IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS CRITICAL TO STUDENTS CHOOSING PENTA CAREER CENTER

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

May 2008

Committee:

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Abstract

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Career-technical education is a system of life-long learning designed to prepare youth and adults to meet the ever changing demands of the 21st Century workplace and post-secondary education. Career-technical education has evolved greatly since the vocational education days of inception. The purpose of this research was to identify factors influencing the decision of Rossford High School students to choose career-technical education offered at Penta Career Center.

Research was conducted using a researcher designed survey; two separate surveys were created, a parent survey and a student survey. The surveys contained both fixed and open-ended questions and were made available to all Rossford High School juniors and their parents through Survey Monkey.

The survey results concluded that students are most influenced by parents, friends and teachers. However, the influence from these sources was not of facts, rather, they are individual perceptions; many which are outdated.
I dedicate this thesis to those individuals who are passionately devoted to career-technical education
Acknowledgements

I would like to extend sincere appreciation to those who have played an important role in the completion of this thesis. First, I extend thanks to my committee Dr. Donna K. Trautman, Dr. Terry Herman and Jane Music. These truly professional women were instrumental in bridging the gaps that were unforeseen; they helped keep and pace the course in this educational process. I also offer a special thanks to Dr. Kathy Hoff, who was instrumental in the beginning stages of my thesis process.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the help of the students who assisted me in gathering data; your support did not go unnoticed!

Finally, I would like extend a thank you to Kim Strickland who has been the most consistent support throughout this entire process. Thank you!
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Chapter I: Introduction

Over the past 30 years, career-technical education has evolved significantly from the days of providing vocational technical training for various trade occupations. Today, career-technical education is a system of life-long learning designed to prepare youth and adults to meet the ever changing demands of the 21st Century workplace and post-secondary education. Unfortunately, the stigma of providing only vocational training for the trades is still present today.

Context of the Problem

It is estimated that the average American worker may change careers up to eight times before retirement (Penta Career Center Impacting Our Communities, 2002). As the American labor market continues to change with an increasing need for workers that are able to compete in a global economy, Career Technical Education has become more critical to the success of our local and national economy.

American high schools provide education for the broad spectrum of students. A number of schools, including career centers, stress the importance of choosing education beyond high school graduation. The most common recommendation to a high school student is college; but what about those students who are not going to college? Or are not sure about college? Furthermore, what about those students who begin college, but drop out for a variety of reasons? Data shows that of every 100 students who complete their
freshman year in college, only 57 return for their sophomore year. Also, the time spent in college can be lengthy; nearly 40 percent of college students complete a four-year degree in five years. Furthermore, only 20 percent of those who complete their degrees actually get jobs related to their college training (Penta Career Center Impacting Our Communities, 2002).

While college is a definite choice for some high school graduates, it is not the norm for the majority of the workforce. Although the American economy continues to change; workers who are trained in a specific skill are still the fastest growing group.

Of the jobs available in 1950, only 20 percent were professional, while another 20 percent were skilled and a large 60 percent were unskilled. Jobs available today still only require 20 percent at the professional level, while skilled jobs have increased to 65 percent, leaving unskilled positions at 15 percent (Penta Career Center Impacting Our Communities, 2002).

Today’s global economy continues to change. Preparing for the future by ensuring proper career training and workforce development is essential to each individual, particularly those in high school.

Career development is a growing concern in vocational education systems. Most vocationally-based schools have changed their titles from vocational schools to career-technical centers. Awareness of this change, however, is slow to those who are not in direct connection of the latest employment and economic needs. Many teachers, parents, employers and
counselors direct youth based on the vocational education of the past; they counsel from their own outdated perspectives and opinions. Therefore, many high school students are making critical career decisions without having sufficient information. Research must be conducted to determine how to promote accurate information to ensure career success.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was to identify factors influencing the decision of Rossford High School students to choose career-technical education offered at Penta Career Center. Although a number of students utilize the Career Center, there are still large numbers who elect to remain at their home school to prepare for life beyond high school. Underlying factors could possibly be a result of insufficient or invalid information on the part of the people who influence the decisions of these students.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the amount of influence parents have on their child’s educational decisions.

2. To identify the amount and source of information students have about career-technical education.

3. To identify the perceptions of vocational and career-technical education by the students and parents.
4. To capture a collective understanding of what determining factors influence students’ decisions to attend Penta Career Center.

Significance of the Study

There are a number of students who greatly benefit from attending Penta Career Center. Many career centers provide a variety of options for students choosing to attend. Not only do they provide programs in areas such as arts and communication, business and management, environmental and agricultural systems, health and human services, they also incorporate additional high school services like community-based job training, career based intervention, transitioning preparation and job placement. Upon completion of a traditional one or two-year high school program, career-technical students receive a career passport displaying their competence and individual achievement, in their specific program; many programs offer business and industry certifications or college credit. These are in addition to the diploma they receive from their home school. Furthermore, the job skills students obtain while attending Penta Career Center allow them to hold decent paying jobs while they attend a college to achieve additional post-secondary education.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study included:

• That participants have internet access;
• That all those surveyed use information and communication technologies;
• That all responses are voluntary, truthful and unbiased;
• That all participants will respect the integrity of the research by submitting only one online survey;

Summary

Each year approximately 1,500 juniors and seniors rely on Penta Career Center for the training and experience necessary for a successful start in a chosen career field. As a result, the career-technical students are employed at a higher rate than students who choose college prep or general high school courses at home schools (Penta Career Center, 2002).

Investing in the future of our labor force requires educating parents and students about the many educational options available. Utilizing the resources available results in success for employees, employers and the economy as a whole. Currently, there are an estimated 145 million jobs available in the United States. Skilled jobs comprise 65%, while only 21% require a baccalaureate degree. Emphasis needs to be placed in the areas of greatest need. Penta Career Center is focused on success of those areas of greatest need.
Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined.

Penta Career Center - a career-technical career center in Northwest Ohio that serves high school and adult learners from 16 school district in five adjacent counties.

Career-Technical - a term used in preparation of employability skills combined with on the job training in the practical, industrial, mechanical arts or applied sciences.

Career Development - the development of career paths, training and educating various components of career paths. Understanding how skills abilities values interests and goals contribute to career success.

Career Passport - represents a customized portfolio developed for secondary and full-time adult career-technical workforce development completers. Includes space for documents such as: resume, letters of recommendation, list of competencies achieved, certificate of program completion, student grade transcript, other employability credentials.

Vocational Education - instructional activities designed to prepare youths and adults, in an efficient and timely fashion, to make informed career choices and to successfully enter, compete, and advance in a changing work world.

Tech Prep Student - student who, beginning in grade 11 and continuing through the associate degree or two year certificate program, is enrolled in the academic, occupational and employability competency delivery system as
identified by a sanctioned Tech Prep demonstration site.
Chapter II: Review of Literature

Vocational education has been a standard in education for centuries. Vocational education, as funded by the Perkins Act, has received much attention of late. Post high school unemployment has forced education to take a hard look at the theoretical perspectives pertaining to school-to-work linkages (Ainsworth & Roscigno, 2005). For instance, who is placed into vocational education? Are certain subgroups steered toward vocational education? What are the factors influencing career paths in vocational education?

The following literature contains the history of vocational education along with specific details outlining Penta County Vocational School, now known as Penta Career Center.

