

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 276

CE 067 425

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 TITLE Factors Contributing to Employment and Enhancement in Quality of Life of Adult Education Students.
 SPONS AGENCY Ontario Educational Research Council, Toronto.
 PUB DATE Dec 91
 NOTE 57p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Achievement; *Achievement Gains; Adult Education; Adult Students; Educational Research; *Employment Patterns; English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *High School Equivalency Programs; High Schools; *Outcomes of Education; *Quality of Life
 IDENTIFIERS *Ontario (Toronto)

ABSTRACT

A statistical analysis of an adult high school was conducted to determine factors for achievement and enhancement of quality of life of adult learners. Participants were 206 adult students studying English as a Second Language or enrolled in upgrading and business courses at a metropolitan Toronto (Ontario, Canada) secondary school. Variables assessed were as follows: gender, area of learning, quadesters (10-week periods) present, courses completed, employment achieved, co-op placement, work experience, support auspices, responsibilities outside school, age, and plans for continuing education. Findings indicated that the following factors contributed to success in achieving employment and enhancement in quality of life: length of attendance, courses completed, cooperative education placement, financial support, and previous work experience. Students who were present for three quadesters were more likely to achieve employment than those who remained in school longer. Those who came from areas of skilled employment, unskilled employment, and employment outside Canada achieved employment in that order. Students who attended school on a training allowance had the highest likelihood of achieving employment and those working part time or full time outside school achieved employment at a higher rate than those on General Welfare or receiving Family Benefits. In the staff survey on quality of life components that enhanced the lives of students, self-esteem and cultural adjustment were perceived to be most important. (Appendixes include a research flow chart, the survey instrument, and 6 graphs. Contains 39 references.) (YLB)

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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYMENT AND ENHANCEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE OF ADULT EDUCATION STUDENTS

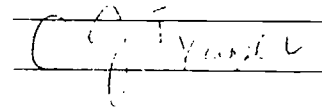
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I. INTRODUCTION

The rationale for adult education is being addressed in Canada, the United States and many other parts of the world. This research will present a clear understanding of factors relating to achievement and the enhancement of quality of life of adult learners in an adult high school.

Statement of the Problem

There are two aspects of the problem being investigated. The first is to examine factors affecting achievement. The second is to examine the effect of adult education on quality of life.

Variables

Variables being assessed are gender, area of learning, quadesters present, courses completed, employment achieved, co-op placement, work experience, support auspices, responsibilities outside school, age, and plans for continuing education.

Area of learning refers to ESL only, Upgrading only, Business only, ESL and Business, and Upgrading and business.

Quadmesters present refers to the number of 10 week periods of attendance.

Co-Op Placement refers to enrollment in the Co-Op program; and the areas of Co-Op Placement are Canadian Experience, Keyboarding and Word Processing, Accounting, and Data Processing.

Work experience refers to students with the following employment backgrounds: no previous employment, unskilled employment, skilled employment and employment outside Canada.

Responsibilities outside school refers to employment, Home Responsibilities, School only and Other.

Plans for continuing education refers to University, Community College and Other.

The Need for the Study

Statistical analysis of an adult high school will provide scientific and mathematical data to determine the factors for achievement and thus enable both students and staff to address these factors.

Preparation of the Participants

The Student Services Department was chosen to administer permission forms and questionnaires to the entire student population. Care was taken to explain to students that the questionnaire to be done was an educational experiment and their name would not appear in accordance with the Access to Information and Privacy Act.

Definition of Terms

Support Auspices is the method of financial support enabling adult students to attend school: Training Allowances, General Welfare

Assistance, Part-time work, Full-time work, Family Benefits Assistance, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Courses Completed refers to the number of half credit courses completed in a ten week (quadmester) (110 hour) Ontario high school course.

Employment Achieved refers to whether the student is presently employed in the workforce.

Quality of Life refers to achieving collaborative and cooperative interactive processes, autonomy, self-direction, group affiliation, pragmatic knowledge and enhancement of self esteem

II. METHOD

Description of Subjects (Participants)

The 206 students chose to respond to a questionnaire administered to the entire student population of an Adult high school in Metropolitan Toronto.

Description of Instruments

Computer Program Utilized

The SPSS, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, was used.

Questionnaires

There was one examiner-composed questionnaire with input from Student Services, administered. Appendix 1. An examiner-composed quality of life questionnaire was administered to the staff of the adult school. Appendix 2.

Telephone Interviews

All respondents who retired from the attendance rolls were telephoned for follow up to the questionnaire.

Research Design

Random sampling is the process by which a sample is selected in such a way that the selection of one member in no way affects the probability of selection of any other member.

The study is of experimental design, and more specifically, post - test - only experimental design.

Computer runs produced analysis for the measurement of frequency distribution; and cross tabulation measured the relationship between variables.

Procedure

The experiment consisted of administration of a questionnaire, preparation of a database of responses, following students by telephone to determine employment achieved, achieving permission to aggregately list courses completed and quadesters present from Student OSR's.

The staff questionnaire on the quality of life of adult students was administered with voluntary participation.

Computer runs determined frequencies of the variables.

