. 8)

The question on how to structure an institution to address the educational problems was a challenge. This transitional bridge had to acknowledge the different developmental levels of the adolescent. Fraunce & Clute defined the differences in developmental tasks of the young adult and stated that the individual characteristics of all people are unique. "The pattern of growth for each individual is distinctly different from

that of every other individual" (Fraunce & Clute, 1961, p. 24). With this premise as a basis, the junior high school structure looked at how to instruct students not as a homogenous group, but as a heterogeneous culture. The important fact to keep in mind about developmental assets is that an individual has to do their own growing according to their own timetable. By separating the junior high out of the 6-6 structure, more attempts could be made to accommodate the needs of the early adolescent.

Junior High Challenges and Educational Recommendations

An inevitable form of confusion existed with the purpose and role of the junior high school. Administrators, community committees, and school districts seemed to contradict each other with the function of the junior high (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967). The two purposes in apparent conflict with each other dealt with the structure. Two notable structural differences of the junior high were "… some conceived the junior high school as a way of starting certain academic subjects earlier and achieving earlier college entrance; others conceived it as an opportunity to provide the best possible education for young people at a specific age level" (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1967, p. 11-12). This disagreement of function eventually led to a breakdown of the junior high philosophy, as individual institutions took the liberty of defining their own function, not necessarily establishing them self as a "fundamental" junior high. The fundamental functions established during the junior high movement are expressed as follows:

1. [To] transition from the self-contained classroom of the elementary school to the highly departmentalized classes of the senior high school.
2. [To] transition from the emphasis on the basic skills of the elementary school to the content courses of the senior high school.

3. [To] transition from the program of all required courses of the elementary school to the elective program of the senior high school.
4. [To] transition from the childhood activities of the pre-adolescent to the accepted adult activities of the young adult.
5. [To] transition from the pre-adolescent set of values to the more serious adult values of our modern, complex economy.
6. [To] transition from the social patterns of childhood to the social life of the adult, which draws a definite distinction between the activities of the sexes. (Brimm, 1963, p. 9)

The prescribed functions of the junior high were to be guiding rationale for all school systems adopting the junior high philosophy. Eventually, after long deliberation, an operational function of personnel emerged.

> Thus the primary function of this administrative unit of our school system is to meet the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual characteristics of the particular group it serves. The guidance function is important at all levels, but the guidance services of the junior high school must be different from those of the elementary school or the senior high school if they are to be effective. By the same token, exploration and socialization are found at all educational levels but the junior high schools must design these portions of their program to be meaningful to the particular are group served. (Brimm, 1963, p. 8)

Imitating the structural design of both the elementary and the high school, establishing an identity that serviced the needs of adolescents, and adopting the prescribed functions was a difficult task for the junior high to surmount (Koos, 1927).

Keeping in mind that the junior high was to be a separate entity, administrators focused on the design of the elementary and senior high programs in order to provide an adequate bridge. The elementary school housed an environment of students in a self-contained classroom that enabled the learner to partake in a daily regiment of core classes. These classes include reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students had the opportunity to have an additional teacher for specialized classes. The overall elementary atmosphere provided a sense of stability for both the teacher and the student (Takanishi & Hamburg, 1997). A family, of sense, developed between the students and the instructor.

Contrary to that of the elementary school, the high school is a highly departmentalized institution that places great emphasis on school subjects and specialization areas of learning and/or occupations (Alexander, 1995). The student may then have a multitude of instructors throughout the high school experience. As a result, that sense of stability was lost in the arena of instruction. The family relationship that existed in the elementary school was no longer present. This key component was essential for the adolescent.

In order to tie both instructional institutions together the junior high provided the transitional bridge. Taking into account the structural design of the elementary and high school, the junior high design is conceptualized as a "foyer" or entrance into the larger institution. It provided the young learner a place to explore, acknowledge, and expand the educational processes that he/she may have interests in.

To assist the junior high in defining and providing the appropriate mode of education for adolescents, a list of "Ten Imperative Needs of Junior High School Youth"

was developed by National Association of Secondary-School Principals in 1951. They stated that:

1. All junior high school youth need to explore their own aptitudes and to have experiences basic to occupational proficiency.
2. All junior high school youth need to develop and maintain abundant physical and mental health.
3. All junior high school youth need to be participating citizens of their school and community, with increasing orientation to adult citizenship.
4. All junior high school youth need experiences and understandings, appropriate to their age and development, which are the foundations of successful home and family life.
5. All junior high youth need to develop a sense of value of material things and the rights of ownership.
6. All junior high youth need to learn about the natural and physical environment and its effects on life, and to have opportunities for using the scientific approach in the solution of problems.
7. All junior high youth need the enriched living, which comes from appreciation of and expression in the arts and from experiencing the beauty and wonder of the world around them.
8. All junior high youth need to have a variety of socially acceptable and personally satisfying leisure-time experiences which contribute either to their personal growth or to their development in wholesome group relationships, or to both.

