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Dropouts and Their Relationship to Guidance

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DROPOUTS AND THEIR

RELATIONSHIP TO GUIDANCE

(TITLE)

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The varied needs and characteristics of pupils who go to school in larger numbers and stay longer demand more and better guidance services than are now offered. In our complex, industrialized society, there will continue to be an increasing need for highly skilled manpower and a decrease in the need for unskilled labor. This has led to increased educational, industrial, and governmental concern about the dropout problem. Lichter says:

Education for all children has long been a prime goal of our American democracy. Education is a basic requisite for responsible citizenship, for maintenance of our way of life, and for successful entry into today's complicated working world.¹

Charles Savitzky defines the term dropouts as "the termination of formal education for students who, with rare exceptions, embark upon a nebulous and questionable future in their adjustments to work and society often leaving high school without achieving graduation."² The one person in the school commonly

¹Solomon O. Lichter et al., The Drop-Outs (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1962), p 245.

²Charles Savitzky, "Dropout and Holding Power," Clearing House, XXXVIII (October, 1963) p 89.

expected to be most interested and most competent in combating the dropout problem has been assumed to be the school counselor. With the assignment of this great task, counseling services might be expanded in both the junior and senior high schools and made more easily available in elementary schools. This expansion would serve the purpose not only of helping all students make wise personal, academic, and vocational decisions, but also of identifying potential dropouts early when counseling and planning are most beneficial. New York City's Early Identification and Prevention program extends from kindergarten through third grade, with follow-up services provided for children who need them beyond this point. "The program begun in 1959, is a direct outgrowth of the conviction that problem children can and must be helped in their early grades if incidence of later school maladjustment is to be reduced."³

Kenneth Hoyt reports:

There is every reason to believe that we will not be able to eliminate the dropout problem in secondary education in the foreseeable future At the same time, the need for encouraging all students to complete a secondary education has never been greater.⁴

³ Julia K. McBride, "School Dropout," NEA Journal, XL (May, 1962) p 55-6.

⁴ Kenneth B. Hoyt, "The Counselor and the Dropout," Clearing House, XXXVI (May, 1962) p 515.

When a great per cent of the students throughout the country who enter high school drop out before graduation, there is cause for great concern. Williams reports, "One out of every three youths in school today will leave before high school graduation. At the current rate, 7.5 million youths will have dropped out of school in the current decade."⁵ According to the United States Department of Labor Statistics, of the twenty-six million new young workers who are expected to enter the labor market during the 1960's, 7.5 million will not have graduated from high school and 2.5 million will not have graduated from the eight grade.

Age sixteen is the most common age at which youngsters quit school and additionally that a sizable group does not attend school after they are fourteen or fifteen years of age. About three-fourths of a million youngsters sixteen and seventeen years old in October 1960 were not in school and had not completed high school. Of this group, only 200,000 had attended school in 1960; 27,000 had dropped out in 1959, 190,000 in 1958 (at no more than fourteen or fifteen years of age) and 80,000 in 1957 or earlier. Altogether, over 340,000 left school in this period (January to October, 1960) and about 540,000 in the twelve months of 1959.⁶

⁵ Percy V. Williams, "School Dropouts," NEA Journal, LII (February, 1963) p 11.

⁶ Sophia Cooper, "Employment of June 1960 High School Graduates," Monthly Labor Review, LXXXIV (May, 1961) p 505.

The nation cannot escape the fact that it is being deprived of a substantial segment of potential trained and educated manpower at a time when it cannot afford such a loss. The average professional or technical worker now requires four or more years of college, and many manual workers need at least a high school education.

The book The Dropouts concludes,

Schooling is the major task of the adolescent, just as earning a livelihood is that of the adult. Acquiring an education is an important stress that the adolescent must meet, and the capacity to adapt to this stress is a measure of the health of his personality. What happens in school is crucial to a child and determines not only the outcome of his vocational future and his effectiveness as a citizen but also the integration of his personality.⁷

The Purpose of the Study.

The intent of the writer was to examine the problem of school dropouts and to what extent guidance can help to avert dropouts and potential dropouts. The following areas of concentration are discussed: (1) the extent to which potential dropouts can be identified, and (2) the role guidance might play in preventing dropouts.

⁷ Lichter, loc. cit.

CHAPTER I

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DROPOUTS

At one time the primary function of secondary schools was to prepare able students for college. The boys and girls who could not or would not meet the standards of the curriculum were eliminated. Perhaps there are two basic reasons for guidance people to be concerned about dropouts: (1) to avoid the social loss from under-used potential, and (2) the cost and problems which arise because of the unskilled, the unemployed, and the possible delinquents which are likely to come from the dropout group.

Educators recognize that the needs of some children are not being met in the schools. Schreiber reports,

Education's response to the challenge has not lagged; programs are under way throughout the nation on the local, state, and federal levels. No single image adequately characterizes the dropout. We have discovered, for example, that the rate of dropout is as high in rural as in urban areas.⁸

⁸Daniel Schreiber, "School Dropouts," NEA Journal, LI (May, 1962) p 52.