- | | |
|---------|--------------------|
| Table 1 | Gender |
| Table 2 | Area of Learning |
| Table 3 | Quadesters Present |
| Table 4 | Courses Completed |

Table 5 Employment Achieved

Table 6 Co-Op Placement

Table 7 Work Experience

Table 8 Support Auspices

Table 9 Age

Crosstabulations were:

Table 10 Employment Achieved by Area of Learning

Table 11 Employment Achieved by Quadesters Present

Table 12 Employment Achieved by Work Experience

Table 13 Employment Achieved by Support Auspices

Table 14 Employment Achieved by Age

Table 15 Courses Completed by Area of Learning

Table 16 Courses Completed by Co-Op Placement

Table 17 Courses Completed by Responsibilities Outside School

Table 18 Courses Completed by Work Experience

Table 19 Courses Completed by Support Auspices

Table 20 Courses Completed by Age

Table 21 Employment Achieved by Area of Learning

Table 22 Quality of Life Factors

Review of the Literature

Future Implications and Process

Research studies in adult education have varying problems investigated for future implications and the process by which adult education is achieved. California State Department of Education (1989) formulated a strategic plan for the 21st century to ensure that adult education will be a self-renewing institution that continually readjusts to meet the needs of a changing society. Barton (1982) investigated the collaborative approaches of five (states) communities which broadened work education councils to improve access by adults. Forrester (1982) studied students entering career/technical programs in British Columbia Community Colleges and Institutes and developed the role of the Open Learning Institute.

Studies on female adult education were completed by Ahmed (1987) reviewing the effect of technology on the poorest SE Asian women who lost their jobs or did not receive training.

Guglielmino (1986) investigating barriers of child care, transportation and tuition cost for single parents returning to vocational classes.

Hartmann (1986) reviewing the literature on women's employment concluded that there must be mutual adaptation of technology and employment.

Momeni (1980) forecast the widening disparity in educational attainment between majority and minority populations, between the more affluent and the less affluent, younger and older adults, and between high educational achievers and those with low prior educational attainments.

Dole (1984) formulated proposals for partnerships between business, labour and education called "Partners for Tomorrow" and prepared Labour Investigating for Tomorrow awards for innovative school-to-work programs.

Alexander (1989) describes how the Alexander Alliance Communications Workers of America International Brotherhood of

American Electrical Workers, AT & T originated in response to AT & T's employees' need to find jobs, transfer skills, and acquire new skills after a court ordered divestiture.

Cohen-Rosenthal (1982) presents an overview of developments in the quality of working life field, and links this movement and Adult Education, and he presents a discussion of worker participation as a strategy for mass Adult Education.

Miller and Daloz (1989) of Britain emphasized the importance of certifying adults' experiential, acquired knowledge.

ESL

Research in ESL by Bruckner (1989) indicated that studying ESL improved employability, by Neff (1982) emphasized the importance of music in learning English culture.

Reiff (1981) covers the following aspects of English and language

learning: English as an interesting language that reflects the freedom of its speakers; what it's like to learn and use English as a second language; humorous examples of grammatical mistakes; a hypothetical look at a world without language; and suggestions for improving one's vocabulary.

Kullman (1984) presents Canadian research on students from 20 countries being employed as Co-Op students to learn about employment, customs, skills and to develop self-confidence for job search.

Harrison (1986) suggests coordination of the ESL teacher with the vocational trained to establish cultural self-confidence because cultural laws have not been codified and are not formally taught.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Valuable Canadian ABE research was presented by Fahy (1985), concluding that ABE students return to school after bad experiences as children or adolescents and are keenly aware of their previous educational failures; and adult students often have extenuating health or family pressures that necessitate special accommodation efforts on the part of

instructors. Fahy underscores the need for treating adult students as individuals and providing adult learners with learning choices so that they may (1) remove themselves from frustrating or boring situations (2) adjust when other responsibilities demand priority and (3) exercise the same self-direction in learning that they both enjoy and are expected to use in other areas of their lives.

The New York State Education Department (1983) provides statistical data to indicate that adult students moved from being illiterate and unemployed or on welfare to being employed and independent of public assistance (a net gain of \$5,781,044.00).

Indiana State Department of Public Instruction (1981) gathered data showing ABE students neither liked nor disliked the program and a few had complaints about teachers, books and transportation, but they did benefit by better jobs, being registered to vote, increased reading skills, and better money management.

Walker (1981) showed increases in the affective domain of ABE students who reported improved self-concept and increased feelings of

personal worth, as well as significant improvement in skill areas such as reading, writing, computation, and consumer behaviour. Many participants planned to continue in the program to earn their GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma).

Co-Operative Education

Harrison (1986) found that work experience and work-place training approaches are effective in teaching employability skills to ESL, LEP (Limited English Proficiency), and VESL (Vocational ESL) students.

Kullman (1984) in Saskatchewan placed ESL students into job situations to explore jobs, learn related terminology, inquire about customs in the region, practice English in daily usage, evaluate their skills and knowledge, and become acquainted with skills and gain confidence for their eventual job search.

Stoleinga (1981) focused on representatives from Malta, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom's Co-Operative Programs to extend Co-Op into Adult Education for re-entry into the job market.

Quality of Life

Jaffe (1986) examined the effects of stress and performance in Worksite Wellness Series training. Work contributes to stress; stress affects work performance; stress raises legal and medical issues; stress affects business; business pays many costs; and family stress and work stress interact.

Weathersby (1980) describes that life cycle and stage theories are used to show how adult learners experience educational programs differently according to their individual developmental stages; and that

quality adult education can and should affect a person's perspective and create new life meanings.