9. All junior high youth need experiences in group living which contribute to personality and character development; they need to develop respect for other persons and their rights and to grow in ethical insight.
10. All junior high school youth need to grow in their ability to observe, listen, read, think, speak, and write with purpose and appreciation.

(Gruhn & Douglass, 1956, p. 25)

The definition of such needs is imperative for existence of the junior high. These needs were so explicitly stated that one couldn't argue their validity. With a primary focus on the development of the adolescent and the concentration to community and societal contributions, the adolescent could make the transition through young adult-hood. It is essential to note the importance of social acceptance and responsibility of the adolescent in this definition. That key element made it difficult to refute the junior high movement.

The learning process consists of "…modification of behavior through experience" (Faunce & Clute, 1961, p. 56). Frauce and Clute then proceeded to expand and define the implications of that statement by defining learning process. Learning entails the following:

1. Individual experience is required.
2. The learner behaves as a total organism.
3. The learner has purposes.
4. Learning involves action.
5. Learning is problem-centered.
6. Learning involves critical thinking.
7. The behavior of each learner results from his unique perceptions.

8. Learning is directly influenced by the learner's attitudes toward himself and others.
9. Group relationships affect learning.
10. Repeated effort is required to bring about changes in behavior.

(Faunce & Clute, 1961, p. 57-65)

The "Ten Imperative Needs of Junior High Youth" coincide with the psychological definition of learning, as defined by Faunce & Clute. By connecting the adolescent to the world around them in problematic multifaceted structure, learning would be real in their life. The initial establishment of the junior high was then consistent to the needs, along with the learning process, essential for adolescent growth and development.

Junior High Fall-out

As time transpired, the reality emerged about the complexity of adopting a new educational philosophy with its educational instructors. The instructional premise of educating adolescents to meet their needs unfortunately changed to meet the needs of the educational institution (Brimm, 1965).

As schools were adopting the junior high structure in education, the junior high emerged as a "junior" or small school to that of the high school (Koos, 1927). "[T]oo many schools ignoring the real functions of the junior high school and actually operating a 'little high school' patterned after the senior high school" (Brimm, 1963, p. 9). Junior high schools were typically set up in a highly departmentalized fashion, lending itself to changes in its initial function (Van Til, Vars, & Lounsbury, 1963). The unintended developmental format of the junior high rooted itself in the structural, philosophical, and

ideological trends of the traditional high school, thus reverting back to the 6-6 structure of education. This highly structured, content driven structure eventually became another area of concern for public education.

> Other evidence abounds that the 'junior' high school has typically been a secondary school following the 4-year high school model rather than being an in-between school bridging a gap between elementary and secondary education. The general adoption by junior high schools of the schedule, the activity program, and the organization of the high school attests to the dominance of the idea that the bridge was fundamentally a vestibule added at the front door of the high school. (Alexander, 1995, p. 21)

The structural and philosophical models that the junior high intended to follow were sound, but the reality of it was otherwise. Typically housing the students of grades seven through nine, the junior high readily adopted the "…departmentalized program and organization of …the high school" (Alexander, 1995). It evolved as an additional secondary school, following the typical high school model in hopes of preparing the students for college rather than building a bridge between elementary and high school (Brimm, 1963). The junior high allowed itself to adopt the traditional high school model of instruction, to remedy the multiple abilities in the classroom, creating a selective process in education (Brimm, 1963). Instructors were not typically trained in the arena of adolescent development, so the Darwin model, 'survival of the fittest,' started to appear for both the instructor and student.

Conant performed a study about educating the junior high student and recommended "grades 7 and 8 certainly should not be viewed as a training ground for

senior high school teachers" (Conant, 1960, p. 13). Too many school systems dumped the aspiring senior high teachers into junior high systems as a form of initiation into education. As a result, the philosophical and emotional needs of adolescents as described in the writings by Hall, Faunce, Clute, Bolton, and others, were not being met. "The school that does not provide for a transition period is violating one of the basic principles of psychology and cannot expect effective results from its educational program" (Brimm, 1963, p. 10). Students were not receiving the services prescribed in the junior high movement, as the "new" instructors had little or no experience on how to instruct such intricate individuals.

In theory the junior high philosophy was sound in the minds of its developers, but the institutional reality of it was too overwhelming. The conceptualized adolescent bridge seemed to take a different form. New views evolved about effectively teaching adolescents as the junior high philosophy was under scrutiny.