In regard to the characteristics of the dropout, Schreiber says, "Though the dropout is of no single type, research of a wide variety concurs indicating certain constants in the school environment which tend to characterize him and shed some light on his predicament."⁹ He goes on to discuss the characteristics:

Reading remains the fundamental educational skill; without it no student can perform adequately in any subject. Yet studies from every section of the country testify that the average dropout is at least two years retarded in reading ability by the time he quits school. The consequences are obvious: dropouts fail three times as many courses as 'stay-ins' and nine of every ten dropouts have been retained in some grade at least one year.

At the same time, the records of I Q scores indicate that the average dropout is by no means uneducable. He tends, on the average, to score lower than his in-school counterpart, but the nationwide study conducted by the U. S. Department of Labor showed that seventy per cent of the dropouts surveyed had registered I Q scores above ninety. An intensive six-year study in the state of New York revealed that thirteen per cent of the dropouts had I Q scores above 110.

A majority of dropouts come from families of the lower socioeconomic categories--families where the father is often missing, where cultural background and horizons are limited, where education is viewed with indifference or distrust, if not open resentment.¹⁰

Albert J. Riendeau states from his observations of dropout studies that the causes fall into one or more of five areas:

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

1. Poor social relationships at school.
2. Lack of personal interest at home or at school.
3. Inability to see value in school subjects.
4. Limited participation in extra-curricular activities.
5. To a lesser degree, early marriages, financial reasons, and enlistment in the armed forces contribute to the high dropout rate.¹¹

Nelson finds these identifiable causes or characteristics for dropouts:

1. Cultural differentiation and deprivation.
2. Lack of individual motivation as this relates to schooling.
3. High level mobility and migrancy, resulting in broken or discontinuous opportunity for schooling.
4. Lack of family encouragement and reinforcement.
5. Mental retardation and intellectual limitations.
6. Unfavorable environmental conditions.
7. Linguistic deficiencies and significantly low attainment in reading and skills of communication.
8. Low levels of aspiration and unrealistic expectations concerning future life roles.¹²

Cassel and Coleman report recurring characteristics among dropouts:

School

Failure of one or more school years. (Usually 1st, 2nd, 8th, or 9th)

¹¹Albert J. Riendeau, "Facing Up to the Dropout Problem," Clearing House, XXXVI (May, 1962) p 523.

¹²Lester W. Nelson, "The Drop-Out Problem--A Growing Educational Concern Today," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLV (April, 1961) p 276.

A year or more behind in reading or arithmetic at seventh grade level.
 Poor school attendance and numerous truanancies.
 Little or no participation in extracurricular school activities.
 Attendance marks are predominantly below C.
 Expresses little interest in school or learning.
 Evidences strong resentment towards school control.

Social

Very few friends and associates, and is not well liked by peers.
 Poor general and personal adjustment.
 Distrustful and resentful towards adults.
 Has feelings of "not belonging."
 Girls tend to go steady with older boys.
 Boys tend to own a car.
 Often in difficulty with community agencies and the law.

Personal

Usually purposeless and has no personal goals for achievement.
 Low scholastic aptitude (I Q's above 109--six per cent, below 90--forty-six per cent)
 Sixteen years of age or older.
 Physically is either quite small or quite large for age group.
 Frequently ill and usually easily fatigued.

Family

Usually from weak or broken home.
 From low-income group, and usually from trade or labor occupations.
 Education of parents usually below eighth-grade level.
 Often there are five or more children in the family.
 Attitude of parents toward graduation negative or vascillating.

Reasons Pupils Give for Dropout

- Not interested in school.
- Prefer work to school.
- Need to help support home financially.
- Wants to get married, or girls has become pregnant.
- Wants to enlist in military service.¹³

Berston, from his studies of dropouts at San Francisco

Continuation High School, concludes:

" . . . a larger percentage than average have been found to have certain physical, psychological, and sociological characteristics in common:

1. Dropouts as a group tend to be below normal in health.
2. Records will usually show low grades and many failure marks.
3. Boys and girls come from the poorer and older districts of the city.
4. Often come from large families and many times parents work.
5. Is socially maladjusted and is profoundly discouraged."¹⁴

Thompson and Nelson, who are on the teaching staff of the Department of Secondary Professional Education at Northern Illinois University, summarize the characteristics of the dropout as reported by the Research Division of the NEA:

¹³Russell N. Cassel and Jack C. Coleman, "A Critical Examination of the School Dropout, Reluctant Learner, and Abler Non-College Student Problem," The National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLVI (November, 1962) p 61-2.

¹⁴H. M. Berston, "The School Dropout Problem," Clearing House, XXXV (December, 1960) p 208.

The average dropout is sixteen years old; often he has been marking time, waiting to reach the age when he may legally quit school. He is most likely to quit between the ninth and tenth, or between tenth and eleventh grades. It is especially likely that he will not return after a summer vacation.