Weilert and Van Dusseldorp (1983) indicated that the effects of returning to the classroom on self-perception of women resulted in gain in self-esteem.

Reiff (1982) cites a series of articles dealing with building self-confidence of adult students.

Gray (1975) focusses on the emotional, financial and academic realities of women returning to school and how women have been socialized to fail.

III RESULTS

Frequencies

Table 1

Gender	frequency
Male	53
Female	153

Table 2

Area of Learning	frequency
ESL only	69
Upgrading only	18
Business only	21
ESL + Business	30
Upgrading + Business	58
Other	10

Table 3

Quadmesters Present	frequency
1	40
2	30
3	28
4	45
5	22
6	29
7 (or more)	12

Table 4

Courses Completed

	frequency
0	16
1	31
2	44
3	25
4	23
5	18
6	19
7 (or more)	30

Table 5

Employment Achieved

Working	72	
Contact-Telephone (Retired Students)		
		Attending college 6
Not Working	28	Other high school 5
		Home with child 5
		Plan to return 1
		Looking for work 11
Cannot Contact	36	

18

Table 6

Co-Op Placement	Area of Placement	
Yes	Canadian Experience	13
	Keyboarding/Word Processing	5
	Accounting	6
	Data Processing	5
No		177

Table 7

Work Experience	frequency
No Previous Employment.....	29
Unskilled Employment.....	38
Skilled Employment.....	64
Employment Outside Canada.....	70
Other.....	5

Table 8

Support Auspices	frequency
Training Allowance	14
General Welfare Assistance . . .	50
Part-time Work	24
Full-time Work	22
Family Benefits Assistance	36
Other	60

Table 9

Age

	frequency
25 (or less) . . .	34
26-30	34
31-35	38
36-40	31
41-45	20
46-50	18
51 (or more) . .	31

CROSSTABULATIONS

Table 10

Employment Achieved by Area of Learning

Business only	63.2
Upgrading only	46.2
Upgrading + Business	44.0
ESL + Business	38.5
ESL only	35.3

Table 11

Employment Achieved by Quadesters Present

1	68.0
2	70.8
3	66.7
4	27.3
5	35.0
6	20.0
7+	30.0

Table 12

Employment Achieved by Work Experience

Skilled Employment	54.5
Unskilled Employment	45.5
Employment Outside Canada	40.4
Other	33.3
No Previous Employment	30.8

Table 13

Employment Achieved by Support Auspices

Training Allowance	72.7
Part-time Work	47.6
Full-time Work	47.1
General Welfare	36.6
Family Benefits	30.0

Table 14

Employment Achieved by Age

Age 19-25	38.5
Age 26-30	37.9
Age 31-35	51.6
Age 36-40	34.6
Age 41-45	47.1
Age 46-50	43.8
Age 51+	58.3

Table 15

Courses Completed by Area of Learning

	ESL only	Upgrading only	Business only	ESL +Business	Upgrading +Business
0,1	21.7	16.7	28.6	16.7	10.3
2-4	33.3	22.2	9.5	16.7	25.9
5-9	30.4	38.9	33.3	23.3	24.1
10+	14.5	22.2	28.6	43.3	39.7

Table 16

Courses Completed by Co-Op Placement

	Yes	No
0,1	11.1	88.9
2-4	12.7	87.3
5-9	5.2	94.8
10+	29.8	70.2

Table 17

Courses Completed by Responsibilities Outside School

	Employment	Home Responsibilities	School only	Other
0,1	20.8	18.2	9.7	16.7
2-4	24.5	24.5	35.5	33.3
5-9	25.9	53.4	15.5	5.2
10+	26.4	29.1	25.8	25.0

Table 18

Courses Completed by Work Experience

No Previous Experience	13.8	34.5	41.4	10.3
Unskilled Employment	7.9	23.7	26.3	42.1
Skilled Employment	18.8	28.1	23.4	29.7
Employment Outside Canada	24.3	21.4	27.1	27.1
Other		60.0	40.0	

Table 19

Courses Completed by Support Auspices

	0,1	2-4	5-9	10+
Training Allowance	21.4	28.6	21.4	28.6
General Welfare Assistance	14.0	40.0	24.0	22.0
Part-time Work	8.3	20.8	29.2	41.7
Full-time Work	27.3	22.7	36.4	13.6
Family Benefits Allowance	16.7	13.9	27.8	41.7
Other	20.0	26.7	30.0	23.3

Table 20

Courses Completed by Age

	0,1	2-4	5-9	10+
19-25	20.6	26.5	29.4	23.5
26-30	14.7	38.2	14.7	32.4
31-35	26.3	18.4	31.6	23.7
36-40	12.9	25.8	35.5	20.0
41-45	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0
46-50	16.7	22.2	38.9	22.2
51+	9.7	32.3	29.0	29.0

Table 21

Employment Achieved by Area of Learning

	All Other Areas of Learning	Business only
Employment		
Yes	42.0	63.2
No	58.0	36.8

QUALITY OF LIFE COMPONENTS PERCEIVED BY STAFF OF STUDENTS IN STUDY
COMPARED TO ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH IN OTHER SETTINGS

75%

self-esteem

cultural adjustment

60%

problem solving skills

occupational improvement

literacy skills

practical skills

English skills

self-confidence

employable skills

IV. DISCUSSION

Rogers (1987) conducted a multi-variate analysis on part-time students studying credit courses and found statistical significance on the sociodemographic variables of gender, age, job change, and income. This is comparable to the present study where students with previous work experience were successful in obtaining employment and completing more courses.