Emergence of the Middle School

The early advocates of the junior high institution focused on the issue of the high number of drop-outs and alleged that since the students were dropping out before grade nine, reorganization of the 8-4 system must occur (Grooms, 1967). By increasing secondary education earlier to the students, retention of students was more likely to occur for the 10th grade (Kindred & Associates, 1968). "Educators believed that holding power of the school could be increased by introducing secondary school experiences into grades seven and eight" (Grooms, 1967, p. 2).

The emergence of the junior high brought about critical changes in the philosophy of public education in America for the first fifty years of its existence. It was a rather

distinct institution that instituted some important characteristics of adolescent education (Kindred & Associates, 1968). One of the most important characteristics was the commitment to service the needs of the adolescent, at least in theory and to some extent in practice (Kindred & Associates, 1968). This was the beginning of a central focus and theme for educating the early adolescent.

By chance the junior high took upon a focus of addressing the needs of the adolescent, as it was not the core for the establishment of the junior high. As American anthropologist, Dr. Margaret Mead stated:

> The junior high school was begun without regard for known facts concerning differences between boys and girls in their preteen and early adolescent years. As a result of this oversight and of an escalating student precocity rate in recent years, we have in the 1960's an institution that is failing to meet its intellectual obligations to its students…. We have made school so incredibly boring and wasteful so that bright and stupid students alike want to get through it and out into the world. (Cited in Grooms, 1968, p. 2)

The validity for the existence of the junior high was in question. "From its beginnings, the junior high school has sought to be a transitional or bridge institution between the elementary and the high school. This characteristic has been vigorously questioned both as to its appropriateness and its actual development" (Alexander, 1995, p. 21). The problem that accounted for the dissatisfaction of the junior high rested not with the goals and functions, but with the failure of the junior high school to fulfill the goals (DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970). The junior high functions of integration,

exploration, guidance, differentiation, socialization, and articulation were relevant then as much then as they are now.

As the implementation of these functions was put into practice, the junior high emerged as the contaminated departmentalized subject-matter curriculum and over-emphasized interscholastic athletics (Gatewood & Dilg, 1975). It also introduced sophisticated socialization activities and initiated college and vocational preparation too early into the lives of the adolescent (Gatewood & Dilg, 1975). As a result, alienation of students from educational achievement occurred because transitional needs into high school were not being taught (Hansen & Hearn, 1971). To increase the complexity of the situation, teen-age development timelines sped up, as students reached puberty faster than those of the early 1900s (Hansen & Hearn, 1971). Finally, a lack of knowledge of how to provide the needed guidance for the developing adolescent was eminent in the roles of the instructors (Kindred & Associates, 1968). These factors fostered and led into the failure and dissatisfaction of the junior high (Kindred & Associates, 1968; DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970; Hansen & Hearn, 1971).

The dissatisfaction of functions in the junior high led to a "…fresh start with a planned rationale and a new title…with the opportunity for correcting [the] troubles" (DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970, p. 24). This fresh start was known as the middle school movement.

Before the middle school philosophy materialized, the question of where to place the ninth grader was an issue of continuous debate. Some argued that placing the ninth grader into the high school would be a better fit because of the increase in the maturation cycle timeline. The ninth grader seemingly had more in common with the tenth grader

than that of the eighth grader, in particular hormonal changes that produced secondary sex characteristics (Kindred & Associates, 1968; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). In conjunction, it also would increase the learning environment of the eighth graders, as they did not have to compete with the ninth grade for academic honors and leadership (Kindred & Associates, 1968; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). The removal of the ninth grade from the junior high would also provide a better opportunity to receive viable guidance and instruction from superior instructors in the field, as instructors were specialized in each particular subject (Kindred & Associates, 1968; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). An interesting study that was conducted in a school district undergoing the middle school transition in Florida, during the fall of 1963 and May 1964, came up with an indisputable conclusion about the placement of the ninth grader.

> Evidence clearly shows that the difference in academic success in the ninth grade does not rest so much with its placement in either a junior or a senior high school as it does with the program of instruction and instructional staff involved. Further, it appears that ninth graders in a junior high school value the importance of school and schoolwork just as highly as ninth graders in a senior high school. (Kindred and Associates, 1968, p. 32)

As the middle school took form, the ninth grade found itself in the senior high, giving the senior high program a four-year institution that had consistency in instruction and discipline (Grooms, 1967; DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970). This left the middle school with grades six through eight for most institutions, as some included the fifth grade in their new program.