As a rule, the dropout has shunned participation in extracurricular activities, and he may have failed to become part of a social group within the school.

Usually his relationships with his teachers and with many of his fellow students indicate tension, suspicion, and strain. His poor attendance record, lack of interest, and failure to cooperate have contributed to his being retarded by about two years. Before leaving school, he may have spent as many years there as one who graduates, but because he has probably been held back rather than promoted regularly, he will not have completed the full program by the end of his attendance period.

The typical dropout's parents are unimpressed with the value of education; often they openly scorn 'book learning.' In addition, the family is likely to regard school as a financial burden; not only does it cost something to keep a child in school, but the family is deprived of the money which the boy or girl could be contributing to the budget.¹⁵

The Quincy Youth Development Project

In the State of Illinois, an intensive study of all early school leavers was made by the Quincy Youth Development Project in an

¹⁵Michael L. Thompson and Robert H. Nelson, "Twelve Approaches to Remedy the Dropout Problem," Clearing House, XXXVIII (December, 1963) p 201.

average community of about 50,000 population. The data obtained from the study was confirmed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the auspices of Title V, National Defense Education Act, as representative of the statewide situation from its survey of early school leavers.

Charles V. Matthews, Research Associate Quincy Youth Development Project, reports the findings of the study:

The study discovered that about 32 per cent of the children in an age group dropped out of school between the sixth and 12th grades. Dropouts left school at ages from 14 to 18, with the highest number of dropouts between ages 16 and 16 1/2; and 17.5 per cent left school after reaching the age of 17 1/2. They left school as early as grade seven and as late as one month before graduation in the 12th grade.

The incidence of dropping out of school and the causes and consequences vary widely with geographic region, from urban to rural populations, and in relation to local employment opportunities. Thus one would expect the causes of early school leaving to be vastly different in South Chicago than in a rural community.

Despite all differences, early school leaving is a fact in every community in Illinois and in the nation. It is a serious problem for all but the most fortunate communities. Dropouts in this study had an average intelligence significantly below the group staying in school. However, approximately four per cent of the dropouts were in the highest quarter of the class and 18 per cent of the dropouts were in the highest quarter of the class in intelligence. Dropouts appeared to be significantly lower in socioeconomic status than

students who stayed in school. No upper-status students dropped out of school and only one upper-middle-class child left school early.

Socioeconomic characteristics of the drop-outs.

The dropout resides to a greater extent in homogeneous areas of deteriorating homes and low-income housing developments than do stayins of similar social status. Also, they attended in greater percentages elementary schools where a majority of the families were of lower socioeconomic status. Despite lower socioeconomic status, dropouts did not seem to be forced to leave school because of absolute financial inadequacy; however, it was apparent from personal interviews with each student dropping out and with the controls who stayed in school that the dropout felt a considerable financial handicap.

Personal and social adjustment. Dropouts scored significantly below stayin students on measures of personality adjustment. This variation could have been partially due to the lower average intelligence of the dropout. However, when these factors were controlled by comparing dropouts to a matched stayin group, the dropout was particularly lacking in the personality characteristics necessary to achieve status and social maturity. He was easily disorganized and pessimistic about his occupational future. He found himself often on the defensive in social situations and was unable to command the work habits necessary to succeed.

School adjustment. The dropout's difficulty with school begins very early in elementary school and is apparent in several ways by the time he reaches the upper elementary grades. The dropout population studied was retarded four times as often as the entire stayin group Dropouts received lower grades throughout their school career and were consistently retarded in reading; however, there was evidence to indicate that only after the fourth grade did his rate of yearly reading gain fall off sufficiently to make him a retarded reader The dropout student does not

actively participate in the extracurricular activities of the school. Although a majority of the dropouts have some contact with extracurricular activities most of them attend entertainment events or meetings only once or twice.

Dropouts' reasons for leaving school. Lack of academic success and inability to connect the school curriculum with interest and practical goals were verbalized by many dropouts. Financial inadequacy was given by only 16 per cent of the dropouts as a reason for leaving school; in half of these cases the need for a job and money stemmed from the desire for a car, clothes, or other peer-status symbols rather than more basic needs.

Society and family influences. The influence of mass media, family disorientations, working mothers, and more adolescent freedom, has created a situation in which the child, particularly the lower class child, grows up early. By sixteen he can drive a car, and has learned to imitate and greatly desire most of the accouterments of the adult world. In contrast, the present labor market does not offer jobs for these people who wish to grow up too early. To an extent the dropout realizes this; but more often than not he succumbs to the lure of the small amount of money to be had at a temporary or marginal job and only too late finds that it does not offer sufficient recompense nor security for independence and that the road to better employment in the near future is closed to him by his action.¹⁶

Dorothy Greathouse did a study of the 1962-63 dropouts at Mattoon High School. The group studied consisted of sixty dropouts, which included thirty-five boys and twenty-five girls. This

¹⁶Charles V. Matthews, "The Serious Problem of the School Dropout," Illinois Education, L, number 5 (January, 1962) p 210-12.

study reveals that the majority of the dropouts left school at sixteen and seventeen years of age. This age group accounted for 73.33 per cent of the sixty dropping out.

