

A SURVEY OF DROPOUTS FROM JUNIOR  
AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## ABSTRACT

This survey investigated secondary school dropouts and stayins. The purpose of the investigation was to discover if there are characteristic differences in the school and home experiences between dropouts and stayins and to search for ways to improve the retention of pupils. The investigation was conducted primarily by a structured interview and by a study of school records. The population for the study consisted of 100 dropouts and 100 stayins from a random selection of 10,495 pupils in the Greater Victoria School District.

A major question and eight ancillary questions were posed. It was concluded that there are characteristic differences in the home and school experiences between dropouts and stayins. The answers to the eight ancillary questions were as follows:

1. There were significant relationships between school withdrawal and male truancy, male absenteeism at the junior secondary level, male and female grade repetition, and female primary reading retardation.
2. Dropouts, both male and female, participated in fewer extracurricular activities compared to stayins.
3. There were significant relationships between male school withdrawal and the educational level of both parents. The relationship between dropouts and the occupation of fathers was not significant, nor was there a significant relationship between dropouts and the employment of mothers outside the home.

4. The relationship between dropouts and lower intelligence was significant.

5. There was general dissatisfaction by both dropouts and stayins concerning counseling and guidance services. Dropouts did not, however, receive less counseling compared to stayins.

6. Dropouts did not feel as well understood nor accepted by teachers as stayins did.

7. The attitude toward education in the homes of dropouts was less positive compared to the attitude in the homes of stayins.

8. Dropouts felt they were understood less at home than stayins and the friends of dropouts were accepted less at home than the friends of stayins.

During the 200 interviews both dropouts and stayins made numerous positive and negative comments concerning various aspects of their educational experiences. Many of their opinions and recommendations are included in the appendix.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The present world of the dropout is vastly different from the world of twenty years or even a decade ago. In contemporary middle class culture, many of the dropouts appear to be doomed to a life of inadequacy, worthlessness, frustration, and failure.<sup>1</sup> Accelerating change is a marked characteristic of modern society. Experts predict that the average worker will change his occupation or undergo retraining several times during his lifetime. Other experts state that automation will eliminate so many tasks that large segments of our population will not have to work for a living.<sup>2</sup> Wise use of leisure time will be of paramount importance, particularly for those who will be content with the standard of living provided for them by the state.

Public School education cannot remain immune to change. Brameld states:

My thesis is that the critical examination and reformulation of beliefs about education is indigenous with the same process occurring in religion, art, science, economics, politics. Education cannot be understood except in the context of the culture which education

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<sup>1</sup>Lucius F. Cervantes, The Dropout, Causes and Cures (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Schreiber, "The School Dropout", National Education Association of the United States (1964), p. 48.

reflects and upon which education in turn exerts its influence. The greatest error that educators can make is to assume that education is an isolated or cloistered institution to be interpreted by itself without regard to the cyclonic forces sweeping the earth.<sup>3</sup>

The fund of knowledge has increased and is increasing so rapidly that it is impossible to equip a pupil with sufficient knowledge and skills to serve him during his lifetime. What contribution shall the school make to the development of the pupil? It seems that in modern society the most valuable education would provide training in the art of living. A definition for the art of living should include the ability to communicate effectively and to develop satisfactory inter-personal relationships, as well as the ability to develop a healthy self-image and a flexible attitude towards change. The definition should also include an awareness of and involvement in those things which promote a more satisfying and useful life for oneself and others.

If schools are accepting change and attempting to prepare pupils for the adult world, education must be concerned with acceptable attitudes, morality, student involvement in education and in life in our changing society. It is reasonable to assume the longer pupils remain in school, the better they will be prepared in the art of living.

## II. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. Approximately one-third of the pupils

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<sup>3</sup>Theodore Brameld, Education for the Emerging Age (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 22.