> A middle school may be defined as the school which stands, academically, between elementary and high school, is housed separately (ideally in a building especially designed for this purpose), and offers at least three years of schooling beginning with either grade five or six. A middle school functions as a separate intermediate school that combines one or more of the elementary grades with the lower secondary grade, as there is general agreement among educational planners that the ninth grade should be omitted from all definitions of the middle school. (Kohut, 1980, p. 5)

The first such institution which resembled the middle school structure appeared in Bay City, Michigan, beginning in 1950 (Grooms, 1967; Kindred & Associates, 1968). "The program originally called for the inclusion of grades 5 through 8 in self-contained classrooms, except for special subjects such as art, music, homemaking, and industrial arts" (Kindred & Associates, 1968, p. 33). Even though this institution did not call itself a middle school, it is given credit for its existence as such because of the initiation of educational change.

Strong educational leaders of the middle school movement and formulators of its principals were few in the beginning (Grooms, 1967). As the middle school took shape, it had to devise guidelines, directions, and characteristics, keeping in perspective of the dissatisfaction of the junior high. The middle school movement initiated a revamping, rediscovery, and a redefining of the philosophical ideas that the junior high had prepared when it took shape at the turn of the 20th century (Kohut, 1980). Many characteristics and distinctions arose as the middle school evolved. One such list of rationale includes a:

1. Continuation of the school's role as an agent important in the transmission and modification of the culture.
2. Intensification of efforts to individualize instruction beginning at an early age and expanding rapidly as more maturity if gained.
3. Implementation of techniques for helping early adolescents to become problem solvers and creative thinkers.
4. Provision for balance in educational experiences.
5. Utilization of various patterns of instructional organization.
6. Integration of the efforts of the total school personnel responsible for the educational program.
7. Growth in the technological aids, as technology evolved rapidly.

(DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970, p. 30-31)

These characteristics differed from those of the junior high, as they centered more on the philosophical implications individual learning. This rationale, coupled with the notable inadequacies of the junior high, was the leading basis for the successful middle school movement.

An overwhelming aim took shape for the middle school pedagogy. The aim changed from a "transitional bridge" to one of individual self-concept and worth. The middle school still was an intermediate school, but refocused its values to that of the child, instead of focusing on the issue of poor school performance and student drop-out.

> The middle school is a school that tries to structure a child's education for him and around him. It considers who he is, where he is, what his needs are and what his potential is. If we start here and always keep this uppermost in mind, then the

> middle school concept moves out of the realm of uncertainty and misunderstanding about the education of children from ages 11 to 14, and into a clearer form concerning future directions.
>
> (DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970, p. 26)

This new focus redirected educators to look at the individual first and provide for his or her needs. The education focuses on the individual learner, "…the learner whose chronological age lies generally with the 10-14 age interval" (Grooms, 1967, p. 6). This new aim and direction changed the way educators instructed the adolescent.

Educational innovations took hold as the middle school emerged into the instructional program. These innovations included "…different types of team teaching, small- and large-group instruction, independent study, instructional resource centers, programmed materials, closed-circuit television, nongraded classes, and block-time teaching" (Kindred & Associates, 1968, p. 35). These particular innovations formulated the middle school distinction, creating the difference that was absent in the traditional junior high. Instruction that was focused on the learner, along with educators who trained in adolescent development and spent time with each other discussing the adolescent, was essential to the middle school movement.

In order to accommodate for these innovations, buildings had to be modified or constructed to be functional. "Middle schools have not always started in new shiny buildings with wide-eyed and enthusiastic staff. Quite often, the need for a new high school building results in a hand-me-down structure for the middle school" (Grooms, 1967, p. 9). The usage of an old high school was only recommended if it was redesigned to provide the educational needs of the middle school (Grooms, 1967). "A new middle

school (best developed in new building programs, although it could be accomplished by modifying the present junior high school structures), should serve several purposes" (Alexander, 1995, p. 23). "Characteristics and needs of young adolescents are best met in schools that have facilities designed expressly for them" (Hansen & Hearn, 1971, p. 21). The middle school needs a facility to accommodate for art, music, science, industrial arts, home making, library services, and physical education, all of which require larger rooms and functional equipment (Kindred & Associates, 1968; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). With the accommodations, teachers will be able to instruct the early adolescents with adequate resources at their disposal.

G. Stanley Hall laid down the foundations for the assumption that a separate school needed to exist for the adolescent (Beane, 1999b). This developmental pattern continued as the middle school took shape.

> The intermediate school should neither be a higher version of the elementary school nor a miniature senior high school. It should possess an organization and program of its own, especially adapting to the needs of the preadolescent and early adolescent pupils, that will help them make a smooth, untroubled transition form childhood to adolescence. (Kindred & Associates, 1968, p. 55)

The middle school has taken on a different form than that of the junior high. "The middle school is more than buildings and facilities; it is an idea, a concept, a belief, that such a school can best educate children who need that kind of attention, teaching, and learning which this program best provides" (Hansen & Hearn, 1971, p. 22).