History of Vocational Education

Vocational education is traced back to the beginning of mankind. When a new discovery was made or increased, even in the slightest, it became necessary to disseminate that knowledge and put it to use. Most of the knowledge was passed one generation to the next and much of the time it was among family members or community. This has been a tradition among the races for centuries (Hawkins, Prosser & Wright, 1951). Thus, the vocational education that exists in modern time has its roots deeply embedded in the past. “In one sense, at least, we are not dealing with a new thing, but with extensions and developments of a system of training long in use” (Hawkins, Prosser & Wright, 1951, p. 3).
Just past the turn of the twentieth century, the importance of vocational education became a priority. One example, from a speech Senator Carroll S. Page of Vermont delivered in 1912, defended a vocational education bill:

People are beginning to realize that boys and girls must be taught to earn a living and that they cannot spend their entire time in studying so-called classical subjects. All children must be educated for their ethical side and must be taught about higher things of life, but they must also be taught that they must support themselves and be given lessons in how to earn money. Our schools should be well balanced, with both these ideas kept well to the front (Copa & Bently, 1992, p. 18).

One of the earliest influences of vocational education was demonstrated with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. This act focused on the role of supervised work experience and placement. It provided funds for the salaries of teachers, supervisors and directors of agriculture and the training of those positions. Federal funds were specified, and state and local districts were required to match the funds dollar for dollar (Copa & Bently, 1992). The primary subjects taught in the beginning of vocational education were home economics and industrial trades subjects.

Vocational Education came of age through federal assistance during the 1920s and 1930s. Federal guidelines were developed and called for states to create state boards to administer the federal funds appropriately. One of the
most important functions of the federal legislation was to stimulate development of vocational education in the states. Additional acts were introduced during this time causing the considerable growth in vocational education. Both the George-Reed Act and the George-Ellsy Act provided increased vocational education funding. The George-Dean Act also added federal funding, more importantly though; this act recognized the adult learner and brought to light the support of evening and part-time programs (Copa, B. & Bently, C., 1992).

Vocational education in the 1940s was influenced by war. The major focus was to support the war effort by providing training through special funding and programs. In the late forties, however, the country faced a major problem in training those who returned from war. There were many issues to be addressed, including a more diverse student body, inequity in educational opportunity and enrollment increases due to the baby boom. It was time for an overhaul. By the 1950s the role of vocational education was in transition. With jobs plentiful in the industrial world, occupationally specific people placed less attention on college; rather, they were for occupationally specific tasks. The focus of this decade was to direct vocational education toward noncollege bound individuals by offering preparation as skilled technicians (Copa & Bently, 1992).

Due to the changing nature of work, caused by technological change, a review of federal legislation supporting vocational education was ordered by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. It was declared that with the birth of technology, vocational education needed a futuristic path. A review board was
put together and ultimately expanded vocational education in many new
directions. Recommendations called for expanded high school programs, short-
term courses for youth and adults, full-time adult programs, individualized
programs and support services for the handicapped and disadvantaged. The
outcome of the recommendations of the review board resulted in the Vocational
Education Amendments of 1963, signed into law by President Lyndon B.
Johnson. Additionally, funding for vocational education was significantly
increased with the passing of these amendments. The sixties proved to be a
crucial developmental stage for vocational education. It was also during this time
that facilities were created to specifically house the vocational programs. The
success of vocational education was greatly empowered by federal government.
Many additional amendments were added throughout the 1970s to secure more
federal funding for the growing needs. Vocational education was taught
throughout the K-12 system, although concentrated in grades 10-12, in
postsecondary colleges and institutes, and in part-time adult programs (Copa &
Bently, 1992). By the end of the 1970s, the basic establishment of vocational
education was firm. Some of those basic establishments of the 70’s are still
echoed today throughout many vocational education programs.

The next two decades saw rapid change due to advances in technology.
Even as early as the 1970s, Industrial Arts contemplated changing names to
Industrial Technology. There was a perception that students were tracked into
certain kinds of work, which became a common criticism of vocational
education. The 1980s marked a time of total educational reform. Vocational education’s comfortable niche in the delivery of job training within public schools began to erode. With the development of the increased competition and the global markets, it became clear that vocational education was in dire need of reform. Critics charged, “vocationalism in education would have to change or wither away” (Lakes, 1997, p. 8).

Basic skills were no longer the focus. It became clear that all educators must direct their attention to high-level skills, not just basic skills (Ohio Council on Vocational Education, 1988). The Carl D. Perkins Act, signed in 1984, was introduced to insure higher-level skills for the global market; it was recently reauthorized in October of 1998. The purpose of Perkins is to provide individuals with the academic and technical skills needed to succeed in a knowledge and skills-based economy. Today, Perkins supports career and technical education that prepares its students both for postsecondary education and the careers of their choice. States and local systems embraced the new accountability requirements of the 1998 Perkins law.

_Penta Vocational History_

In September of 1965 Penta County Joint Vocational School began serving students from 16 member school districts. The original number was 19, however after school consolidation, the following became, and still are, the districts Penta serves: Anthony Wayne, Benton-Carroll Salem, Bowling Green, Eastwood, Elmwood, Genoa, Lake, Maumee, North Baltimore, Northwood, Otsego, Perrysburg, Rossford, Springfield, Swanton and Woodmore. These school
districts are located among five northwest Ohio counties, which is where Penta, meaning five, derived its name (Penta County Board, 1990).

When Penta County Joint Vocational School opened in 1965, it served 995 students within a 90,000 square foot, three story building. Since then, Penta has added 278,822 square feet of space and a number of programs to accommodate the ever-growing needs of the student. The original 24 programs have been reviewed, revised, updated and expanded to help better prepare students for the ever-changing demands of the job market. In addition to the programs offered to high school students, Penta has been a strong leader in adult education. Since 1965, Penta has trained both high school students and adults for life long career success. More than 21,900 high school students have attended Penta and even more adults, 29,800 have taken advantage of continuing their education to further themselves in the job market (Penta Career Center, 2002). Adult education has always been a part of Penta; technical college courses were offered between 1966 and 1972 prior to the opening to the Michael J. Owens Technical College (Penta County Board, 1990).

**Penta County Joint Vocational Center to Penta Career Center**

Throughout the development of vocational education the needs of the economy have changed. In order to keep pace with the economy and the needs of the workers in it, Penta County Joint Vocational School changed to Penta Career Center.
Penta Career Center’s mission to educate high school and adult students in occupational program transitioning successfully from school to work gained importance. Penta Career Center is committed to meeting the lifelong career education needs of high school students and adults in the community. A variety of hands-on training programs are available for high school students in areas such as Arts & Communications; Business & Management; Industrial & Engineering Systems; Environmental & Agricultural Systems; Health Services; and Human Services. For adult students Penta offers programs for workers who want to prepare or retrain for a new career and as well as those who want to enter or reenter the workforce. The purpose of Penta is to help individuals advance in the changing world of work, to recognize the necessity of continuous education and move along a career path that is successful (Penta Career Center, 2002, p. 8).

The New Penta Career Center

In October 2005 Penta Career Center entered a new chapter of its history by breaking grounds for a new, state of the art facility. Project completion is expected in the summer of 2008. The new center will be located in Perrysburg Township on property approximately two miles from its existing location. The 522,000 square foot building will be a stunning visual from Interstate 75 as well as easy access for student, faculty and visitors. Penta Career Center is located on a 150-acre site bound by Interstate 75, Buck Road, Bates Road and Lime City Road. The building will consist of a center core and three wings for career-
technical labs. The three-story center core, with a glass wall is the focal point of the new facility. This area consists of a student commons area, food service operation, a 600-seat auditorium, administrative offices, student services, culinary arts program, Culinary Connection restaurant, multipurpose room, academic classrooms and media center.

