Content analysis PDW: Charter schools and organizational identity

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Why do content analysis?

- Theoretical questions can best be addressed using archival materials

- Frequencies / count data

- Theoretical interest in meaning

- Subjective meanings instantiated in documents / artifacts

- Can be used inductively to discover meaning patterns at higher levels of analysis

Example: Measuring differences in organizational identity

- Organizational identity is a subjective expression of an organization's distinctive self
- Identity stretches across two levels:
  - Field-level categories (i.e., membership and belonging)
  - Distinctive claims & differentiating characteristics
- Mapping identity configurations at the *field-level* first requires content analysis of identities at the *organization level*
- Context of Arizona charter schools

Theory should inform coding categories

- Organizational identity = an organization's self-definition (central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics)
  - What identity characteristics did charter schools envision as the most central, enduring and distinctive?
- Three kinds of characteristics
  - Substantive themes
  - Resources and services
  - Target Population

Khalsa Montessori Elementary School - Phoenix

Khalsa Montessori Elementary Schools
2536 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004

Director: Mr. Satwant Singh Khalsa	**Grades: K-8**
Schedule: 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM	**2001 Enrollment: 116**
Web Address: Unpublished or Unavailable	**Phone: (602) 252-3759**
E-mail: khalsamontessori@firstinter.net	**Fax: (602) 252-5224**

❖ School Overview ❖

Mission

Khalsa provides an integrated Montessori education in a nurturing environment for young children in central Phoenix. We offer a holistic program that helps children reach their highest potential academically, creatively, socially and physically within self-paced multi-age classrooms.

Organization and Philosophy

- Charter School
- Montessori Classrooms
- Multi-age Classrooms
- Holistic Education

Instructional Programs

- Montessori Education K-8
- Self-paced Instruction
- Individual Reading Tutoring
- Foreign Language Classes
- Creative Arts; Social Development
- Private Preschool and Full-day Kinder.
- Summer School
- Before/After School Care

School/Academic Goals

- Establish in each child the ability to master fundamental skills, approach problem-solving tasks with critical thought and reason, learn quickly and easily, and effectively apply knowledge to new situations.

- Provide a wide variety of avenues for creative expression in class and through classes in the arts.

- Encourage physical development with a variety of activities in class, on the playground, and in physical education and team training classes.

- Support in each child a sense of personal meaning and responsibility for themselves, others and our world.

Enrollment

October 1, 2000 School Year Student Enrollment:	94
Accepting New Students in 2001-02 Under Open Enrollment Law[1]:	Yes
Number of Students Attending Under Open Enrollment in 2000-01:	116

External Data   Database Tools

School: Khalsa Montessori El   Organizational model   [   ]   Notes: [   ]

Year: 2001

Mission Statement
- ☑ Encourage academic learning
- ☐ Encourage self-esteem among students
- ☑ Develop students' social skills
- ☑ Provide a caring environment for students
- ☐ Provide a safe environment
- ☐ Encourage community involvement
- ☐ Prepare students for future work outcomes
- ☐ Prepare students for future life outcomes
- ☐ Ensure equal opportunity for all students
- ☐ Assert the belief that all children can learn
- ☐ Provide a positive and professional environment for staff

Other [   ]

Substantive Themes
- ☐ Academic: back to basics
- ☐ Academic: gifted/college
- ☑ Values and virtues
- ☐ Social justice
- ☐ Patriotism/citizenship
- ☐ Vocational
- ☑ Learning processes
- ☐ Arts
- ☐ Science/technology

Other [   ]

- ☑ **Specific curriculum**
  - ☑ Montessori
  - ☐ Phonics
  - ☐ Core knowledge
  - ☐ 7 intelligences

Other [   ]

Target Population
- ☐ At-risk
- ☐ Ethnic Identity

Specify [   ]
- ☐ Academic/gifted
- ☐ At-home students

Other [   ]

Classroom Organization
- ☐ Traditional
- ☑ Multi-age
- ☐ Small classes
- ☐ Small groups/tutoring
- ☑ Individualized/self-paced
- ☐ Projects/research
- ☐ Team-teaching
- ☐ Parents in classroom
- ☐ Dual enrollment
- ☐ Advanced placement
- ☐ Special education/inclusionary
- ☐ Computers/Tech/Media
- ☐ Flexible scheduling
- ☐ Block scheduling