An interesting perspective that occurred frequently or was suggested as the middle school evolved is the idea of an ungraded institution (Alexander, 1995; Eichhorn,

1966; Kindred & Associates, 1968; DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). Pupils would be assigned specific groups or houses, thus formulating a school within as school concept. The group or house assignment would be based upon prior experience and knowledge of subject matter. The approach would give students the responsibility in their learning, giving them power in their educational endeavors. "While plans on this nature have existed for many years, they are being reexamined and improved so that the pupils can progress in keeping with their knowledge, skill and understanding" (Kindred & Associates, 1968, p. 36).

Adolescent Development Practices in the Middle School

Again, as the middle school developed, a great deal of concern about individual differences was a driving motivator. "The middle school youngster is unique in his development pattern. He is desperately searching for truth of self and seeking recognition as an individual" (DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklw, 1970, p. 62). This new direction looked very closely to the psychological patterns of individuals of this age. In conjunction with middle school development, new studies were being conducted on the psychological development of these students, known as "transescents." The stage in which the transescent develops is referred to as "transescence."

> [Transescence is] the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the transescent designation is based on the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the puberty cycle to the

> time in which the body gains a practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes. (Eichhorn, 1966, p. 3)

Clearly, Eichhorn recognized the difference in each individual and understood the concept of the middle school. By recognizing the needs of the individual, acknowledging that they develop at different rates, and are experiencing changes socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually, Eichhorn was able to classify students from the fifth through eighth grade into a developmental category and a common institution that could provide for their needs.

An understanding of these individuals is necessary in order to make and create a successful transition to a middle school. This youngster is in need of a school environment with programs that are different in climate and atmosphere, other than the unique functions and directions of the elementary school and not as complex as the high school (DeVita, Pumerantz, & Wilklow, 1970). The question that remains then is what are these needs and what makes this individual so special? Through careful study and analysis, a considerable amount of recommendations have been made to help direct the instructional design of the middle school.

Psychological needs that were repeatedly addressed by the psychologists and researchers in middle school education included physical, mental, social, and emotional needs. These needs were explicitly identified, with an emphasis on adolescent development.

Eichhorn, along with others, identified changes in physical attributes that affect the developmental process of the transescent. In his findings, Eichhorn stated that the adolescent of the early 1900s were further behind in their advancement towards

adulthood than those of the time (Eichhorn, 1966). This trend seemed to continue, as adolescents seem to challenge educators today (Erb, 1999). This physical stature of development, along with the external and internal pressures for children which they have little control, creates anxiety, tension, and pressure for them as they attempt to conform to the psychosocial status of their environment (Eichhorn, 1966; Grooms, 1967; Kindred & Associates, 1968). Prescott characterized this area of great concern by stating: "Currently, many school people seem to feel that the child is a mechanism and that learning occurs in a child chiefly as a result of something that is done to him from the outside" (cited in Eichhorn, 1966, p. 23). This suggestion impresses that the educator needs to look to the adolescent as the driving force for instruction and education, and is not to be driven and derailed into a volcano of turmoil.

In reference to the mental growth of the adolescent, it is important to recognize the variable amount of mental developmental capacity that could arise in a classroom (Hoose & Strahan, 1989). "The richness of the experiences to which a learner is exposed appears to have a direct relation to the rate and extent of his cognitive development" (Eichhorn, 1966, p. 39). Kindred exemplified this statement by inferring that "each boy and girl in an intermediate school must find sufficient challenges to make full use of growing mental ability; he must be offered learning experiences that are purposeful and stimulating" (Kindred & Associates, 1968, p. 56). The daily intellectual challenges that an adolescent encounters should not only challenge him, but also challenge the instructor, as to encourage bilateral intellectual growth. It was suggested that the process of memorization and basic acceptance of ideas be replaced by creative research activities that encourage the learner to go beyond the "square-ness" of the classroom to experience

thinking at higher levels (Kindred & Associates, 1968). This can be accomplished through discovery of relationships as they are extended to larger generalizations and concepts.

Finally, in the realm of the social and emotional aspects of adolescent development, the middle school provides a more viable atmosphere than that of the junior high (Hoose & Strahan, 1989). The environment in which the adolescent is exposed to is an external force that a youngster has to adapt to, even though it uncontrollable by him (Eichhorn, 1966). The degree at which the adolescent then adjusts to the environmental changes "…affects his personal development as well as the development of society" (Eichhorn, 1966, p. 56).