There will be a total of three wings in addition to the center core; they are divided into sections A, B and C. Section A includes Manufacturing and Transportation programs as well as Environmental and Agriculture. Section B includes the constructional trade programs and section C is a combination Business and Management, Health Services, Human Services, Physical Fitness, Special Education, Adult Education and the Board office (Penta Career Center, 2002). The new facility contains 97 classrooms and labs and has the capacity for 2,000 students, which is 600 more than Penta currently serves.

Career-technical education has evolved significantly from the days of vocational training for trade occupations. Vocational Education has been and will continue to be a major contributor to the success of the job market; it also has been a key factor in career success for those individuals who have benefited from attending Penta.
Chapter III: Methodology

The information contained in this chapter consists of a problem restatement, the design of the research, characteristics of the population, data collection procedures, and a proposed budget.

Restatement of the Problem

The problem of the study was to identify factors influencing the decision of Rossford High School students to choose career-technical education offered at Penta Career Center.

Research Design

Research was conducted using a researcher designed survey. The parent survey (appendix A) and student survey (appendix B) contained both fixed and open-ended questions and were open to all Rossford High School juniors and their parents.

A pilot study was conducted using a sample of five randomly selected high school juniors and their parents. Participants in the pilot study were asked to complete the survey in addition to informally critiquing it by providing constructive comments. The information gathered from the pilot study provided suggestions for reformat.

The data from the pilot study was compiled and statistically researched to assure that the final survey provided statistically sound results. Revisions were made, based on the data collected, and the suggestions made by the participants.
The final surveys were placed on an internet website, where all 146 juniors and their parents had access to participate. A consent form (appendix C) as well as a letter (appendix D) was distributed with an explanation of the process.

*Characteristics of the Study Population*

The population chosen for this study consisted of Rossford High School Juniors and their parents. Rossford is currently one of 16 school districts that Penta Career Center serves. It is a comprehensive high school with 635 students in grades 9 through 12; 129 students attend Penta Career Center. Rossford school district is a suburban community of approximately 6,000 residents located southeast of Toledo on the banks of the Maumee River. It also extends into the countryside. The post high school plans of the most recent graduating class were 36% intend to obtain a bachelor degree while 30% intend to obtain an associates degree. Thirty-two percent of the most recent graduating class intend to seek full time employment immediately after high school while two percent seek employment with the United States Armed Forces (appendix E).

*Data Collection*

The surveys were designed to gather data to address the following:

- Attitudes of students and parents toward Penta Career Center;
- Factors which influence students choices to attend Penta Career Center;
- Knowledge of Penta Career Center Education programs and services.
Protection of Human Subjects

All efforts have been made to assure that no human subjects will be harmed during this research process. The Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University has reviewed and approved all appropriate documents prior to implementation (appendix F).

Timeline

To complete this research, there was a significant amount of detailed planning needed. The break down in Table 1 is the overview of the time frame used for this master’s thesis.

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<td>October 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 2008</td>
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Budget

The budget for this research was minimal. The estimated cost included postage, $114.00 for 279 letters requesting student and parent involvement in the surveys. A portion of the cost of the postage was a gift in kind, by Rossford Exempted Village Schools.

Chapter Summary

This chapter included a description of the sample population to be studied, the method that was used to reach the results of understanding the factors that influence Rossford High School sophomores and juniors to attend Penta Career Center. The importance of having the research survey and data collection instrument approved by the Human Subjects Review Board was recognized. The method of collecting data and how the data was analyzed was also discussed.
Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter presents data that was collected to assess the factors that influence high school students’ decision to attend a career center. Two separate surveys were used; one for the sophomore and junior students and one for those students’ parents. Both surveys included a combination of question types, including multiple choice, a rating scale and extended response. Demographic questions from the respondents such as age, educational level, gender, and the relationship between student and parent were included in the survey.

The main purpose of the surveys was to determine the amount of knowledge the participants had about the Career Center and how they ascertained it. This also included gathering information on the personal thoughts of the students and parents regarding the career center and how and or who impacted the influence. In total, the student survey was comprised a total of twelve questions while the parent survey was comprised of thirteen.

Response Rates

Two hundred and seventy eight letters and consensual agreement forms were sent to the parents of all Rossford High School sophomore and juniors. Parents of student of minor status had to agree by signing so that their student could participate in the study. Twenty seven consent agreements were returned. Upon receipt of the consent, the participants were either emailed the address to the online survey or given written instructions as to how to access the surveys. In total, there was a response from nine parents and fifteen students. The survey
was posted online through SurveyMonkey® on October 15, 2007 and was operational for two weeks, ending October 29. The response rate for parents was nine of the eleven who agreed to complete survey. The response rate for students was fifteen of the seventeen who agreed to complete survey.

*Student Survey Results*

Fifteen students responded to the online survey and completed all questions. The following are the result reported for each question.

Fifteen student respondents answered question “What is your current grade level?” Of the fifteen respondents, seven reported a sophomore grade level (or 46.7%) and eight reported a junior’s grade level (or 53.3%). Of the fifteen student respondents, four were male (26.7 %) and eleven were female (73.3%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>n = 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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Table 2. Student Respondent Grade Level

What is your current grade level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Student Respondent Gender

What is your gender?
Fifteen student respondents answered question “What best describes your living arrangement?” Of the fifteen respondents, four students reported they reside within a single parent family (26.7%), four reside within a blended family (26.7%), six reside within a nuclear family (40 %) and one resided with grandparents (6.7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Arrangement</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended family (living with stepparent or legal guardian)</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family (living with birth parents who are still married to each other)</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parent</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Student Respondent Living Arrangements

What describes your living arrangement?

Fifteen student respondents answered question “How much do you know about Penta Career Center?” Of the fifteen respondents, five reported that they knew little about Penta Career Center (33.3%), seven reported they knew some about Penta Career Center (46.7%) and three reported they knew a lot about Penta Career Center (20%).
How much do you know about Penta Career Center?

Fifteen student respondents answered the question “How did you learn about Penta Career Center?” Of the fifteen respondents, three reported that they learned about Penta Career Center in a class (20%) eight reported they learned about Penta Career Center from a guidance counselor (53.3%), one reported they learned about Penta Career Center from a guest presenter (6.7%) and two reported they learned about Penta Career Center from friends (13.3%).

Table 5. Student Respondent Knowledge of Penta Career Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>n = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response % Response Count
n = 15

In a class 20.0% 3
Guidance counselor 53.3% 8
Guest presenter / recruiter 6.7% 1
Friends 13.3% 2
Siblings 6.7% 1
Parents 0.0% 0
Pamphlets 0.0% 0
Fliers / mail 0.0% 0
Table 6. Student Respondent Source of Knowledge

How did you learn about Penta Career Center?

Fifteen student respondents answered the question “Have you ever
visited or participated in activities at Penta Career Center?” Of the fifteen
respondents, 8 indicated they visited or participated in activities at Penta Career
Center (53.3%), while seven had not (46.7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Student Respondent Participation of Activities at Penta

Have you ever visited or participated in activities at Penta Career Center?