Other [   ]

Accountability
- ☐ AZ Standards
- ☑ Other substantive mastery
- ☐ Testing Performance
- ☐ Transition Rates
- ☐ Attendance

Other [   ]

Course Content
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Math/Science
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Diversity/multicultural
- ☑ Arts/music
- ☐ Literature/reading/writing
- ☐ Social Studies/History
- ☑ PE
- ☐ Diploma/GED
- ☐ ESL
- ☐ Life Skills
- ☐ Vocational/technical

Other [   ]

Methods
- ☐ Report cards
- ☐ Testing
- ☑ Portfolios
- ☑ Parent conferences
- ☐ Professional standards

Other [   ]

Report Card Code

School	Year	Organization	Notes	Academic lea	Self-esteem	Social skills	Caring	Safety	Community	Future wo
Academic Success Charter School	2000									
Academic Success Charter School	2001									
Academy of Excellence	1999				✓	✓			✓	
Academy of Excellence	2000				✓	✓			✓	
Academy of Excellence	2001			✓						
Academy of Tucson	2000									
Academy of Tucson	2001									
Academy with Community Partners	1997			✓	✓				✓	
Academy with Community Partners	1998			✓	✓				✓	
Academy with Community Partners	1999			✓	✓				✓	
Academy with Community Partners	2000			✓	✓				✓	
Academy with Community Partners	2001			✓	✓				✓	
Accelerated Learning Center	1998									
Accelerated Learning Center	1999			✓						
Accelerated Learning Center	2000			✓						
Accelerated Learning Center	2001			✓						
Accelerated Learning Center Laboratory	1999									
Accelerated Learning Center Laboratory	2000									
Accelerated Learning Center Laboratory	2001									
ACCLAIM Charter School	1999			✓						
ACCLAIM Charter School	2000			✓						
ACCLAIM Charter School	2001			✓						
Aha Macav High School	1999			✓						✓
Aha Macav High School	2000			✓						✓
Aha Macav High School	2001			✓						✓
AIBT Charter High School	2001			✓			✓			
American Heritage Academy	1999									
American Heritage Academy	2000									
American Heritage Academy	2001									
AmeriSchools Academy	2000									
AmeriSchools Academy	2000			✓						
AmeriSchools Academy	2001			✓					✓	
AmeriSchools Academy	2001									
Apache Trail High School	1998									
Apache Trail High School	1999									

Finding identity patterns

1. Coded three kinds of elements from report cards: substantive theme, resources and services, and target population

2. Used relational methods – stochastic block modeling – to find identity clusters

3. Assess changes in clustering over time

   - Were identity clusters becoming more pronounced and distinct over time?

Table 1: Frequency of Organizational Elements of Arizona Charter Schools in 2001

Organizational Elements	Frequency
Substantive theme	
Values and virtues	133
Learning processes	106
Montessori or other curriculum	103
Back-to-basics	98
Gifted/college-oriented	92
Patriotism/citizenship	56
Science/technology	55
Social justice	52
Vocational	47
Arts	26
Resources and services	
Computer support and training	222
Library/media	114
Social services for students	103
Before/after care	103
Recreation factilities	98
Social services for adults	93
GED/adult education	72
Full day kindegarten	68
Arts facilities	52
Employment services for students	51
Pre-school/childcare	50
Tutoring services	45
Health/legal services for students	35
Employment services for adults	24
Summer/winter camp	22
Health/legal services for adults	12
ESL/citizenship classes	8
Target population	
High school	161
Elementary	158
Junior high	134
At-risk	56
Academic/gifted	29
Ethnic identity	18
At-home students	2
Total schools	298

Block model summary

- Identity elements were becoming more clustered and clusters becoming more internally coherent over time
- Two main identity clusters emerged
  - FSP: Family and social programs
  - CAL: Creative and alternative learning
- A third cluster emerged consisting of elements that could be used flexibly to supplement an organization's main identity