The issue of sexual development brings about the greatest turmoil in the life of the adolescent (Hansen & Hearn, 1971). The confusing nature of sexual development and interests in thereof, compound the emotional adjustments in the life of the adolescent (Grooms, 1967; Hansen & Hearn, 1971). Not only is this an emotional adjustment, but it also becomes a physical encumbrance as the student develops (Hansen & Hearn, 1971). These issues must be addressed and understood by the institution and its personnel. John H. Lounsbury, a strong advocate for middle school reform, so elegantly stated:

> The middle school movement is built on the realities of human growth and development. Its concepts and their advocacy, without exception, grow out of what we know about the nature and needs of early adolescents and how they learn. It is therefore incumbent on any who seek to understand the middle school to be fully cognizant of the unique nature of young people in this special period of life. (Cited in Hoose & Strahan, 1989, p. v)

Middle School Challenges

These psychological developmental issues of physical, mental, social, and emotional awareness of the adolescent were driving issues that encompassed the middle school movement. This movement has encountered challenges along the way, being personified as the "…feel-good institution that leave young adolescents unprepared for the intellectual demands of high school and college" (Pardini, 1998, p. 11). In rebuttal to such a bold statement, new studies which validate the existence of the middle school movement, identified by University of Wisconsin researchers Valerie E. Lee and Julia B. Smith, found that "…student achievement, measured both by grades and standardized test scores, was higher in schools that had more highly integrated – less departmentalized – curricula" (Pardini, 1998, p. 38). "Researchers found that students in school that seriously pursued that middle school concept with high fidelity over a number of years fared better on measures of both academic achievement and social behavior" (Beane, 1999a, p. 4). These two measures suggest that the middle school philosophy is still headed in the right direction.

As all of the new changes occurred, critics have speculated about the validity of a new institution. Early criticisms of the middle school consisted of the insurmountable amount of time it would take to make the transition from junior high to middle school, along with the uncertainty about the maturation of fifth and sixth graders (Kindred & Associates, 1968). Other criticisms included the additional money to construct or reconstruct a building, along with training teachers about adolescents, and that the middle school was just simply a transplant of the junior high and the upper elementary grades (Kindred & Associates, 1968). In time, some of the "pioneer" middle schools were under

sharp criticism in the time of declining enrollments, the shifting of educational preferences, and the financial budget crunches (Kohurt, 1980). These criticisms have inadvertently helped strengthen the middle school movement, as reformation of the middle school is continuously proceeding forward. The criticisms have been addressed with positive regards, resulting in progressive rationale in favor of the middle school movement (Beane, 1999b).

Ideal Middle School Model(s)

In efforts to clarify the middle school philosophy of today, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's Task Force devised eight principals, known as the *Turning Points,* for transforming the education of young adolescents (Takanishi & Hamburg, 1997). As recorded by Anthony W. Jackson, the principals that were recommended include:

1. Large middle grade schools are divided into smaller communities for learning.
2. Middle grade schools transmit a core of common knowledge to all students.
3. Middle grade schools are organized to ensure success for all students.
4. Teachers and principals have a major responsibility and power to transform middle grade schools.
5. Teachers for the middle grades are specifically prepared to teach young adolescents.
6. Schools promote good health; the education and health of young adolescents are inextricably linked.
7. Families are allied with school staff through mutual respect, trust, and communication.

8. Schools and communities are partners in educating young adolescents.

(Takanishi & Hamburg, 1997, p. 15-16)

These principals are the result of "…integrating current research knowledge with the considered opinions of eminent researchers, educators, policymakers, and advocates for children and youth" (Takanishi & Hamburg, 1997, p. 15). This is a validation of adolescent development as it pertains to educational expectations and premises of today.

To further encapsulate the necessary elements of an ideal middle school, the "true" middle school will have evidence of the characteristics prescribed by the National Middle School Association compiled in the document *This We Believe*. The essential elements consist of:

1. Educators with knowledge about and committed to young adolescents
2. A balanced curriculum based on the needs of young adolescents
3. A range of organizational arrangements on schedule and classes
4. Varied instructional strategies that engage all learners
5. A full exploratory program
6. Comprehensive advising and counseling programs
7. Continuous progress for students who are undergoing continuous growth
8. Evaluation procedures compatible with the nature of young adolescents
9. Cooperative planning time between professionals
10. A positive school environment that encourages a "family" relationship.

(National Middle Level Association, 1992, p. 14-24)

The middle school must demonstrate all of the essential elements to be considered an "ideal" middle school that services the needs of the adolescents (National Middle Level

Association, 1992). All members involved in maintaining the "true" middle school must work cooperatively and be dedicated to the adolescent. The implementation of such tasks may become taxing. By maintaining a centralized focus on the developmental patterns of the adolescent, the ideal middle school will prevail.

