

A comparison: The German and American Educational System

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German public education makes it possible for qualified kids to study up to university level, regardless of their families' financial status. The German education system is different in many ways from the ones in Anglo-Saxon countries, but it produces high-performing students.



Before beginning school the children of both countries, Germany and US have the opportunity to attend the Kindergarten. Parents may decide whether their children should attend

this institution and for how long. The children at the age of six German kids are enrolled to the Grundschule (Primary School). Similar to the American elementary school Grundschule consists of four years, the American elementary school lasts six years. The children usually have one class teacher that teaches all subjects except for physical education, religious education, music and common art.

After elementary school the German school system differs enormously from the American education. Secondary education is what makes the German school system so complicated compared to the educational systems of other countries in the world. In Germany, School children usually get a recommendation of their teacher which school-form to attend after Grundschule depending on their overall academic performance. This decision determines the further profession in life. In Germany there is a choosing between four different progressing schools. These are Hauptschule, Realschule, Gesamtschule, Gymnasium.

The American system of high school education, where all students regardless of talent attend the same school for 12 years, has been tried in Germany as "Gesamtschulen". Conservatives are usually opposed to this model, calling it egalitarian and socialist. It appears less socialist however if one takes into account that US schools are financed locally and hence poor communities gen-

erally have bad schools; the rich avoid the public school system altogether and send their kids to excellent private schools.

German pupils get 6 weeks during the summer, 2 weeks in the fall, 2 weeks for Christmas, and 2 weeks Spring Break. US pupils get a lot more vacation: 12 weeks during the summer, plus one week for Christmas and one week of Spring Break. On the other hand, German school is mostly only from 8 o'clock in the morning until lunchtime at 1pm, while in America school takes place in the mornings and lasts till 3 to 4 pm.

While teaching in the US is often considered to be just another "job", teachers in Germany are highly regarded professionals and are much better paid. The training required to become a German teacher is quite a bit longer than that for US public schools.

In US after senior high school there is no final examination, but in Germany final examinations called Abitur, takes place. With the German Abitur the students are illegible to study at a University. The American students have to sit for SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT respectively before the students can apply for University to study. Education in America is much more expensive than in Germany.

Introduction:

Every national educational system focuses on defined targets. Some countries rather focus on criteria's such as social skills, some more on fine arts and some on academics. All nations, however, have one thing in common: After completing the educational curriculum every student should be able to have knowledge of basic reading, writing and mathematics. I will now point out similarities and differences of the German and American educational system and try to explain the general structure of these two different educational systems.

In the beginning of the year 2002 the so called PISA (Program for International School Assessment) - study was published and created extensive discussions among the German educational professionals. This was a disappointing result of German students who marked below average.

PISA study is done every three years and this is

a survey carried by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation Development). It is supposed to show the academic abilities of fifteen-year old students of 32 different industrial nations. All different school forms that exist for this level of age are part of the survey. In the year 2002, PISA primarily focused on reading comprehensive skills with a 66% weight factor and the other 34% were related to mathematics - and natural science. German students performed poorly, ranking between 20 and 23 in reading literacy among the 32 participating nations. American students generally did better. In comprehensive reading skills they ranked 15, in mathematics 20 and in natural science 15.

As a Professor, I gained practical experience both in the American and the German educational system. In General the students of Bangladesh are acquainted with the American or British education system and less familiar to the German Education System. This essay is to compare the structure of the German and US Educational System and inform the readers about the background information. The narration will also interpret the two different systems and define strength and weakness.

German Education System:

According to the German Constitution, competence for school and culture has been given to the 16 individual Länder (federal states) of the Federal Republic of Germany. The organisation and the educational aims of all school-forms are committed to follow school-laws of these 16 federal states. This particularly applies to the school system, higher education and the adult education/continuing education sector. The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany is divided into:

- early childhood education
- primary education
- secondary education
- tertiary education
- continuing education

Pre-school education (Kindergarten (ages 3 to 6)):

The German educational system starts of with the so called Kindergarten and is not part of the Primary School. Parents may decide whether their children should attend this institution and for how

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