

Experiences and Perceptions of Dropout Recovery for Adults:

Case Studies on Older High School
Graduates

Lori Bogen

Researcher's Background

- Qualifications related to research:
 - 25 years in Elementary & Secondary Education
 - 4 as instructional assistant
 - 17 as teacher
 - 4 as administrator
 - Family & student advocate throughout career

Researcher's Background (Cont.)

- Bachelor's in Management & Organizational Leadership
- Master of Arts in Teaching
 - Elementary Endorsement k-9
 - Spanish & ESOL Endorsements all levels
 - Global Career Development Facilitator Credential
 - Initial Administrator Licensure
 - Ensuing PhD - June, 2014

Researcher's Background (Cont.)

➤ Life Experience

- High risk childhood
- Family influence - special needs populations
- Crisis intervention, suicide prevention, & family nurturing
- Completed Fulbright Teaching Exchange

Topic Background

➤ Why this topic?

- Dropout Phenomenon - national crisis
- Much research on causes for dropping out (Rumberger, 2011)
- Many prevention and intervention strategies developed
- However, gap regarding dropout recovery (Burrow & Smith, 2007)

Topic Background

➤ Statistics of need

- No significant reduction in dropout rates over the last 40 years (Heckman, Humphries, Lafontaine, & Rodriguez, 2012)
- GED is not an equivalent option (Heckman & Lafontaine, 2010)
- Workforce needs and educational expectations changing (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010)
- Dropouts affect socioeconomic health of the nation (Rouse, 2005)

Purpose of the Research

- The purpose of this study is to investigate the recovery processes and experiences of students who initially dropped out of high school, yet returned as adults to graduate

Importance of the Research

This research may:

- increase awareness of the over-age dropout population
- inform educational institutions
- influence policy-makers
- Inform my practice & future research endeavors

Theoretical Framework

- › Life Course Perspective (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Elder, 1998)
- › Transformative Research with Critical Theory Construct (Mertens, 2012; Freire, 1985)
- 3. Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky in Liu & Chen, 2010)

Life Course Perspective

- › Principle of Life-Span Development
- › Principle of Agency
- Principle of Time & Place
- Principle of Timing
- Principle of Linked Lives

Transformative Research & Critical Theory

- “...researchers consciously and explicitly position themselves side by side with the less powerful in a joint effort to bring about social transformation” (Mertens, 2012, p. 21)
- Critical theory's emancipatory agenda fits within the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2011)

Sociocultural Theory

- › Learning within the context of social interaction
- › Between persons of different levels
- › Through use of cultural signs and tools—the most significant of which is language
- › (Vygotsky in Liu & Chen, 2010)

History of the Purpose of Education

- › No reference in Constitution (Pelikan, 2005)
- › From moralization to socialization (Fuhrman & Lazerson, 2005)
- › Citizenship (Reuben, 2005)
- › American democracy (Darling-Hammond, 1996)

Dropout Literature

- › Nearly 1.3 million drop out each year (Snyder & Dillow, 2010)
- › Cumulative process (Myers, 1996)
- › Low SES, low skills, & behavior (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007)
- › Push & Pull (Jordan, McPartland, & Lara, 1999)

Impact of Dropping Out

- › Lower life-time earnings
- › Poorer health
- › Higher criminal activity
- › Higher dependence on social services
- › Lost tax revenue for society
- › Lost human potential (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009)

Prevention, Intervention, & Alternative Education

- › More than \$300 million from federal government
- › Annenberg and Gates Foundations - another \$3 billion plus
- › Three main approaches
 - Targeted approaches - students identified & extra services added
 - Comprehensive - whole school change
 - Systemic - compulsory age, diploma requirements, school choice
(Rumberger, 2011)

SPECIFICS ON METHODOLOGY

Site & Participant Selection

- **The Excel Center**
Indianapolis, Indiana

The Excel Center is a high-quality, free public charter school for older youth and adults looking for a tuition-free school that provides a high school diploma. The school also pays tuition costs for students to earn industry-recognized certificates or begin undergraduate degrees at higher-learning institutions.

SPECIFICS ON METHODOLOGY

Site & Participant Selection

Gordon Bernell Charter School Albuquerque, New Mexico

GBCS is not your average high school. It's a high school with a curriculum and an environment designed specifically to accommodate adult students who haven't been in school for awhile. This includes inmates at the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center, recently released inmates in the Bernalillo Community Custody Program as well as any adults who want to get their lives back on track. You don't have to be an inmate. All are welcome. And there is no upper limit on age.

SPECIFICS ON METHODOLOGY

Data Collection & Analysis

- All interviews recorded and transcribed
- Programs observed
- Demographic information collected
- Data will be organized by theme and by frequency. Cross case synthesis will look for patterns in explanations as well as age correlations

Timeline

- **Complete interviews by April 10, 2014**
- **Compile & analyze data by May 15, 2014**
- **Complete defense by May 31, 2014**
- **Receive PhD in Educational Leadership!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!