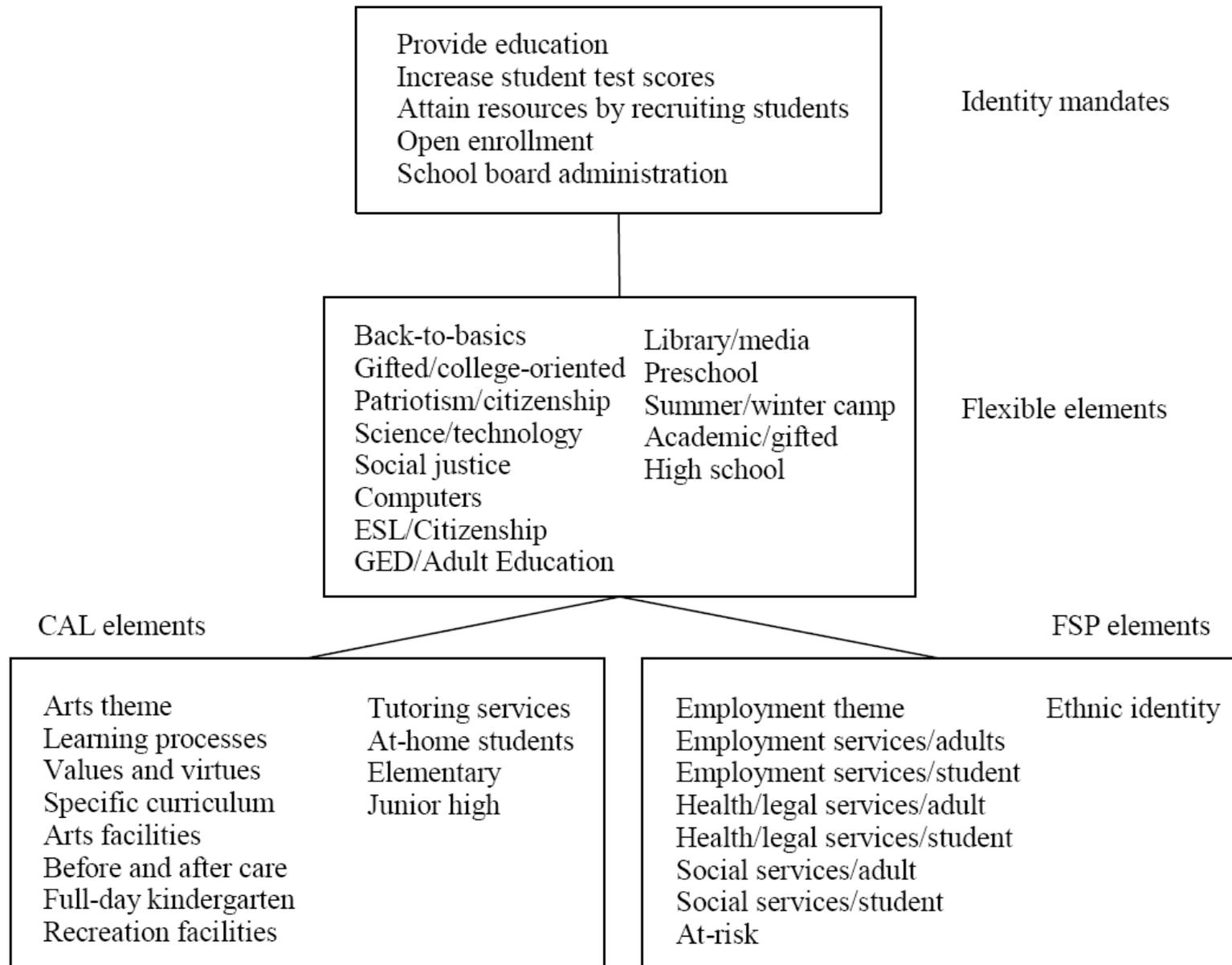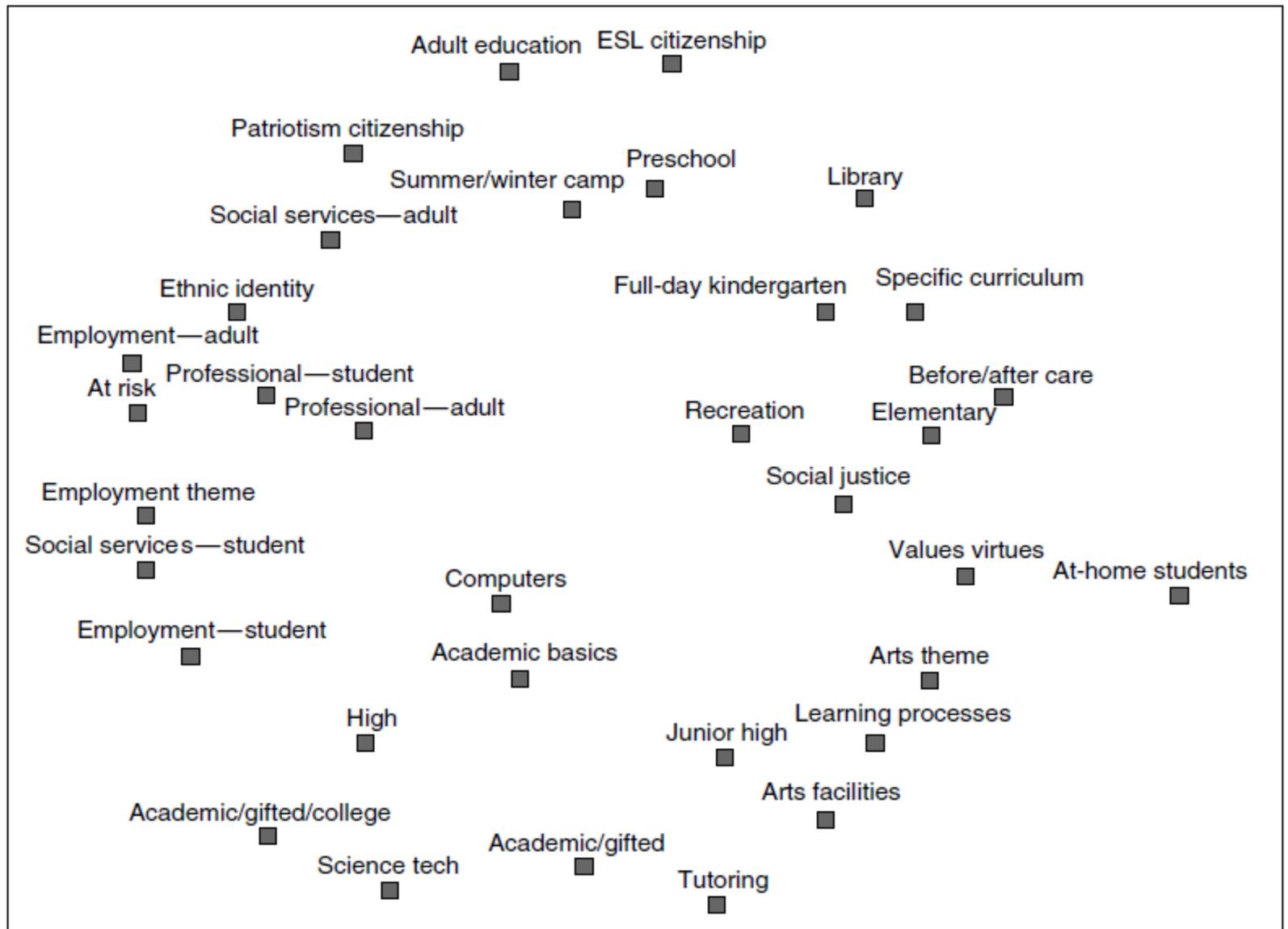**Figure 1: Map of Charter School Organizational Form**

Provide education
Increase student test scores
Attain resources by recruiting students
Open enrollment
School board administration

Identity mandates

Back-to-basics   Library/media
Gifted/college-oriented   Preschool
Patriotism/citizenship   Summer/winter camp
Science/technology   Academic/gifted
Social justice   High school
Computers
ESL/Citizenship
GED/Adult Education

Flexible elements

CAL elements

FSP elements

Arts theme   Tutoring services
Learning processes   At-home students
Values and virtues   Elementary
Specific curriculum   Junior high
Arts facilities
Before and after care
Full-day kindergarten
Recreation facilities

Employment theme   Ethnic identity
Employment services/adults
Employment services/student
Health/legal services/adult
Health/legal services/student
Social services/adult
Social services/student
At-risk

Figure B.1 Multidimensional Scaling of Identity Elements

Summary

- Content analysis is a useful tool for discovering and coding meaning

- Can do more than give you counts / frequencies; it can also scale up to reveal field-level patterns

- Useful for doing inductive analysis about meaning patterns

Tips

- If you're going to do hand-coding, develop good coding habits & routines

- Should be informed by theoretically relevant categories

- Relational tools, like network analysis, can be combined with traditional content analysis to assess macro-level patterns