“Do you believe this has or will influence your decision to attend Penta
Career Center?” Of the fifteen respondents, eight (53.3%) believed that having
visited or not visited Penta Career Center influenced the decision to attend or
not. Seven (46.6%) do not agree that it had an impact on their influence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Student Respondent Belief of Influence of Activity
Do you believe this has or will influence your decision to attend Penta Career Center?

Fifteen student respondents answered the question “What level of influence do you believe the following people had or have on your decision to attend or not to attend Penta Career Center?” Parents had the highest level of influence (46.7%) on the respondents' decision to attend Penta Career Center. Siblings and friends also had influence on the respondents' decision with 33.3% and 35.7% respectively. Friends of parents were also identified to have no influence 50% of the respondents. Boyfriends and girlfriends were identified as having no influence (53.3%) next to having low and medium (40% combined). Teachers had a medium to high influence (80%). Other acquaintances, which could include, but not limited to, clergy, coaches, counselors and neighbors, were identified as medium influence over all (40%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>parent/guardian</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>46.7% (7)</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>46.7% (7)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>13.3% (2)</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your friends</td>
<td>7.1% (1)</td>
<td>21.4% (3)</td>
<td>35.7% (5)</td>
<td>35.7% (5)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your parents friends</td>
<td>50.0% (7)</td>
<td>42.9% (6)</td>
<td>7.1% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boyfriend /</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0% (3)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
girlfriend (8) (3)
teachers 6.7% (1) 13.3% (2) 53.3% (8) 26.7% (4) 3.00 15
other acquaintances (e.g. clergy, coaches, counselors, neighbors) 20.0% (3) 20.0% (3) 40.0% (6) 20.0% (3) 2.60 15

Table 9. Student Respondent’s Influential Individuals

What level of influence do you believe the following people had or have on your decision to attend or not to attend Penta Career Center?

Fifteen student respondents answered the question “With the new facility being built for Penta Career Center, do you believe this has increased or will increase the influence of choosing to attend Penta Career Center?” Of the fifteen respondents, twelve (80%) indicated that the new Penta facilities greatly increased the influence their choice to attend, three (20%) indicated no influential change.

Response %  Response Count
n = 15
Yes 80.0% 12
No 20.0% 3

Table 10. Student Respondent’s Influence from New Penta Facilities

With the new facility being built for Penta Career Center, do you believe this has increased or will increase the influence of choosing to attend Penta Career Center?
Fifteen student respondents answered the short answer question “When you think of Penta Career Center, what comes to mind?” The majority of the student respondents reported that Penta was an excellent school for students to pursue future career interest. A smaller number of students reported the Career Center as a place for students who need more hands on activity for students who do not plan on attending college. A complete posting of the answers can be found in appendix H.

Fifteen students answered the question “What is your overall opinion of Penta Career Center and how do you believe your opinion has been influenced?” Several student respondents reported a favorable opinion, even though they preferred not to attend. One particular student reported an opinion influenced greatly by their own parents experience “I know that I will never go to Penta. For one, I don’t know what I want to be when I get older yet so I wouldn’t want to go and take a class there and not use it in the future. I also know that my mom went to Penta when she was younger and did not like it and does not recommend me to go there.”

Fifteen students answered the question “What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center?” Several students reported that they have heard Penta is a place where dumb, unmotivated students go because it is considered an easy alternative. One student reported that people make fun of students who attend Penta and often refer to them as “Pentards.” There was an opposite reaction from the previous student reports as well. Several students reported that
they have friends who have been extremely successful, despite the number of students who claim the Career Center to be an easy alternative. A complete list of comments can be found in appendix H.

Parent Survey Results

Nine parents responded to the online survey. The following are the result reported for each question.

Nine parent respondents answered the question “Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution as a high school student?” Of the nine, one (11.1 %) attended Penta Career Center or a like institution as a high school student; eight (88.9 %) had not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Parent Respondent Penta Attendance as High School Student

Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution as a high school student?

Eight of the nine parent respondents answered the question “Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution for adult education classes?” Of the eight, one (12.5%) attended Penta Career Center or a like institution for adult education classes, seven (85.5%) had not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution for adult education classes?

Nine parent respondents answered the question “Do you believe this has or will have influence on your child’s decision to attend Penta Career Center?” Of the nine respondents, one respondent (11.1%) believed their choice in choosing or not choosing Penta Career Center for education had an influence on their child’s decision to attend Penta Career Center; eight (88.9%) did not believe their choice in choosing or not choosing Penta Career Center for education had an influence on their child’s decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Parent Respondent Penta attendance for Adult Education

Table 13: Parent Respondent Level of Influence of Own Penta Involvement

Do you believe this has or will have influence on your child's decision to attend Penta Career Center?

Nine parent respondents answered the question “How much do you believe you know about Penta Career Center?” Six of the parent respondents (66.7%) believed they had some knowledge of Penta Career Center, while three (33.3%) knew a lot about Penta Career Center. None of the parent respondents selected that they knew little about Penta Career Center.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>0.0% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>66.7% 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>33.3% 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Parent Respondent Level of Knowledge about Penta

How much do you believe you know about Penta Career Center?

Nine parent respondents answered the question “What amount of influence do you believe you had or will have on your child in his or her decision to attend Penta Career Center?” One parent respondent (11.1%) believed that they had a little influence on their child’s decision to attend Penta Career Center. Five of the nine parent respondents (55.6%) believed they had some influence on their child’s decision to attend Penta Career Center, while three (33.3%) believed they had a lot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>11.1% 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>55.6% 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>33.3% 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Parent Respondent Level of Influence over Child

What amount of influence do you believe you had or will have on your child in his or her decision to attend Penta Career Center?
Nine parent respondents answered the question “What level do you believe the following people will have or had on your child's decision to attend Penta Career Center?” Each respondent was asked to rate from no influence to a high level of influence on their child’s decision to attend Penta. Results indicated that majority of parents believe that extended family members have a low level of influence (55.6%). The level of influence parents believed siblings had ranged from no influence (44.4%) to medium level influence at (33.3%) influence. The parent response regarding their child’s friends influence indicated the majority (77.8%) had medium influence. The parent response believed that their friends had influence ranging from none (22.2%) to low medium (77.8%). The parents’ perceptions of the boyfriend/girlfriends influence on their child’s decision to attend Penta career center ranged on both ends of the spectrum from a high level (44%) to no influence (33.3%). The parents perceive the teachers had some influence from low (22.2%) to high (55.6%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended family members</td>
<td>11.1% (1)</td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child's friends</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>77.8% (7)</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your friends</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Response %</td>
<td>Response Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend / girlfriend</td>
<td>33.3% (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.1% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.1% (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.4% (4)</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.6% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.2% (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Acquaintances</td>
<td>12.5% (1)</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.5% (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0% (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Parent Respondent Level of Influence from Other Individuals

What level do you believe the following people will have or had on your child's decision to attend Penta Career Center?

Eight parent respondents answered the question “What do you believe is the quality of education at Penta Career Center?” Of the eight parent respondents, three (37.5%) believed that quality of education at Penta Career Center is average. Three (37.5%) additional respondents believed that the quality of education at Penta Career Center is better than average. Two parent respondents (25%) believed that the quality of education at Penta is excellent; none of the parent respondents believed the quality of education at Penta Career Center is poor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better than Average</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17: Parent Respondent Quality of Education

What do you believe is the quality of education at Penta Career Center?