As time has transpired throughout the middle school movement, criticisms have been evaluated numerous times, but are refuted with great success. As Alexander stated in 1968 "…[the] effective middle school must always be undergoing revitalization or they will cease to be alive, growing, and meaningful places for learning" (cited in George, Weast, Jones, Priddy, & Allred, 2000, p. 11). This statement ended up being ahead of its time, as it still pertinent today. Because of the issues of budgetary crunches and the public view of the "feel-good" institution, the middle school concept is under constant scrutiny (Erb, 2000). The middle schools, as Erb, editor of the *Middle School Journal*, emphatically states, "…represent an improvement over the inadequate junior highs that they replaced, but now is the time to make them even better for the students they serve" (Erb, 2000, p. 2).

> For all of the bashing that the middle school concept has taken in recent months, we do have it right! While we may not have always had the will to *do* it right, we know what we need to do to reduce alienation, despair, and ultimately violence among adolescents. Let us get on with the task of creating small communities for learning that ensure success for all students. (Erb, 1999, p. 2)

CHAPTER THREE

Conclusions, Analyses, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter contains conclusions, analyses, and recommendations on the development, roles, and philosophical rationale of the junior high school and middle school and their affect on adolescent development. The conclusion portion reviews the major apparent aspects that distinguish differences and similarities between the junior high school and middle school. At the same time, a critical analysis will be presented to delineate their importance to adolescent developmental practices. Finally, recommendations are made concerning the educational prowess of the junior high and the middle school.

Conclusions & Analyses

Through the research in this study, it was evident that the roles, development, and philosophical trends of both the junior high and the middle school were distinct structures. Each system addressed specific concerns in educational development, but ultimately focused on the adolescent.

The junior high emerged as the transitional bridge between the elementary school and the high school. Its developmental course of action originally addressed the needs of the school system. One of the driving factors that led the junior high movement was the high level of educational dropouts. The school system recognized that the individuals it was established to service were not obliging to receive the service. Students did not see a purpose in education, as it became a dreadful occupation that filled up their time. School

and the work that it required had little or no meaning. Educators assembled to address the issues present in educational society.

As committees formed to formulate educational resolves about the issues, many recommendations were presented to reconcile the problems. It seemed to these committees that special attention needed to be taken about the structure in education. Committee members felt that the 8-4 structure was disabling the desire in students to reach the secondary level of education. As recommendations were put into practice, alternative ideas were presented. Eventually, the 6-3-3 structure emerged as the educational protocol. This structure reorganized the elementary and high school so that the first six grades were in the elementary and the last three grades were in the high school. The junior high then encompassed those in the seventh, eighth, and ninth. Such a division occurred in hopes of encouraging the young adolescent to continue their educational endeavors.

In relationship to the development of the 6-3-3 structure, addressing the needs of the adolescent emerged into the arena, as psychologists and educational specialists recommended the course of action. As a result, specific functions were developed that helped educate and personalize the educational directives of the junior high, so that the adolescent could contribute to society in purposeful manners. These functions, at least in theory and to some extent in practice, showed the adolescent the importance of contributing to society through educational objectives.

Evidence abounds to the success in the junior high fulfilling its initial objective of encouraging students to stay in school. Such evidence includes structural improvements, along with more students staying in school. An external contribution to

the success of the junior high movement included advancements in social-economic status of the people it served. Unfortunately, the junior high emerged as a "junior" school to the high school. Not all of its initial intentions were adhered to as it developed as a third institution in our K-12 educational system. The junior high became a dumping ground for instructors who had little or no education in teaching the adolescent. Educationally speaking, it became a departmentalized, impersonal, athletic driven institution with no specific focus on the individuals it was established to serve. Values changed as a result and the public, administrators, and students challenged educators to reorganize the system.

With a new aim and direction, the middle school philosophy emerged to address the needs of the "transescent." This educational premise did not focus on the needs of the school, but the needs of the individual it serviced. Educational specialists recognized the necessity to revamp the "school in the middle" so that it would address the needs of the transescent. Psychologists and educational specialists realized that the transescent was a fragile individual that had specific requirements. Focusing on physical, emotional, and social aspects of the individual from ages 10-14 became a primary focus. This new age distinction altered the grade levels of concentration. Grades five through eight, with the elimination of grade nine, became a primary foci as educational specialists reconstructed the "school in the middle." New studies showed that the transescent was not the same individual that the junior high serviced for fifty years. A deeper understanding of the adolescent, along with new technologies and educational approaches, appeared into the picture of the educational system. As a result, the central aim of educating and providing services for administrators, teachers, and school personnel about adolescent development

accounts for a majority of the middle school movement success. Focusing on the needs of the adolescent evolved as an effective way of educating students "in the middle."

As with most educational movements, the public and "nay sayers" acquire apprehension about "change," resulting in criticism about institutional objectives. The criticisms that eventually arose became the driving force that helped strengthen the middle school movement. In conjuction it is still under scrutiny today. As Alexander expressed in 1968, "…[the] effective middle school must always be undergoing revitalization or they will cease to be alive, growing, and meaningful places for learning" (cited in George, Weast, Jones, Priddy, & Allred, 2000, p. 11). Focusing on what is best for the student is in direct relation to the astounding success of the middle school movement. Making the educational process part of their lives, without become as stagnant as "mill pond," will result in positive effects in action and reaction.