The tenth and eleventh grades were equal in the number of dropouts. Many of the eleventh graders who gave up were discouraged and felt that the attainment of enough credits to earn their diploma was too far in the future.

The attendance figures reveal absenteeism is greater than school average. The majority of the dropouts were absent more than one-fourth of the days enrolled in school during the year in which they dropped.

Twenty of the thirty-five boys had been suspended from school one or more times. None of the girls had been suspended from school, but most of them had cut classes one or more times. Nearly all of the sixty dropouts had skipped school.

Of the reasons given for leaving school, military service and employment were most dominant for the boys. Marriage accounted for 56 per cent of the reasons given by the twenty-five girls.

The average intelligence score of the sixty dropouts was 99.67. It was also evident from the results that the girls rated higher in intelligence than the boys.

Both the boys and girls were under-achieving. Of the total dropouts, 58.33 per cent were below the fiftieth percentile on the Iowa test.

The dropouts were making average and better grades in the early elementary years. By the time they entered the seventh grade only one made A's; 32 per cent of them were making a D average. In the ninth grade none of them were making A's, and eight were failing for the year. Sixteen per cent had to repeat a grade.

Most of the dropouts came from the low average to low socio-economic level.¹⁷

Charles Morrison from his study of dropouts in the ninth and tenth grades, makes these conclusions:

1. The compulsory age limit for school attendance of sixteen is the age at which most ninth and tenth grade dropouts leave.
2. I Q is positively related to remaining in the ninth and tenth grades. (Median I Q was 82 for the ninth grade dropouts and 89 for the tenth grade dropouts).
3. Retardation (being too old for the grade) is related to dropping out of the ninth and tenth grades.
4. Broken families may be conducive to dropping out of school.
5. Education of the parent may be related to remaining in school.
6. Family size is negatively related to remaining in school.
7. Boys dropping out tend not to participate successfully in athletics, that is, in regard to relations with teammates, relations with the coach, and eligibility.
8. Dropouts are not extensive participators in extra-curricular activities.
9. The most prevalent reasons for dropouts in the study are: (1) lack of interest, (2) academic (poor grades), and (3) left school to work.
10. Most dropouts feel that high school graduation would have been helpful to them, although boys feel this more strongly than girls.
11. Most dropouts state that they will encourage others to graduate from high school.¹⁸

¹⁷Dorothy A. Greathouse, "A Descriptive Study of the 1962-63 Dropouts at Mattoon High School" (unpublished Master's thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1963), pp 40-3.

¹⁸Charles W. Morrison, "A Study of the Characteristics of Pupil Dropouts With Special Reference to the Ninth and Tenth Grades of United Township High School East Moline, Illinois" (unpublished Master's thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1960), pp 51-2.

Edward Cook¹⁹ compared dropout and nonleavers during the 1952-53 school year at Atlanta high school, and concluded that the greatest difference, among the two groups was in measured intelligence. He found that the language I Q of the dropout was considerably below that of the nonleaver, but the nonlanguage I Q was higher than his language I Q. Perhaps because of his language disability, the dropout's level of reading achievement is significantly lower than that of the nonleaver. Penty found a relationship between reading ability and withdrawal from high school. "Three times as many poor readers as good readers dropped out of school, and the likelihood of a poor reader's dropping out was greater when other factors pressuring a student toward withdrawal were present."²⁰

Cook²¹ found that dropouts in his study, averaged D grades while the nonleavers averaged a high C. Failure in school seems to be closely related to dropping out. Dropouts are often grade repeaters; also, they show a general decline in scholarship from the elementary to high school.

Cook's study also revealed the reasons for leaving school

¹⁹Edward S. Cook, "An Analysis of Factors Related to Withdrawal from High School Prior to Graduation," Journal of Educational Research, L (November, 1956) p 194.

²⁰Ruth C. Penty, "Reading Ability and High-School Drop-Outs," Education Digest, XXV (February, 1960) p 2.

²¹Cook, op. cit., p 195.

as given by the dropouts: going to work (39.6 per cent), dislike of school (20.9 per cent), marriage (20.9 per cent), failing courses (9.4 per cent), needed at home (4.6 per cent), left home (2.3 per cent) and administrative request (2.3 per cent). On the other hand, in the opinion of the school counselor the reasons were: failure and retardation (34.9 per cent), home circumstances (28.1 per cent), marriage (20.2 per cent), feeling of rejection (9.6 per cent), and conflicts with teachers (7.2 per cent).²²

The counselor's responsibility for early identification of the dropout is clear. Early identification is necessary if anything is to be done to prevent early school leaving. Much of the information needed by the counselor can be found from (a) teacher opinion about the dropout, (b) opinions of the dropouts themselves, (c) comparisons of dropouts with students who finish with respect to intelligence, sex, age, average marks, socioeconomic status of the family, race, and health, (d) examination of evidence in the cumulative record of the dropout, and (e) personal interviews with the dropout and his family. Matthews suggests the following table²³ showing the grade level at which the factors characteristic of dropouts could be reported.