Nine parent respondents answered the open-ended question “When you think of Penta Career Center, what thoughts come to mind?” The general consensus was that Penta Career Center was a reliable source of education, particularly for those students who prefer a hands-on method. Other parents stated that they felt Penta career center was a place for students to go who did not want to attend college, or did not care for traditional high school courses. The full listed results to this question have been included in appendix G.

Nine parents respondents answered the question “What is your overall opinion of Penta Career Center and how or who has influenced this opinion?” This question was posted as an open-ended question on the survey. The overall opinions were that Penta Career Center is an excellent place to gain experience in a career area of choice, particularly for those students who did not want to attend college after high school. One parent respondent reflected on their own high school experience. “When I went to Rossford, it used to have the stigma of being for the troubled kids that didn’t want to be in school, so they got a head start on a trade. Now there are so many options offered in trades and fields that they are graduating more prepared in their field than a non-Penta student.” The documented responses can be found in appendix G.
Nine parent respondents answered the following open-ended question “What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center, and what relation are these people to you?” (friends, your child's teacher, neighbors, family members, etc.) Parent results ranged from hearing from others that Penta Career Center is a place that is greatly valued and a wonder place for an education to being a place where “bad” students go to get job skills. The results can be found in appendix G.

Eight parent respondents answered the question “What is your highest level of education?” Of the eight parent respondents, five reported (62.5%) they had a high school level of education. Three of the eight parent respondents (37.5%) reported they had a master degree level of education, while two parent respondents (2.5%) reported they had some college education. One parent respondent (1.3%) reported they had an associate’s degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Parent Respondent Level of Education

What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center, and what relation are these people to you?
Nine parent respondents answered the question “Within what decade did you graduate from high school?” One parent respondent (11.1%) reported they graduated between the years 1970 – 1979. Seven parent respondents (77.8%) reported they graduated between the years 1980 – 1989. One parent respondent (11.1%) reported they graduated between the years 1990 – 1999.

![Table 19: Parent Respondent Decade of Graduation](image)

Within what decade did you graduate from high school?

Nine parent respondents answered the question “What is your gender?”

Of the nine parent respondents, six (66.7%) report they were females, while three (33.3%) were male.

![Table 20: Parent Respondent Gender](image)
Nine parent respondents answered the question “What relationship best describes you and your child?” Six parent respondents (66.7%) reported they share a biological married parent relationship with their child. Two parent respondents (22.2%) reported they share a biological single parent relationship with their child, while one parent respondent (11.1%) reported a stepparent relationship with their child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological / single parent</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological / married parent</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Guardian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21: Parent Respondent Relationship to Child
What relationship best describes you and your child?

Eight answered the question “Where is your place of residence?” Of the eight parent respondents, six (75%) reported they live within the city limits of Rossford while two respondents (25%) reported they live in a township residence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within Rossford City limits</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Parent Respondent Location of Residence
Where is your place of residence?
Chapter V: Summary, Conclusions & Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the study’s focus and what conclusions can be drawn as a result of the findings. The implications of this data, as well as recommendations for further study will be addressed.

The previous chapter reported the data that was collected for this study. The survey gathered information from two basic groups: Rossford high school junior and sophomore students and their parents. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of students’ choice to attend or not attend Penta Career Center. Two separate surveys were made available online for students and parents who agreed through a consent form to participate. A total of nine parents and fifteen students participated.

Summary

The problem of the study was to identify factors influencing the decision of Rossford High School students to choose career-technical education offered at Penta Career Center. The objectives of the study, as outlined in Chapter One, will serve as a frame work for summarizing and presenting the collected data.

Research Objective 1: To determine the amount of influence parents have on their child’s educational decisions.

Based on the results of the survey, it is evident that the student’s parents, friends and teachers all had influence on his/her decision to attend or not attend Penta Career Center. Student respondents results overwhelmingly concluded that teachers influenced 80% of them at a medium to high level to attend or not
attend Penta, which was the highest combined level reported. Sixty seven percent of the student respondents reported that parent had a medium to high level of influence. Seventy one percent of the student respondents identified their friends having a medium to high level of influence. Interestingly, parent respondents believed that their child’s friends have the overall highest influence, with teachers having the second highest overall level of influence. Parents also believe they have some to a lot of their child’s decision to attend or not attend Penta Career Center.

Parents do indeed have high influence on their child’s decision. Parents model ideas, behaviors and beliefs, all which are absorbed by their child and then are further acted out in the child’s decisions. To be specific, parents have based their perceptions on their very own experiences, “I was always under the understanding that if you wanted to go to college, you didn’t go to Penta” (Appendix G). “When I went to Rossford, it used to have the stigma of being for the troubled kids that didn’t want to be in school so they got a head start in a trade.” (Appendix G). Parents have legal authority over their child’s decisions and with influence such as these, students will continue to make decisions through the people who impact and influence their decision the most: their parents.

Research Objective 2: To identify the amount and source of information students have about Penta Career education.
Twelve of the fifteen student respondents know some information about Penta Career Center; the remaining three, claimed to know a lot about Penta. The students acknowledged that what they know they learned predominately from teachers or guidance counselors. This is an excellent example of how students are making decision, not based on educated decisions to attend the Career Center, but are based upon other people’s perceptions.

Students obtain information from many resources, but how accurate is that information? Parents do not have current or accurate information, such as college credit availability or post secondary options, which are available to students through career technical education.

Educators do have information, however not all faculty and staff have a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of Penta Career Center. Many students are told that if they want to go to college, they should stay on a “college prep” plan at their home school. Career Centers are geared toward preparing students for whatever step comes next in the students plan, their career or additional education, including a college degree.

Research Objective 3: To identify student and parent perceptions about vocational and career-technical education.

Overwhelmingly, ten of the fifteen student respondents perceive Penta Career Center as a place where they can achieve a career goal. Students also, however, received messages from others that Penta as a place where students attend because it is easier or they want a way out of the member school where they are not very successful academically. One student respondent reflected on
one of her family member’s experience and contrasted it with what she hears from other people. “A lot of other people feel that students at Penta are dumb which is not true at all. My sister attended in Cosmetology and really enjoyed it and it helped her succeed in school more” (Appendix H).

Parents had similar responses. “Some people still feel that Penta is a place for those not interested in school. They think it is taking the easy way out. Some of these people are students, some are parents. I let them know that Penta is an excellent place for learning real world skills and allows students greater opportunities to ‘try on’ a career” (appendix G).

Parents and students alike, encounter conflicting messages from others, presenting a genuine influential clash.

Research Objective 4: To capture a collective understanding of what determining factors influence students’ decisions to attend Penta Career Center.

Students are influenced greatly by people they spend the most amount of time with; students spend a great deal of time with friends, teachers and parents. The opinions and perceptions of these individuals play an important role in the decision-making process of the student who has to make to the choice to attend Penta Career Center. Students rely on the successes or failures of friends or family members who have attended before. “My sister who attended in cosmetology really enjoyed it and it helped her succeed more in school.” My friends that go to Penta say that it is a good school and that it will help you later in life.” “My mom works there and she is amazed by how large the program has become” (Appendix H).
The lack of career-technical education comprehension has also played a role in the decision-making process for students.

Conclusions

Based on the data collected from the survey and its application to the objectives of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn by the researcher.

Students obtain information about Penta Career Center from many resources including parents, peers, and teachers. Parents do indeed have a high influence on their child’s decision to attend or not attend Penta Career Center, however, often times the influence is mere personal perceptions.