Barrett (1986) discovered that 80% of mature age special admissions students gained employment by upgrading their education, and many made movement up the occupational scale, although a number of women were still employed at the clerical level. These results are comparable to the present study where 153 female students and 53 male students participated in the study, and of the 136 retired students--72 were working, 36 could not be contacted by telephone and may have been working, and among those not working, only 11 were still looking for work.

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education in Washington, D.C. (1989) presented research on adults with disabilities, competency based adult education, correction education, family literacy, and teaching writing. All these are areas much needed in Canada by Canadian adults,

many who find their children's interest in school is greatly enhanced when the parents go back to school. These results are seen among many students in the present study in all areas of learning, although employment achieved was higher for Business only, compared to all other areas of learning. Also, Table 9 results indicate more courses were completed by ESL+business and Upgrading+business--students requiring the most education.

Kullman (1984) discovered that many Co-Op students were disappointed at not working at the level or in the field of their training or experience. The students in the present study are enrolled in a Canadian Experience Co-Op Program to adapt their skills to the Canadian work place, and often more than one Co-Op placement may be required to gain this result. Results show that more courses are completed by students who are not in the Co-Op program, but those are students with less previous education or work experience.

Forrester (1982) in British Columbia developed the concept (Open Training Institute) which is comparable to students of the present study who often attend classes on Saturday and weekday evenings to accelerate their learning. Approximately 5% of students in the study had retired and

program, in order to achieve their goals.

Dole (1989) presented (Partners for Tomorrow) which is closely related to developments for the students in the present study in developing closer links between business, industry and education. Such alliances will enable future employees to manage their careers at all times in anticipation of change. Partnerships are being established to address future needs of education and business. Appendix A.

In a study entitled, "Computer Chips and Paper Clips, Technology and Women's Employment", done by Hartmann (1986), current and future effects of technological change on employment quality, and changes in worker supply and demand are discussed. Being the most recently opened Metro Toronto adult high school, the technology offered by seven computer labs is most current in addressing the future employment of adult students.

Jaffe (1986) discusses stress whereas Toronto based medical researcher describes technostress as a problem suffered by employees or students receiving and giving information with the rapidity of the computers on which they work. He claims that human response time is being reduced. This problem is magnified with ESL or language deficient adult students. Noon hour workshops by Student Services could be

Weatherby (1980) indicates the need for adult educators to be aware of the life stages and hence the learning styles of adult students. However, the quality of life checklist did not indicate similar results.

The Quality of Life Checklist is a summary of all current bibliographical references cited. 75% of the staff indicated: self-esteem and cultural adjustment - were the areas where adult students had gains in quality of life; and 60% rated problem solving skills, occupational improvement, literacy skills, practical skills, English skills, self-confidence and employable skills as important gains in student quality of life. Finally, according to the definition of quality of life, self-esteem becomes the common factor of research findings and the present study.

The results of the present study compare with Harrison's (1986) finding, that coordination is required between the ESL teacher and the vocational teacher, because once language and culture is mastered, vocational success follows. The ESL+business results show more courses and more employment than for ESL only; and ESL Co-Op provides the Canadian Experience which effectively transfers students' skills from other countries to an entry position in the Canadian Labour Market.

Comparing ABE students and instructors with results of Fahy (1985),

instructors of students in the present study make special efforts to retain students, teach remedially and discover learning skills which adult students have developed as they coped with daily life. 18 students in the present study were taking Upgrading only and Table 15 indicates a second highest result of 38.9% of ABE students completing 5-9 courses, compared to 43.3% for ESL+business students.

V. CONCLUSION

Adult Education is a valuable method of improving the quality of working life. The students in the present study achieved employment by upgrading their academic background, by studying English as a Second Language, and by business training in current technology. Upgrading and ESL students also studied business courses to equip them for the work force.

Students who were present for three quadesters were more likely to achieve employment than those who remained in school longer, due to having higher skills when they enrolled.

Students who came from areas of skilled employment, unskilled employment, and employment outside Canada achieved employment in that order.

Students who attend school on a training allowance had the highest likelihood of achieving employment and those working part-time or full-time outside school achieved employment at higher rates than those on General Welfare or receiving Family Benefits.

More courses were completed by students studying ESL and business than any other area of learning, and more courses were completed by students with no previous work experience.

Single mothers and homemakers who returned to school completed more courses than those who were employed or only attending school, and students 51 years of age or older as well as those in the age 31-35 age bracket were more likely to receive employment. Students in the 41-45 age bracket completed the greatest number of courses.

In the staff survey on quality of life components which enhanced the lives of students in the study, self esteem and cultural adjustment were perceived to be the most important. Research in other settings is in agreement with these findings. Other gains by the students in the present study were perceived to be: problem solving skills, occupational improvement, literacy skills, practical skills, English skills, self-confidence and employable skills.

The present study is in agreement with the findings in main other adult educational settings throughout North America and other parts of the world. Thus, as the partnerships between business and education develop, and the literacy needs and technological skill requirements of the students are met, adult graduates will be well equipped to enter, remain, and retrain in the ever-evolving work-force in a technological age.