²²Ibid.

²³Matthews, op. cit., p 212.

Identifying the Dropout-Prone Student

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Intelligence		x		x			x		x
Social status	x						x		
Achievement	x			x			x		x
Reading Level	x			x		x	x		x
Social Adjustment	x	x	x				x		x
	(by teacher)					(by objective test)			
Personal Adjustment	x	x	x				x		x
	(by teacher)					(by objective test)			

The immediate cause of school leaving may be a failed examination, a disagreement with a teacher or the chance to get a job at the shoe factory, but the basic causes are usually multiple and of long standing. In summary the characteristics from the studies generally show:

1. Consistent failure to achieve in regular school work.
2. Grade level placement two or more years below the average for the grade.
3. Irregular attendance.
4. Active dislike for school personnel.
5. Disinterest in school and "feelings of not being wanted."
6. Low scholastic aptitude and low reading ability.
7. Frequent changes of school.

8. Non-acceptance by the school personnel and classmates.
9. Unhappy family situation.
10. Difference from schoolmates in size, interests, social class, or personality development.
11. Inability to afford the normal financial needs of school.
12. Non-participation in extra-curricular activities.
13. Performance below potential.
14. Being a discipline case.

There is little value in determining the characteristics of potential dropouts in the school district, unless the information is used to reduce the dropout rate, and alert teachers, school personnel and the community to the problem. Having attempted to identify the characteristics of the potential dropouts in the school district, the counselor could begin to consider specific projects and activities which will result in a reduction of the dropout rate.

CHAPTER II

PROJECTS AND SUGGESTIONS TO HELP AVERT DROPOUTS

Many of the studies concerning the identification of the dropout have also offered suggestions for reduction of the dropout rate. The writer here presents several of the programs. As of this writing there has been no proven program which is completely effective. Young suggests,

Anything the counselor can do to encourage provisions for educational experiences designed to be uniquely appropriate in meeting the differing educational needs of students can be expected to have a positive influence in reducing the school dropout rate.²⁴

Jim Ribbeck, Coordinator of Guidance and Research Aurora Public Schools (East) makes these suggestions for counselor's responsibilities to all potential dropouts:

During the first term of the school year each counselor should identify the potential dropouts among his counselees. The counselor should make a special effort to work closely with these students and to get to know each of them well before the end of the first term.

²⁴Joe M. Young, "Can Counseling Reduce Dropouts?," The Clearing House, XXX (September, 1955) p 23.

The counselor should be especially aware of how he relates to contact in individual or group counseling situations or in informal or incidental associations as in school activities or even in the school corridors, it is important that the counselor attempt to do the following things:

1. Make a special effort to develop an acceptant and understanding attitude toward the potential dropout. Attempt to convey to him that you accept him with all his limitations even though you may not agree with his behavior or attitude on some occasions.
2. Encourage participation in activities whereby the potential dropout can obtain some positive recognition.
3. Whenever possible, give the potential dropout credit for effort in spite of the fact that he may not achieve anywhere near the academic standards set for his grade level.
4. Assist the potential dropout in every possible way to relate his school experiences to life situations.
5. Attempt to get him involved in remedial experiences, especially in the area of reading, when appropriate.
6. Help the potential dropout's parents to gain a more realistic understanding of their child and how they can help him to become a better adjusted and more effective student.
7. Refer students with special problems to school specialists such as social workers, speech correctionists, etc. and to out-of-school agencies.
8. Assist the potential dropout to develop a positive attitude toward school attendance.
9. Emphasize the point that a high school diploma greatly enhances the possibility of success in our society.²⁵

²⁵Jim Ribbeck, "Practical Research Can Reduce the Dropout Problem," The IGPA Newsletter, No. 11 (Spring, 1964) p 27.

Claude C. Willis, Jr. suggests:

1. Giving pupils of limited ability work within their capacity and remedial reading and remedial arithmetic.
2. Steering pupils of limited ability to vocational work.
3. Putting potential leavers in classes of more sympathetic teachers.
4. Conferring with potential leaver's teachers to find ways of helping him get a feeling of success and to get the feeling that teachers are interested in him.
5. Letting potential leavers earn their lunches or helping them get a part-time job.
6. Giving girls reasons for waiting until they are mature to marry.²⁶

Most studies report that curricular adjustments are necessary to combat the dropout problem. Matthews says:

Central among the curricular adjustments which are implied for the academically unsuccessful dropout-prone student are the preparation of boys for vocational success at a level appropriate to their ability. The high-school program for the slow learner (possibly beginning in the ninth grade for some) should consist in part of closely supervised part-time work experience in business, industry, and/or realistic 'make-work' programs. By the last year of high school the erst-while dropout student should be learning and practicing habits of responsibility and, secondarily, skills which would make him immediately employable upon graduation.