As the researcher took upon the venture of this document, preconceived ideals existed that both institutions would be distinguishably different. As the course of research showed, the two institutions imperatively resembled each other in service and central focus. The change in philosophy and adhesion to the philosophy has apparently made the distinction between the junior high and the middle school. The educational philosophy that the junior high initially adopted was mimicked by the middle school concept. The middle school concept decisively delineated its purpose to the public and administrators by addressing the needs of the learner.

As transcribed in this document, the ideological development of the initial junior high and the middle school inadvertently share the same value, that of assisting the educational endeavors of the adolescent. The major difference in their organization rests

upon the developmental practices that administrators, teachers, and school personnel adopted. The junior high school was initially developed to give students a chance for educational success. The middle school, on the other hand, was developed to service the student, letting he/she drive the "educational vehicle", instead of being driven by an established institution. Some may argue the audacity of such a premise, but the evidence exists that shows the legitimacy in educating the adolescent. The school system is ultimately providing a service to its clients. Just like in the business world, sometimes you need to let your "customer" drive your institution so that they can gain the benefit from your service.

In reality, the middle school concept is not just a change in name, but also a philosophical change that includes well-needed adaptations for adolescent developmental practices. The philosophical aspect of adolescent development is evident in the formation and function of the middle school. A central focus on that of the student is the basis of the middle school philosophy and role. Evidence proliferates in demonstrating the effectiveness of the middle school on adolescent development and success. Research of more that 420 schools involved in a longitudinal study of middle school reform found that "higher language arts, mathematics, and reading scores were closely correlated with the degree to which schools had successfully implemented the *Turning Points* recommendations" (Pardini, 1998, p. 38). Even though the criticisms exist, the philosophy is consistent with the psychological development of the adolescent.

From this premise, recommendations are presented that address the concerns of some middle school institutions that may be contemplating the transition back to the

developmental format of the junior high school. Some schools in rural school districts may be considering this alternative in order to operate under restricted financial crunches.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of the researcher for school districts to critically analyze their present situation before revisiting the philosophy of the junior high school. By restructuring the institution to facilitate a remedy of budgetary restraints without looking at the potential drawbacks could be devastating.

A disputable argument that could be presented by the public and school administrators is that the junior high could be successful in today's culture. In order to do so, it would have to follow the original guidelines established in the junior high development. This in turn could save money for districts that are under tight financial struggles. To make that transition, the junior high would house the same type of students, but would not focus on providing all of the educational opportunities that could be offered in a middle school building. Redirection towards the school facility and its function would occur, as multiple rooms and resources would be limited. Specialists in middle school education may be limited, as those exclusively trained in adolescent development would drift towards institutions that address the adolescent needs and provide opportunities to do so. Do students "in the middle" really need to have a specialized institution that focuses on their needs instead of the needs of the school? In what ways can advocates refocus the direction in order to operate a school that services the students "in the middle?" These questions, along with many others, need direct attention by school personnel before any fateful decisions are made.

Focusing on the preparedness of the young students and their role in society should be of top priority. These young children are our future. The educational standard of meeting the needs of the students should be first at hand for all school institutions. Each institution exists to provide a service to its clients. This service needs to conform to those who are receiving the benefits.

The middle school research shows that students show improvement in achievement, self-concept and attitude towards school (Kohut, 1980). The traditional learning that occurred in the junior high did not show the improvements in learning and self-concept such as the middle school. As the junior high emerged into the educational culture, a majority of the students were segregated into units that were established on the basis of intellect. This type of homogenous grouping resulted in negative attitudes in self-concept and worth. Under the middle school concept, heterogeneous grouping is practiced consistently, resulting in more positive outcomes in students.

In addition, focusing on the preparation of its administration and instructors should also be on the priority list. Providing teachers and administrators the appropriate education to address the needs of the adolescent should be seriously measured and practiced. In this manor, the whole premise of the middle school concept can be sustained.

Finally, looking at cost saving alternatives for educational institutions should be considered, prior to the reorganization of middle school back to the junior high. The possibility of "melting" some of the junior high concept into the present system could be an alternative. Such concepts could include reduction in available space, shortening up exploratory opportunities, reassigning staff, and sharing of educational resources with the

elementary or senior high. These possibilities could be introduced without having a devastating impact on the middle school structure. Keeping the adolescent first and providing opportunities to meet his/her necessities is essential for a successful institution. Redirect institutional directives to those of the individual who's served. With that in mind, the middle school philosophy will thrive.

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