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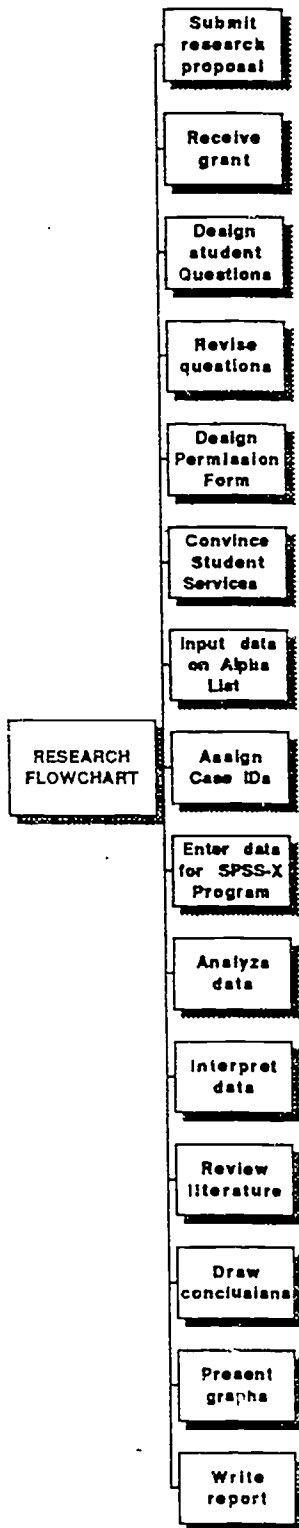
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Appendix A

Research Flowchart



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Student Questionnaire

Staff Questionnaire

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. We are interested in your progress by June, 1990. How do you wish to be contacted? Please notify the school of any change of address:

- 1. Telephone
- 2. Mail
- 3. Personal Interview
- 4. You will notify the school
- 5. Other

After your courses at the Adult Learning Centre, do you intend to continue your education?

- 1. University
- 2. Community College
- 3. Other

FOR CO-OP STUDENTS ONLY

What is your Co-Op Placement?

- 1. Canadian Experience
- 2. Keyboarding and Word Processing
- 3. Accounting
- 4. Data Processing

Which of the following best describes the enhancement of quality of life of your students (in your opinion)? Check as many criteria as you find appropriate. The result will be an aggregate score of all staff members.

Quality of Life Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| -goal attainment <input type="checkbox"/> | -literacy skills <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -collaborative work <input type="checkbox"/> | -wellness (body/mind/soul) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -problem solving skills <input type="checkbox"/> | -practical skills <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -interview techniques <input type="checkbox"/> | -independence/
public assistance <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -use/educational system <input type="checkbox"/> | -change in perspective <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -cultural adjustment <input type="checkbox"/> | -interactive process <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -autonomy development <input type="checkbox"/> | -work performance <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -pragmatic knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> | -self-esteem <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -occupational improvement <input type="checkbox"/> | -self-direction <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -group affiliation <input type="checkbox"/> | -cooperative activities <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -understanding life stages <input type="checkbox"/> | -perception/family members <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -emotional stability <input type="checkbox"/> | -English skills <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -overcoming financial realities <input type="checkbox"/> | -self-confidence <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -new life meanings <input type="checkbox"/> | -employable skills <input type="checkbox"/> |
| -life skills <input type="checkbox"/> | -technological adjustment <input type="checkbox"/> |