²⁶Claude C. Willis, Jr., "Program To Decrease the Number of Early School Leavers," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principales, XL (September, 1956) p 95.

Work programs need to be supplemented by sufficient school instruction in basic communication skills and elective curricula to ensure the possibility of informed citizenship.²⁷

Generally speaking, the Quincy Report recommends (1) early grouping of children with like abilities for instructional purposes, (2) providing remedial teaching for those who need it and group and individual counseling for pupils and parents, (3) preparation of youth, especially boys, for vocational success by providing counseling and closely supervised work-experience programs, and (4) for girls, preparation for marriage and family living.

Smith and Miller have drawn on reports recently received by U. S. Commissioner of Education Keppel from cities which received allocations from President Kennedy's Emergency Fund for campaigns to keep dropouts and potential dropouts in school. They have listed some of the things school systems have turned their attention to in helping with the dropout problem:

1. Improved personal counseling to help students realize their goals, select appropriate courses of study, and find ways of overcoming their problems.
2. Special classes, after school study programs, tutorial help, and other means of giving students the individual attention they need to do better scholastic work.

²⁷Matthews, op. cit., p 212.

3. Release of certain students from fixed school regulations to allow them to take the courses they want and need, or to study part time so that they want and need to graduate, or to take a part-time job.

4. Improved cocurricular offerings to make the school more interesting and attractive.

5. Greater involvement of the school with the community, including welfare and other public agencies, to meet student's social and economic needs that have a bearing on their attendance and success in school.²⁸

In his study of potential dropouts and the effects of special attention, establishing friendship relations with students by teachers and counselors, inviting consultants to discuss delinquency and dropout problems with staff and personnel, field trips, and formal and informal counseling interviews with the students, Davis recommends:

. . . that counseling staffs in local schools identify potential dropouts and establish friendly interpersonal relationships with these students as early as feasible. The teaching staff should be made acquainted with the characteristics of potential dropouts and their peculiar needs. A combination of these factors apparently makes the student feel as though they are wanted in the school and seems to affect significantly their behavior in school.²⁹

²⁸Hyrum M. Smith and Leonard M. Miller, "Doors Were Opened," A Commentary on the 1963 Dropout Campaign, School Life, XLVI (January, 1964) p 8-10.

²⁹Donald A. Davis, "An Experimental Study of Potential Dropouts," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XL (May, 1962) p 799.

John H. O'Neill, Associate Professor of Education at De Paul University, has discussed the dropout problem with forty-three high school counselors. He hoped to arrive at some measures which could be taken so as to reduce the number of high school dropouts. From these discussions came the recommendations:

1. Take frequent inventory of the ability and achievement of pupils in elementary school. To do this in the primary grades is not too early. Classes should be organized annually on the basis of achievement. This would make provision for slow learners, the gifted and other specialized groups.

2. The rate of teaching subject matter content should be adjusted to suit the ability and other needs of the group levels. Slow learners may spend more time in elementary school but they will enjoy success at what they are doing. The carry-over implications here are tremendous.

3. Comparisons should be made between class performance and ability as shown by test scores and teacher's observations.

4. Early spotting of important lags between achievement and ability makes possible early analysis by classroom teachers, counselors, and parents and paves the way for correction of interferences.

5. Class size for average classes should be kept at reasonable levels. For slow learners smaller class size is a must.

6. Expanded personnel services are needed in high school, not only to help the student to perform to his ability, but also to provide him with information so that he may choose subjects of

maximum help in his fields of interest and ability. The potential dropout is more in need of these services than is the average student.³⁰

Several cities have work-study programs, either in progress or planned, as a measure to help prevent dropouts. Students in these programs attend school part of the day and work the rest; they receive credit for satisfactory job performances, and some are paid for the work they do. They are counseled throughout their course of study. Most projects of this type require the cooperation of school authorities, parents, and officials of local industries and business firms to make the jobs available.

Bayley cites some of the projects initiated by several cities:

Southfield, Michigan, initiated a work-study program in cooperation with the Bell Telephone Company. Ten girl students are enrolled.

Washington, D. C., has a special junior high school project for dropout-prone students. Students spend half of each day getting practical training in printing, electrical work, or domestic work. Some work as nursery aides and hospital attendants.

Canton, Ohio, added to its school system a diversified work experience program for selected students with low academic ratings and students in special education programs.

³⁰John H. O'Neill, "High School Dropouts," Education, LXXX (November, 1963) p 159.

The Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port District, Huron City Michigan, has begun a program in cooperation with local industry. Seniors in the program work half of each day as apprentices under the supervision of an instructor.

Union Township High, Union, New York, permits seniors in a special program to work as apprentices in the afternoon. Eight local firms are cooperating. Students are paid at the same rate as regular apprentices and are assigned to work that is 'interesting, not just simple or repetitive.'³¹

Slotkin reports on three New York City experimental projects designed to prevent early school leaving and to rehabilitate those who left before graduation. The projects were started in February, 1961 and the evaluation finished in June, 1963.