Parent respondents have developed perceptions of vocational and career education while in high school and have not changed them despite the changes in education. Parents are not aware nor are they pursuing current information on offerings at Penta. “Penta Career Center is fine if you want to get a job right out of college and start your career, but I am not sure how going to Penta will affect college. Will it help or hurt? I was always under the understanding that if you wanted to go to college, you didn’t go to Penta” (Appendix G).

As well, teachers are acting “in loco parentis”. That is, they are influencing students’ decisions in the same ways a parent would. Students are learning from teachers on a daily basis and are around them throughout their education. Students are greatly influenced by teachers; not all teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of Penta Career Center.
School districts generally categorize the student body into groups: “college bound”, “Full time employment” or “Military.” Students who are college bound are encouraged to schedule for college prep classes, while students who do not prefer to attend college are encouraged to attend basic high school required course work or are supported when making a decision to attend a career center.

Often times students who get the support of special education, are highly encouraged to attend Penta Career Center due to the success rate of this body of students; ironically, this creates yet another perception that student encounter and thus are influenced, usually by their peers.

Student respondents reported that their friends tell them that Penta is an easy way out and is a place where dumb people attend classes. “I hear that “stupid” people go there and that people just go there because it’s easy” (appendix ). Another student reported a name given to people who attend Penta Career Center “they make fun of the people who go there a lot of the time. Saying things like their too stupid for a regular high school and calling them “pentards” like retards who go to Penta” (Appendix H). Clearly students are influenced by perceptions of all sorts.

There are influences, smaller in number as they are, that reflect a belief system in career-technical education. One particular parent reported that they saw an improvement in their son’s communication and would recommend their other children enrolling in Penta course work, while another parent stated “Now
there are so many options offered in trades and fields that they are graduating more prepared in their field than a non-Penta student” (Appendix G).

Recommendations

The information from this study can be used as baseline for further study. One such recommendation would be to conduct a similar study in more schools with more participants of various grade levels, education backgrounds and economical variances. This would give a more comprehensive and accurate view of a total population.

Another recommendation is to research and develop more appropriate education, training and marketing systems for teachers and parents. Teachers and parents are relying on their own experiences, perceptions and the perceptions of others to education and influence student decisions to attend or not attend Career Centers. When Career Centers take the initiative to motivate a desire of interest in the adults who influence the students will result in a positive influence rather than negative.

Research should be conducted and data should be gathered from students in grades kindergarten through sixth grade students on their perceptions of career education. Simply waiting until they are in their middle grades, seven through tenth, is not ample amount of time to allow grasping the value of the alternative benefits available through Career Centers. Influence of a child starts in the very early years, starting age appropriate career education can positively increase the influential affects of student career path selection.
References


APPENDIX A

Parent Survey

What is your highest level of education?

a. High School
b. GED
c. Baccalaureate
d. Master
e. Doctorate
f. Other ____________

Within what decade did you graduate high school?

a. 1960 – 1969
b. 1970 - 1979
c. 1980 – 1989
d. 1990 – 1999
e. Other ____________

What is your gender?

a. Female
b. Male

What relationship best describes you and your child?

a. Biological/single parent
b. Biological/ married parent
c. Stepparent
d. Legal Guardian
e. Foster
f. Other __________________

Where is your place of residence?

a. Within Rossford City limits
b. Township
c. Other __________________

Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution as a High school student?

a. Yes
b. No

Did you attend Penta Career Center or a like institution for adult education classes?

a. Yes
b. No
Do you believe that this has or will influence your child’s decision to attend?
   a. Yes
   b. No

For the following questions, please select the number which best represents your level, where
   0 = none
   1 = little
   2 = some
   3 = a lot

How much do you know about Penta Career Center?

```
   0   1   2   3
```

What level of influence do you believe you had or have on your child in his or her
decision to attend Penta Career Center?

```
   0   1   2   3
```

What level do you believe the following people had or have on your child’s decision to
attend Penta Career Center?

Siblings:

```
   0   1   2   3
```

Child’s Friends:

```
   0   1   2   3
```

Parent’s Friends:

```
   0   1   2   3
```

Boyfriend/girlfriend:

```
   0   1   2   3
```

Teachers:

```
   0   1   2   3
```

Other Acquaintances (e.g. clergy, coaches, neighbors)

```
   0   1   2   3
```
APPENDIX B

Student Survey

What is your current grade level?
   a. sophomore
   b. junior
   c. other

What is your gender?
   a. male
   b. female

What best describes your living arrangement?
   a. single parent
   b. blended family (living with step parents or legal guardian)
   c. nuclear family (living with birth parents who are still married to each other)
   d. Grandparents
   e. Foster parent
   f. Other ______________

How much do you know about Penta Career Center?
   a. A little
   b. Some
   c. A lot

How did you learn about Penta Career Center?
   a. In class
   b. Guidance counselor
   c. Guest presenter/ recruiter
   d. Friends
   e. Siblings
   f. Parents
   g. Pamphlets
   h. Fliers
   i. Other _____________

Have you ever visited or participated in activities at Penta Career Center?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Do you believe this has or will influence your decision to attend Penta Career Center?
   a. Yes
   b. No
For the following question, please select the number which best represents your level of agreement where:

0 = none
1 = low
2 = medium
3 = high

What level of influence do you believe the following people had or have on your decision to attend or not to attend Penta?

Parent

0 1 2 3

Siblings

0 1 2 3

Your Friends

0 1 2 3

Your Parents Friends

0 1 2 3

Boyfriend/ girlfriend

0 1 2 3

Teachers

0 1 2 3

Other Acquaintances (e.g. clergy, coaches, neighbors)

0 1 2 3

With the new facility being built at Penta Career center, do you believe this has increased or will increase your chances of choosing to attend Penta Career Center? Why or why not.

a. Yes
b. No

When you think of Penta Career Center, what comes to mind?
What do you think about Penta Career Center?

What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center? What relation are these people to you? (parents, friends, teachers etc.)
Appendix C

I consent to participating in the survey study investigating the factors influencing students' choices to attend or not attend Penta Career Center.

Signature          Print name          Date

I consent that my child may participate in the survey study investigating the factors influencing students' choices to attend or not attend Penta Career Center.

Parent/Guardian Signature          Print Name of Student          Date

My Child is 18 or older and does not need my consent to participate.

Initial

I consent to participating in the survey study investigating the factors influencing students' choices to attend or not attend Penta Career Center.

Student Signature          Print Name          Date
Appendix D
Letter of Explanation for Survey Research

October, 2007

Dear Rossford Student and Parent:

I invite you to participate in a survey study investigating the factors influencing students’ choices to attend or not attend Penta Career Center. I, Shawn Chalfin Singh, career education teacher at Rossford High School, am also a graduate student at Bowling Green State University in the Career and Technology Education program. I will be the primary investigator of this study. If you would like to participate in this study or if you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at schalfi@bgsu.edu.

I have included a consent form with this letter for you, the parent or guardian, to sign due to the minor status of the students. There are two places for your signature, one for you to consent your participation and one for your consent in allowing your student to participate. If, by chance, your student is no longer of minor status, you may simply check off and allow them to sign their own consent form. Upon receipt of your signed consent form, which can either be mailed through U.S. postal service in care of Shawn Chalfin Singh at Rossford High School, 701 Superior Street, Rossford Ohio, 43460 or returned with student, I will send you the link to a SurveyMonkey® questionnaire. SurveyMonkey® is a software package in which survey participants are guaranteed anonymity and the highest safeguard of confidentiality is assured. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The risks to you, in participating, are no greater than what you would experience in your normal day-to-day life. Furthermore, the decision to participate or not participate in the study will have no impact on your relationship with Rossford High School; neither will it have an impact on your student’s grades or class standing.