Appendix C

Graphs

Figure 1 Courses Completed

Figure 2 Employment Achieved

Figure 3 Support Auspices

Figure 4 Employment Achieved by Work Experience

Figure 5 Employment Achieved by Co-Op Placement

Figure 6 Courses Completed by Support Auspices

Figure 1 Courses Completed

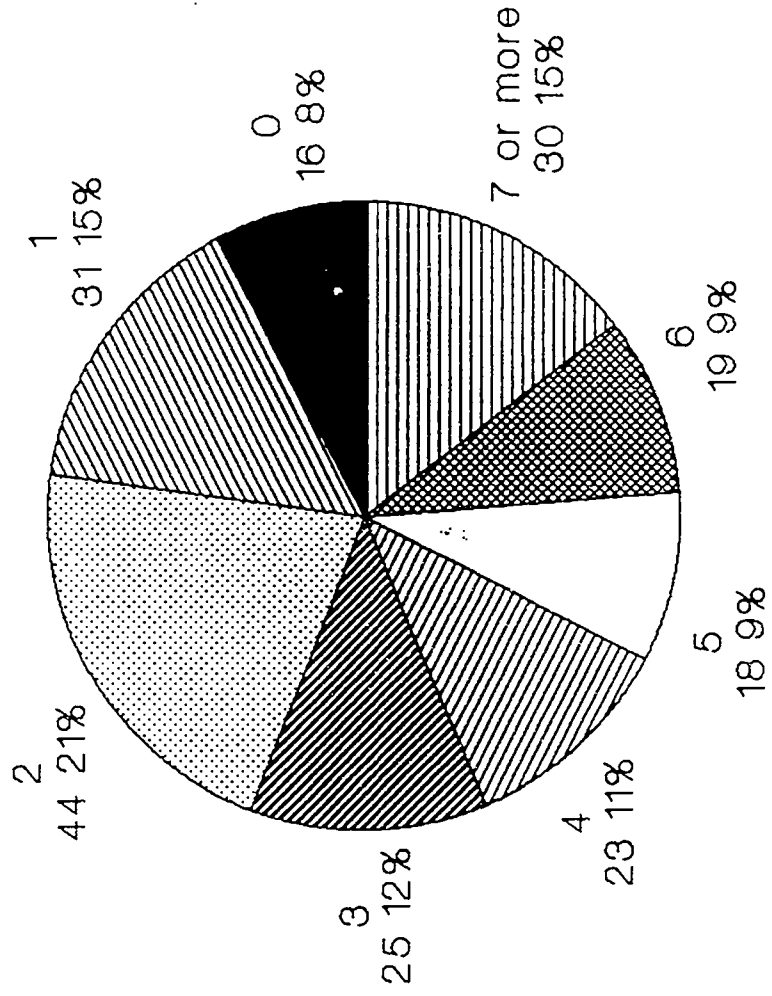


Figure 2 Employment Achieved

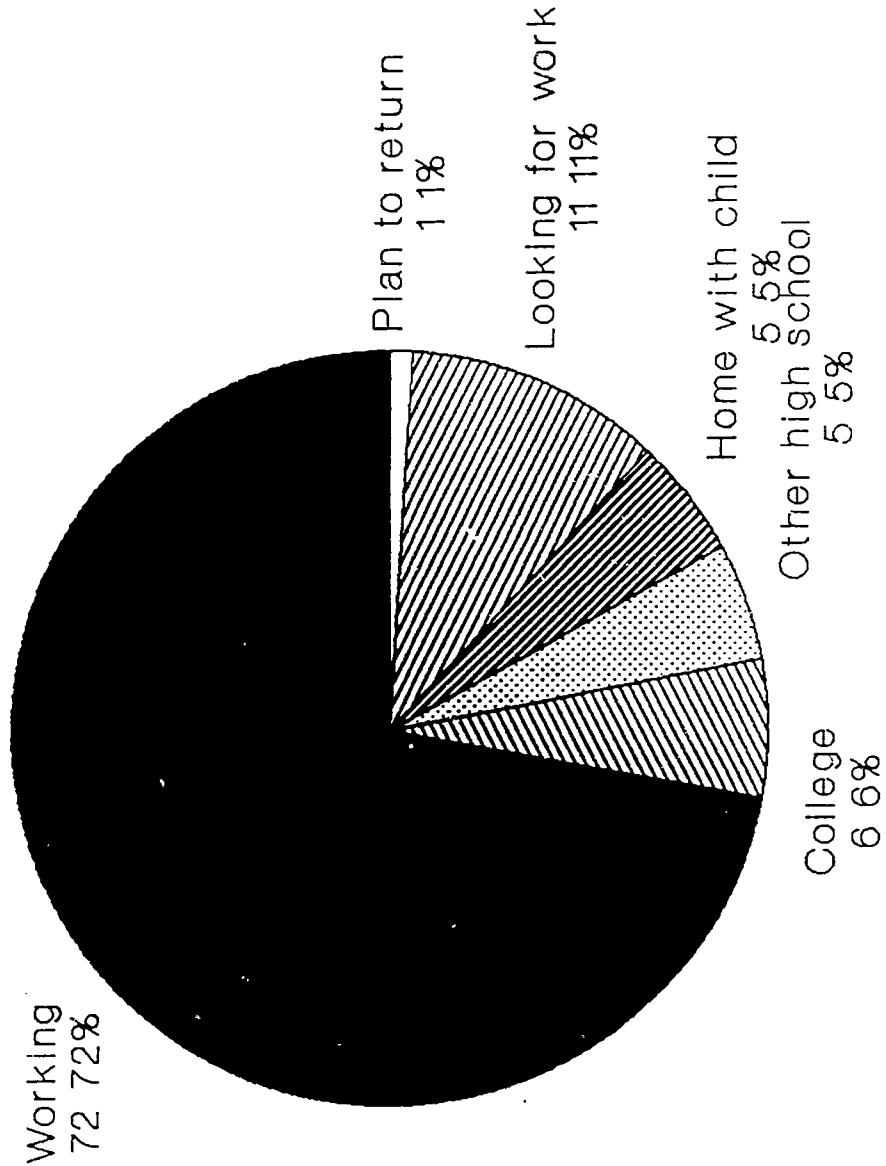


Figure 3 Support Auspices

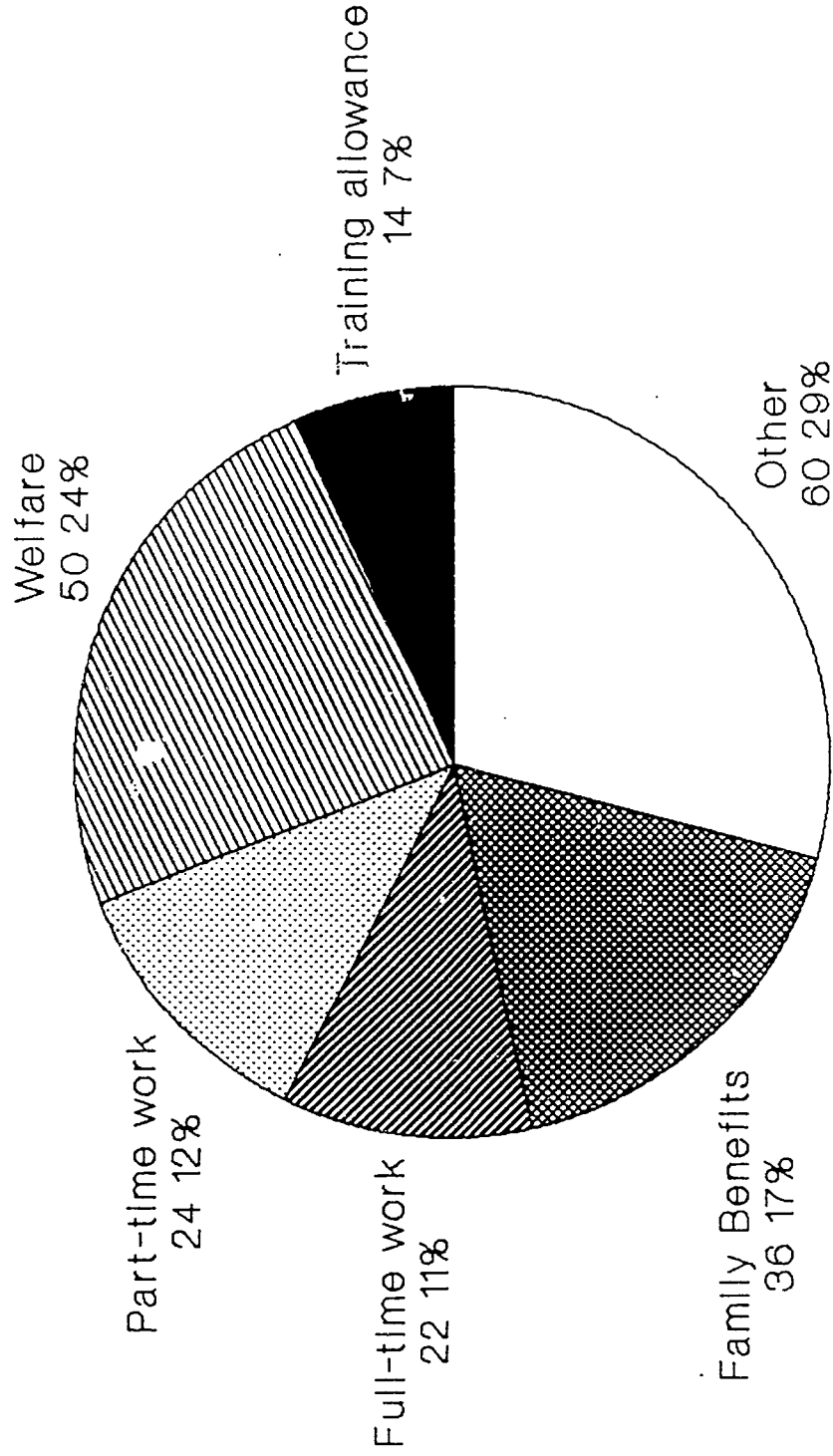
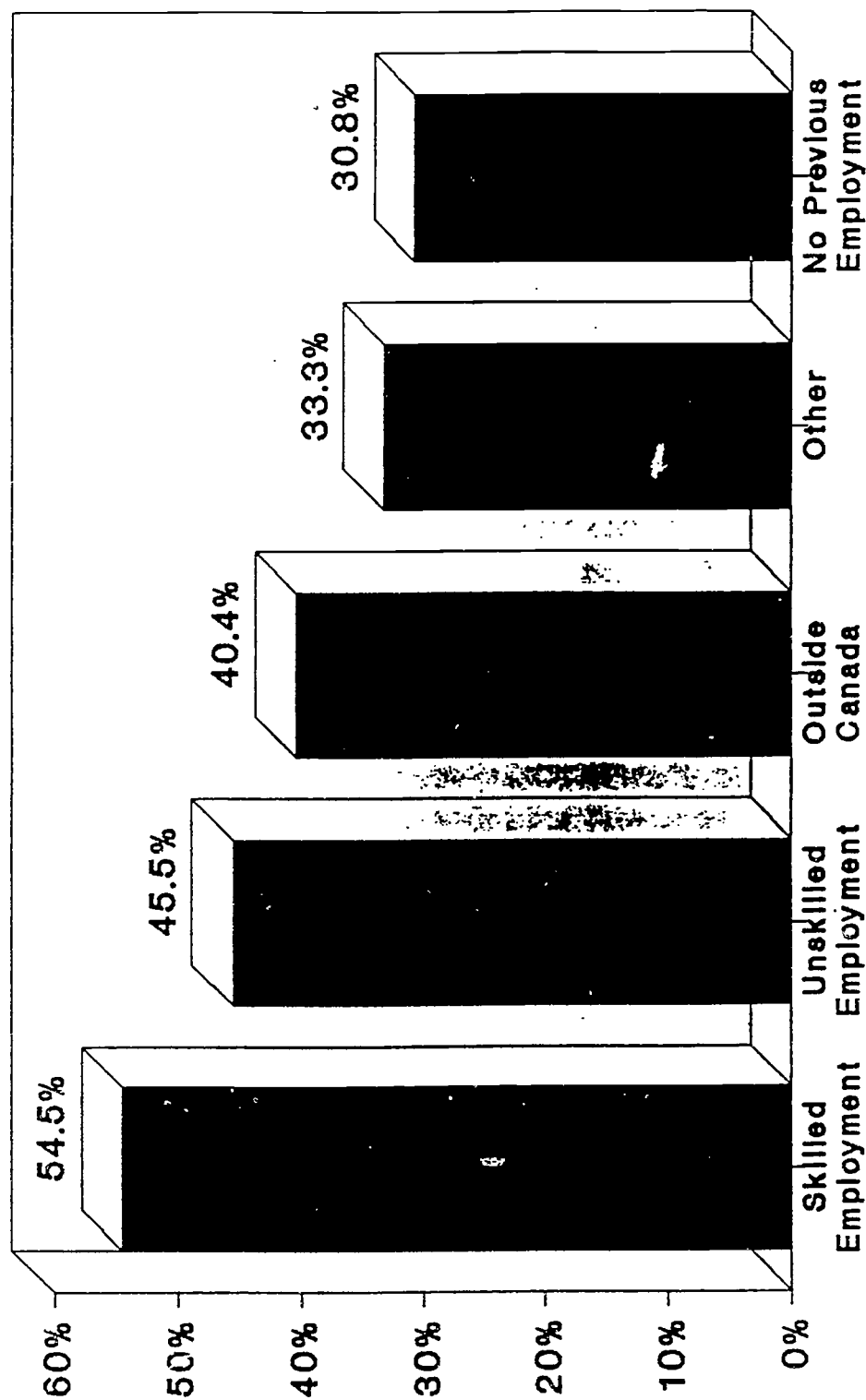