The three experiments were conceived as a coordinated attack on major aspects of the drop-out problem. Project I, provided a study, work, and guidance program designed to retain potential dropouts until graduation; Project II, was an evening school program for school-oriented dropouts; Project III, a program of pre-employment preparation, job placement, and follow-up, was intended for school-alienated work-oriented boys and girls. In all of these programs the growth of actual or potential dropouts toward clearer, more realistic vocational goals was regarded as central to motivating achievement at school and at work. The results of the evaluation:

³¹Monica Bayley, "A Renewed Effort to Solve the Problem of Dropout," School Life, XLVI (December, 1963) p 15.

Project I

In Project I, a study, work, and guidance program of dropout prevention, the primary goal was the retention of the experimental boys and girls in school until graduation. Failing this, it was a purpose to prepare for improved achievement and adjustment at work.

In the attainment of its primary goals, high school graduation and improved achievement, the project was successful. Over the experimental period of more than a year and a half, 64 per cent of the potential dropouts in the experimental group either graduated or were still in school. In addition, the students in the experimental group were superior in scholarship and in teachers' ratings of their dependability, cooperation, courtesy, and appearance.

Project II

The evening schools program, Project II, was designed for sixteen-year-old boys and girls who left school but were sufficiently school orientated to be induced to go to evening school for a diploma or for the improvement of work skills. A counselor was provided in each of the experimental evening schools to ease the student-worker over the inevitable school and work problems that arise.

Evaluation showed that in school adjustment and achievement, in the attainment of clear, realistic vocational goals, and in the attitudes of students, parents, and employers toward the school programs, the experimental students proved to be significantly better than the controls. Of particular meaning was the success of the experimental boys and girls at work. Their unemployment rate was less than half that of the controls, and they were rated superior in work performance and attitude by their employers.

Project III

Project III was intended for the most difficult teenagers, those who were alienated from school

and are lacking in employability. Specifically, it was the purpose of this project to prepare students for employment in one month, help students to begin the process of attaining clear, realistic vocational goals, assist in the student's job adjustment, and return as many as possible to the regular stream of education.

The findings of the evaluation showed that in school adjustment, in the attainment of clear, realistic vocational goals, and in the attitudes of students, parents and employers to the school programs, the experimental boys and girls were significantly better. Moreover, these youngsters, who were deemed alienated, returned to full-time school in greater numbers than did their matched control counterparts.

In dealing with the dropout problem, there has been a tendency to concentrate on the expansion of educational and vocational opportunities with the expectation that these opportunities would be self-motivating. The results obtained in the Projects suggest that for self-motivation to occur, it is equally important to focus on the vocational development of each individual. The development of new educational and vocational opportunities must be accompanied by attention to the vocational development of those who enter these opportunities to produce the best results.

If careful attention to the vocational development of dropouts can improve their achievement at school and at work, it is suggested that similar treatment for all underachieving students may effect some improvement in their educational attainment.³²

³²Herman Slotkin, "New Programs for Dropouts," Vocational Guidance Quarterly, XII (Winter, 1963-4) p 127-30.

Bond says of keeping students in school:

To keep youth in school, attention must be focused on a meaningful curriculum, enlightened guidance efforts, and a program of financial aid. All students do not want the same things from school. They should be provided the type of training and education best suited to them as individuals and their expected needs as adults. Guidance programs should early identify the potential dropouts and begin administering measures designed to hold them in school. Basic step: a critical evaluation of the curriculum. Provision of technical and vocational courses helps meet the requirements of students for whom academic work fills no real need; complement basic selection of electives; give remedial work in academic studies; provide extra-curricular activities for all; find ways to meet financial hardship through cooperative work programs. ³³

Schreiber adds his comments on dropouts and school:

A large number of dropouts could and would be salvaged by the classroom teacher if conditions within the classroom were more advantageous. Generally, in the overlarge classes of many schools, the most sympathetic of teachers simply cannot afford to give the potential dropout the additional individual attention he needs if he is to overcome the problem presented by his limited background.

The outcome of any school endeavor is bound to be affected by the atmosphere of the student's home, and by the attitudes to which he is exposed outside the school. Any redemptive or preventive effort of the school will have to function within the student's

³³T. J. Bond, "The High School Dropout," National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin, XLVI (September, 1962) p 183.

total environment and will depend heavily on the school's staff of guidance counselors and school-community coordinators. ³⁴

In regard to early treatment of the potential dropout,

Thompson and Nelson and Cassel and Coleman reply:

Treating the symptoms never removes the cause. Therefore, a concrete approach is definitely needed if the dropout is ever going to become extinct. For this program to be successful, it is necessary to spot the potential dropout as early as possible and apply the eventual cure. ³⁵

The potential dropout and the reluctant learner all have histories of unsatisfactory experiences that date to early primary grades. Attention should be focused on reasons for ineffective early learning experiences, with a view toward specialized remedial programs in reading, arithmetic, and human relations. During the latter elementary and secondary years, broader curriculum offerings might be afforded through such additions as tutoring machines, additional class periods, and television. ³⁶

The National Education Association has begun an intensive program aimed at reducing the school dropout rate. The program,

³⁴Schreiber, loc. cit.

