

MAY 19 1994

A SURVEY AND ANALYSIS  
OF A SOLUTION TO THE SCHOOL DROPOUT PROGRAM IN NEW YORK CITY:  
THE CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAM

AN ABSTRACT OF  
A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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June 1965

This paper is an attempt to discover whether or not a program called Career Guidance is succeeding in its attempt to combat the dropout problem in New York City. Career Guidance is a program for academic failures in the junior high schools of New York. It has been in existence in four pilot schools since 1958. One of these schools is Dewey Junior High School in Brooklyn.

Questionnaires, to the students in the program, to the graduates of the program, to the teachers who participate in it, and to the guidance counselors of the students who were graduated to high school, were used in an attempt to ascertain the holding power of this program on its students.

Chapter I attempts to delineate the problem. The dropout is discussed, and so also are the attempts to keep him in school, both on the national and on the New York City level.

Chapter II is a description of the Career Guidance Program. This program concerns itself with the dropout. It attempts to discover the potential dropout. It puts him in a small class, with a stimulating curriculum whose emphasis is on basic skills. It surrounds him with intensive guidance, in a group and individually, in an attempt to reverse his pattern of failure and frustration in school. The history of the program since its inception is covered. The changes in the curriculum and its formalization are discussed.

Chapter III describes the criteria for the selection of the pupils for the program. In addition, a typical class is analyzed, with a breakdown of test scores and home background.

Chapter IV gives the responses to the questionnaire administered to the pupils enrolled in the program. It attempts to determine if the students are happier in school, like school better, and wish to go on to high school. In addition, it asks for suggestions for improvement of the program.

Chapter V is composed of the responses from all the graduates of the program since its inception. About half of those queried answered. This questionnaire attempts to discover if those boys and girls are still in high school, or have graduated. In addition, it inquires about jobs and future plans. It also seeks to find out if they liked the Career Guidance Program and asks them for suggestions for improving it.

Chapter VI discusses the answers to a questionnaire administered to the teachers of the program in an attempt to ascertain their opinion of it. Teachers were asked if they thought it was successful and would keep the students in school. They were also asked to make any suggestions they wished.

Chapter VII is a study of pupil accomplishments after leaving junior high school. Each student's progress is followed in an attempt to see if the program has holding power in the high school. The progress of each of five classes is analyzed to see how many are still in school, and how long each dropout stayed in school.

Chapter VIII is composed of two parts. The first part—an evaluation of the data collected—has tables to show what happened to the graduates of the Career Guidance Program. Their progress in high school is also evaluated. The second part is made up of recommendations for the junior and senior high schools.

The results of the investigation tend to show that the Career Guidance Program is a success in junior high school because it is keeping the potential dropouts in school until they graduate. The high school is not doing as well with the graduates. They are dropping out of high school in the same percentages as the national dropout rates.

It is not only the purpose of this thesis to evaluate the Career Guidance Program, but to make recommendations on the basis of the therapeutic prognosis shown by the program. The recommendations are that the program be extended in junior high school to include at least two years of Career Guidance for each potential dropout. It is further recommended that a similar program be instituted in high school which will maintain the success pattern so newly established and continue the intensive, supportive, individualized focus which is so vital to the salvaging of the youth of our nation.