Figure 4
Employment Achieved by Work Experience



EMPLOYMENT ACHIEVED

Figure 5 Courses Completed by Co-op Placement

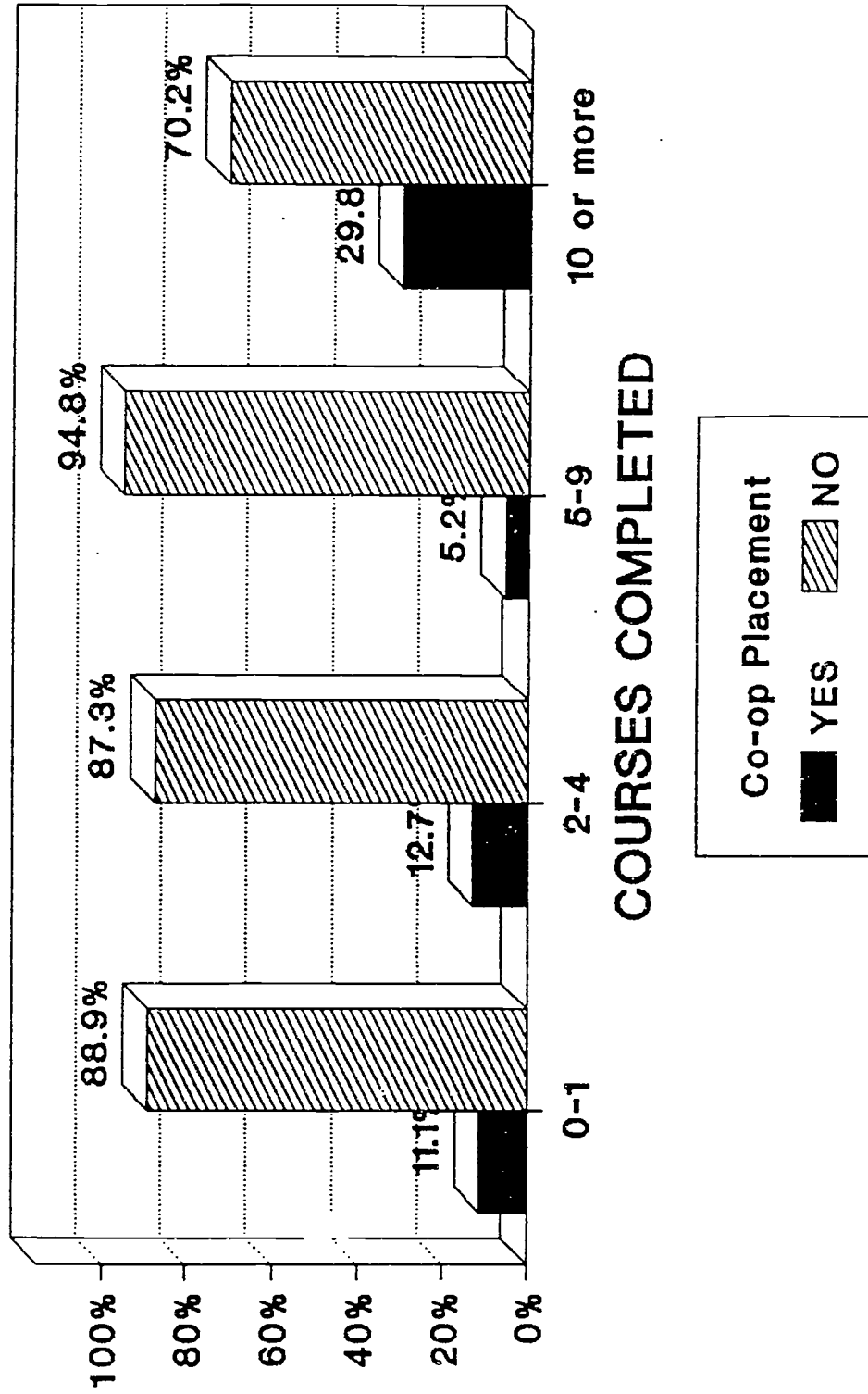


Figure 6

Courses Completed by Support Auspices