³⁵Thompson and Nelson, loc. cit.

³⁶Cassel and Coleman, loc. cit.

backed by the Ford Foundation, will also try to establish what the role of schools should be in serving the educational needs of unemployed, out-of-school youths between the ages of sixteen and twenty.

The NEA plans to set up a national clearing house to collect, analyze, and keep current information on efforts to deal with the dropout and youth unemployment problems. It will provide services for schools and community agencies, and will sponsor conferences in such areas as the effect of reading ability, motivation, work-study programs, and migrant pupils.

The 1960 White House Conference made the following recommendations in regard to school dropouts:

1. That elementary teachers and counselors be educated to recognize and to help potential dropouts at the earliest stage.
2. That the school curriculum be made more interesting and meaningful with remedial and supportive services, especially for retarded and undermotivated youngsters, children of migrant workers, and other economically and culturally deprived families.
3. That guidance services give more attention to potential dropouts at all levels, stressing the importance of education and preparation for work.

4. That parents be brought in to participate in educational and vocational planning with a qualified counselor at the time their children drop out.
5. That school building facilities and personnel be available day and evening on a twelve-month basis to serve the needs of dropouts.³⁷

Schools have no control over some of the factors, perhaps the most significant factors, which contribute to school dropout. They cannot, for example, produce the necessary change in the socioeconomic and cultural background of the pupil or the attitude of his family or neighborhood toward education. They can, of course, at least try to reduce school-induced practices which emphasize differences in background.

In summary, the findings and recommendations of the forgoing studies basically agree in the following areas as being effective in reducing the dropout problem: (1) identify the potential dropout, (2) counsel the student and parents, (3) provide special studies leading to curriculum changes, (4) make more flexible student schedules, (5) improve teaching methods, and (6) develop new technical and vocational education programs and expansion of those in existence.

³⁷ E. H. Mellon and Merle B. Karnes, "The School Dropouts: American Educators Number One Problem," Illinois Education, LII (March, 1964) p 299.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS

There is little debate about the value of keeping pupils in school as long as possible. The problem is to discover why schools are not holding more of their pupils through graduation and what can be done about it.

Guidance has little value after the student has made up his mind to leave school. For this reason, it is recommended that counselors collect information on the student early in an effort to discover potential dropouts.

The great concern with dropouts has led schools to evaluate their guidance services and school program on the basis of a reduction in the numbers of students who leave school before graduation. Until they have the best of all possible school systems, and that may take time, it would seem unlikely that all students are best serving their goals. Before dropping out is to be avoided, it needs to be shown that the school is contributing more to the student's education than would the things he would do if he were not in school.

The symptoms of potential dropouts tend to come from

one or more of the areas of social, cultural, intellectual, or economic. It is possible for the counselor to identify these students through information from cumulative folders, teacher reports and observations, interviews, and testing and comparisons of potential dropouts with students who finish with respect to intelligence, sex, age, marks, socioeconomic status of the family, race, and health.

Failure in school seems to be closely related to dropping out. Also reading ability was found to be a significant cause of dropouts. The writer feels that curriculum changes must be made as a part of the program for reduction of dropouts. The guidance counselor can be instrumental in curriculum change if he will study the needs of his potential dropouts. This kind of curriculum change recognizes that individual differences in intelligence and aptitude will exist, that there are differences in mental and physical health and emotional stability, and that there are great differences in the social, economic, and cultural backgrounds of individual students.

It should be pointed out here that the counselor can be instrumental in identifying dropouts and help these students make the necessary adjustments to the school environment in which he

will feel successful. However, the guidance counselor cannot do the job alone. He needs the cooperation and support of the board of education, administration, teachers and community. Guidance alone cannot solve the problem of dropouts. It requires the team work of counselor, school and community.

A work experience program in school, a part of each day to work for pay, is suggested by several writers of the dropout problem. In some programs, study and work are closely related, and in others the school simply makes it possible for those who want to work to do so.

School and work programs can make it possible for those who must leave school for economic reasons to continue their education. They can also be useful in vocational guidance, for actual experience on a job may help to clarify the occupational interests and preferences of the student. Perhaps the value of education can be realized in such a program.

Part of school success may come from happy experiences in activities. Students should have available, experiences which will help them to overcome feelings of insecurity. Counselors can serve in this area by helping students select areas of activity in which they can actively participate with the feeling of belonging and contributing to the school environment.

Guidance can be effective in keeping students in school if the counselor helps them to realize their goals, select appropriate subjects in which they can feel a certain amount of success and help the student find ways of overcoming his problems.

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