Please note that some employers have software that tracks mouse clicks, keystrokes, and web page visits. You may therefore wish to complete the survey on a home or public computer. In either instance, please be sure to clear your temporary internet files and page history following submission of the completed survey.

Your participation in this study will contribute to the research on educational practices and theories. This will contribute to a more comprehensive understand of the factors that influence students career decisions. Ultimately the goal of this study is to aid in the career decision making process, helping students understand their options and better provide them opportunities to develop successful career pathways. Therefore, it is my intent to gather information from as many students and their parents as possible to help better understand the decision making process.

In order to keep the number of participants practical, this survey is being limited to Rossford High School sophomores, juniors and their parents.
If you have any questions concerning this survey, please feel free to contact me or my advisor using the information below. If you were to have any questions or concerns about participants' rights, please feel free to contact the Bowling Green State University Human Subject Review Board at 419.372.7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Thank you for your data-collection assistance!

Sincerely,

Shawn Chalfin Singh
Rossford High School
Ph: 419.666.5262
Email: schalfin@mail.rossford.k12.oh.us

Dr. Kathryn Hoff, advisor
College of Technology
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403
Ph: 419.372.7557
Fax: 302.372.7558
Email: khoff@bgnet.bgsu.edu
Appendix E

Rosford High School
701 Superior Street
Rossford, Ohio 43460
Telephone (419) 666-5262
Code: 364-475

School Profile

ADMINISTRATORS
Ron Grimm
Principal
Pat Murtha
Assistant Principal

COUNSELORS
Pat Biniker
Grades 9 & 10
Dan Sayers
Grades 11 & 12

COMMUNITY: A suburban community of approximately 6,000 residents located southeast of Toledo on the banks of the Maumee River extending into the countryside.

SCHOOL: Public comprehensive high school enrolling 635 students in grades 9-12, with 129 attending vocational school. The Rossford staff totals 40 teachers, with 65% having Masters Degrees. Teacher-student ratio is 13:1. Accreditation by the State of Ohio.

CURRICULA: Curriculum includes business, college preparatory, vocational, advanced placement, special education, honors courses, and independent study.

MINIMUM GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:
English 4.00
Mathematics 3.00
Science 3.00
Social Studies 3.00
Physical Education/Health 1.00
Fine Arts 0.50
Computer and/or Keyboarding 1.00
Electives 5.50
Total Credits 21.00

GRADING SYSTEM AND CLASS RANK:
All students are ranked together regardless of track. Honors and AP points are used in figuring averages, which determines rank. AP curriculum includes English, US History and American Government.

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GRADE POINT AVERAGE – Class of 2007
Top G.P.A. (7 semesters) 4.20
Median 2.62
Number of students higher than 4.00 3 of 140

ACT RESULTS – Class of 2007

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<tr>
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POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANS – Class of 2007

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<tr>
<td>2 year college</td>
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<td>Full time employment</td>
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<td>Military</td>
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Appendix F

HSRB Approval Letter

October 8, 2007

TO: Shawn Chalfin Singh  
VC&TE

FROM: Richard Rowlands  
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project No.: H08T071GE7

TITLE: Identification of Factors Critical to Students Choosing Penta Career Center

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of October 5, 2007, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on September 10, 2008. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), please send a request for modifications immediately to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, in writing (fax: 372-6916 or email: hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu) upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments/Modifications:

1. Please provide the URL of the online survey when it is available.

C: Dr. Kathryn S. Hoff

Research Category: EXPEDITED #7
Appendix G

Parent Survey Results Open Ended Questions

8. With the new Penta Career Center facility being built, do you believe this has increased or will increase the chances of your child choosing to attend Penta?

1. yes

2. I don't think so, she says she likes Rossford and likes the classes there

3. No, I don't believe it will change our minds on going there.

4. I really don't think it will have any affect.

5. No. My child has no clue as what he wants to do for a career.

6. increase

7. Neutral - students who are making decisions based on facilities alone should reassess their career path.

8. No, my child does not want to attend Penta because she has chosen a college prep. course of study.

9. No, she will be a senior next year and will stay at Rossford


1. something for the students to decide what they want to do with their future. And they don't have to stick to one particular course of study.

2. I think it is a great place to learn hands on jobs such as mechanic, etc.

3. Students they have trouble staying in school and don't plan on attending college.

4. A great place to learn a trade that can't be found in the home school.

5. The fact that they never responded to my emails
and letters when I suggested a Wood County area school for aviation and aviation mechanics. The chairman for Metcalf Airport told me they never answered him back either and he was all for a joint aviation school in this immediate area.

6. Training for future jobs. They train students to be productive members of society. Mon, 10/22/07 2:39 PM

7. Programs and career path. If a student is sure of the career they want to pursue Penta is the ultimate head start. Mon, 10/22/07 12:23 PM

8. Excellent trades skills training. Great place for students who want to find a job right out of high school, without going on to college. Mon, 10/22/07 10:42 AM

9. Prepared in beginning a career in a field the student is planning on having. In many cases, they are able to work full-time in that field or have some education in that field going into college. Mon, 10/22/07 7:26 AM

10. What is your overall opinion of Penta Career Center and how or who has influenced this opinion?

1. My overall opinion is that Penta is a great school. If gives students options on their educational goals. Thu, 10/25/07 2:15 PM

2. Penta career center is fine if you want to get a job right out of college and start your career, but I'm not sure how going to Penta will affect college. Will it hurt her or help her. I was always under the understanding that if you wanted to go to college, you didn't go to Penta. Tue, 10/23/07 3:50 PM

3. I think it is good for the student who doesn't like school and wants to learn a trade. Tue, 10/23/07 12:48 PM

4. I think it is a great place for any student wanting a career in the fields that are offered there. Tue, 10/23/07 3:53 AM

5. n/a Mon, 10/22/07 3:26 PM

6. Good training, and preparation for the future Mon, 10/22/07 2:39 PM
7. I happen to have been around when Penta was built and have had the distinct pleasure of watching it grow into the institution it is today. I also have seen first hand the contributions Penta has made to the economic development in this area. Mon, 10/22/07 12:23 PM

8. Penta has much to offer in preparing students for a skilled trade job. It is an excellent place to obtain a real world education. My son took Penta’s Marketing Program through Rossford High School and it really taught him confidence. He learned how to speak in front of people, and to be more of a creative thinker. Mon, 10/22/07 10:42 AM

9. When I went to Rossford it used to have the stigma of being for the troubled kids that didn’t want to be in school so they got a head start in a trade. Now there are so many options offered in trades and fields that they are graduating more prepared in their field than a non-Penta student. Mon, 10/22/07 7:26 AM

11. What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center? What relation are these people to you? (friends, your child’s teacher, neighbors, family members, etc.)

1. That it is a great school. Thu, 10/25/07 2:15 PM

2. I hear from some of my friends that their kids go to Penta because they get bad grades in regular high school so they go to Penta Tue, 10/23/07 3:50 PM

3. Troubled students with problems. Tue, 10/23/07 12:48 PM

4. There are many different reactions from its a great school to that’s where people who can’t make it go to get a diploma. This is from all areas with no grouping of people feeling all one way or another. Tue, 10/23/07 3:53 AM

5. I really haven’t heard much about Penta except from a school counselor Mon, 10/22/07 3:26 PM

6. Speak highly Mon, 10/22/07 2:39 PM

7. Other business professionals realize the value of having a job training facility in our backyard. The comment are extremely positive. Mon, 10/22/07 12:23 PM

8. Some people still feel that Penta is a place for those not interested in school. They think it is “taking the easy way out.” Some of these people are students, some are parents. I let them know that Penta is an excellent place for learning real world skills and allow students greater opportunities to “try on” a career. Mon, 10/22/07 10:42 AM

9. Many have told me they are so glad they went there. They are able to have an income in their field while attending college or they are able to get a full-time job in their field
Appendix H

Student Respondent Survey Open Ended Questions

10. When you think of Penta Career Center, what comes to mind?

1. The brand new facility Mon, 10/29/07 10:47 AM

2. I think of a technical school. I actually enrolled in Penta course work. Fri, 10/26/07 10:25 AM

3. More hands on then high school Fri, 10/26/07 9:16 AM

4. My future. Going into cozmology. Fri, 10/26/07 5:44 AM

5. A bunch of different classes are offered for students to take to help them pursue a career in the future. I also think of people that say that they just want to get out of Rossford schools so they go there. Fri, 10/26/07 5:28 AM

6. Schooling that helps you in a certain area of interest so that it is easier to get a job after high school. Wed, 10/24/07 5:31 PM

7. School for students who have a very good idea of what they want for their future. Wed, 10/24/07 12:53 PM

8. People that know what they are going to do and aren't planning on going to a 4 year college. Wed, 10/24/07 6:23 AM

9. It is a good opportunity to get far in life. Wed, 10/24/07 5:54 AM

10. I personally think of an easier school. Although it seems like a very good idea if you are totally sure what you want to do for your career. Wed, 10/24/07 5:45 AM

11. I think of people who want to learn a new skill before they graduate so they can get somewhere in life. Tue, 10/23/07 2:42 PM

12. People who are focusing on one career in their lives. Tue, 10/23/07 5:16 AM
13. A lot of hands on work. People who are not as good with a lot of classwork. Mon, 10/22/07 6:09 AM

14. A school that will help you with a job goal. Mon, 10/22/07 5:31 AM

15. A school that you meet a whole new group of people and also classes that are specific to my interest. I also think of the new building that is being built.

11. What is your overall opinion of Penta Career Center and how do you believe your opinion has been influenced?

1. I think that it sounds like a great place but I don't think it is for me. Mon, 10/29/07 10:47 AM

2. I think that Penta Career Center is a good option. It allows students who already know what they want to do, to get ahead start. Some courses even get college credits for the course your senior year. My opinion hasn't been influenced by anyone. My parents both attended Penta Career Center at one point and are very pleased with the way that it is ran. Fri, 10/26/07 10:25 AM

3. My overall opinion about Penta is that it helps people realize what they want to do for the rest of their life. Penta is not for me. Fri, 10/26/07 9:16 AM

4. I think it's great and i will help me get the future i want. Fri, 10/26/07 5:44 AM

5. I know that I will never go to Penta. For one I don't know what I want to be when I get older yet so I wouldn't want to go and take a class there and not even use it in the future. I Fri, 10/26/07 5:28 AM
also know that my mom went to Penta when she was younger and didn't like it and doesn't recommend me to go there.

6. Penta is a good choice if you know what field you want to pursue early on. Also, I think it helps people who have problems in concentrating in school because they're just not interested. At Penta you have classes that your interested in and its easier to pay attention.

7. I think it is a really great program that helps a lot of students but that many honors students choose to opt out of this experience because their are not fast paced classes to take.

8. My opinion on Penta is that its just not for me i'm planning on going to a 4 year college and i think most of my "bad" thoughts about penta have came from my parents and friends.

9. It is a good school and if you dont do well at rossford then penta is good for you.

10. My overall opinion of Penta is if you are having a hard time passing your classes at your home school that you should go to Penta. My opinion has been pretty much influenced by my friends.
who have gone there and seeing who has left out of my junior class that its a pretty good reason.

11. I think its a great program if you cant afford college or dont want to attend college. My opinion has been influenced greatly by my parents and friends. Tue, 10/23/07 2:42 PM

12. I just don't care for it. Plus all of my friends are here at Rossford and i don't want to leave them. Tue, 10/23/07 5:16 AM

13. I feel that although penta is not a right choice for me to go to school, that it is a good place for people who want to start working right away can go. I believe that i have made my own opinion regarding penta who little regard to what others say. Mon, 10/22/07 6:09 AM

14. I think that I am very influence about Penta. I wish I could have even more of an ideal what Penta is. Mon, 10/22/07 5:31 AM

15. At first I did not want to go to Penta Career Center because of the fact I would be changing schools and I felt that going to something new would be a bit overwhelming. Becoming educated on what the content of the programs really helped me make sure that I choose what is right for me and also learning about the future and how Penta
Career Center would affect my life.

12. What do you hear others saying about Penta Career Center? What relation are these people to you? (parent, teachers, siblings, friends, etc.)

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<th>Comment Text</th>
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</tr>
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<td>My friends dont think it is the place for them either they are just gunna stay at rossford</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>People at my school say that Penta is only for people that want a way out. It's an alternative to dropping out. They also say that Penta Career Center has easier course work. I have a few friends that attend Penta Career Center.</td>
<td>Fri, 10/26/07 10:25 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>That it really helped them from when they went then. Friends</td>
<td>Fri, 10/26/07 9:16 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They always tell me</td>
<td>Fri, 10/26/07 5:44 AM</td>
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</table>
should go. my friends and parents.

5. My cousin says that she doesn't like Rossford schools so she goes to Penta instead of staying here at Rossford. My cousin also says though that she likes what she's doing (cosmotology) and wants to get a job somewhere doing that. So in a way Penta has been good for her.

6. I hear that "stupid" people go there and that people just go there because it's easy. I hear this from friends and family.

7. A lot of other people feel that students at Penta are dumb which is not true at all. My sister who attended
in cosmetology really enjoyed it and it helped her succeed in school more. My mom works there and she is amazed by how large the program has become and very excited for the new school.

8. they make fun of the people who go there a lot of the time. saying things like their to stupid for a regular high school and calling them "pentards" like retards who go to penta.

9. My friends that go to penta say that is is a good to school and that it will help you later in life

10. I have heard that Penta is an extremely easy school to
go to. Also that it is a ton of fun and that you get to meet many new kids. But also that its very hard to leave and get dropped into Penta. My relation again is friends.

11. I hear mixed feelings from others about Penta. Some people say that its great and others think the opposite. My parents and my friends are the main people who talk to me about Penta.

12. That its somewhat easy. And that its dumb and only dumb people go to it. I mostly here it from friends or students.

13. Friends that don't go there often make fun of the people who do. My cousin
went to penta and enjoyed his experience there very well and so my family has a lot of positive thoughts about Penta.

14. Some teachers like my english teacher says it is a great place to go and also my AI teacher said that too.

15. I have heard both positive and negative sides about what people thing about penta career center. From some friends they feel that other students have made their experience bad for them, but I have heard other tell me great stories on how successful they are in todays world.