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ABSTRACT

Research done during the last 10 years on part-time employment of secondary students was compared with results of a study of part-time employment in Toronto (Ontario, Canada). The literature has indicated that whether part-time work is beneficial or harmful depends on the amount of time students spend at work. In comparison with students with no jobs and students who work long hours, students who work limited hours (up to 15 per week) tended to demonstrate superior academic performance. They tended to spend more time on homework and extracurricular activities and to have lower dropout rates. More than 15 to 20 hours a week was associated with negative academic results. Part-time employment among Toronto students was explored through the 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey, the Ontario Provincial assessment of student writing, and a local school survey on the after-school activities of 71 students. Data on Toronto students support the findings of other research. Working was more advantageous to students than not working, provided the hours were moderate (up to 15 hours a week). Four appendixes present tables that summarize the impact of part-time work on students. (Contains 4 figures and 1 table in the text and 32 references.) (SLD)

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Executive Summary

The size of the high school student work force in Canada and the U.S. has grown considerably during the last decade. At the same time, the hours that students work have also been extended. The types of jobs most high school students hold are low pay, low skill, dead-end jobs in the service sector that bear little relationship to the skills they acquired in school. Most students work, not because of financial needs, but to satisfy their desire for personal luxuries and consumer goods.

Recent research shows that whether part time work is beneficial or harmful to students would depend on the amount of time students devote to this activity. *Hence the issue of part-time work is not working per se, but how much work is involved.* The following are the key positive findings associated with a moderate level (usually between 1-15 hours per week) of part-time employment:

- In comparison both to students with no jobs, and to those who work long hours, students who work limited hours tend to demonstrate superior academic performance.
- They tend to spend more time on homework and extracurricular activities, both of which are found to be achievement enhancing activities.
- They also tend to have lower dropout rates.

On the other hand, long hours (more than 15-20 hours per week) of employment are associated with the following negative findings:

- An overcommitment to part-time work is linked to lower marks, higher absenteeism rates, a lower level of involvement in homework and extra-curricular activities and higher dropout rates.
- Teachers tend to lower their expectations and standards of grading for students who work extensive hours.
- There is strong evidence that working long hours is associated with more frequent use of alcohol and drugs.

Such negative correlates of intensive employment tend to cut across students of different age, gender, racial/ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, although the effects may be more severe for some groups (e.g. male, younger students) than others (e.g. female, older students).

In Toronto, data from the 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey and other Toronto sources reinforce the notion that working is more advantageous to students than not working, provided that the work hours are moderate (1-15 hours a week). However, when work commitment is intense (16 or more hours per week), the effect of employment becomes negative for students in a number of areas similar to what previous research in other jurisdictions has found.

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Introduction

Recent research on the employment of high school students has raised a number of important issues that educators, parents, students and the wider community should be aware of. These issues include both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of adolescent employment, such as:

1. What proportion of our high school students work?
2. How much time do they devote to part-time work per week?
3. Why do they work?
4. What types of work are they employed in?
5. What are the possible consequences of combining work with school?
6. Does youth employment serve to promote equalities of opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds?

The purpose of the present report is to find out

1. what the current studies in Canada and the U.S. have to say about the six topics mentioned above;

2. whether the part-time employment situation of Toronto secondary students is typical of that described in other Canadian and U.S. studies; and

3. what recommendations have been made on how to lessen the negative consequences of youth employment.

Literature Review on Student Employment in Canada and the U.S.

This section covers research done during the last ten years on the part-time employment of secondary students in North America. Specific data for the Toronto secondary students who work part-time is dealt with in a later section.

Some facts about student employment

Size of the high school work force

The proportion of high school students working part-time while attending school has grown considerably during the last decade in Canada. At the national level, the proportion of full-time students between the ages of 15-24 who worked part-time has risen from 30% in 1980 to 40% in 1990. (Sunter, 1992, p. 15).[1] Among the youth workers, the highest employment

1. In Ontario, employment of high school students increased by about one-third between 1975 and 1987, (Lawton, 1994, p. 4).

rates are among the 17-19 year-old high school students. Almost half (48%) of this age group juggle full-time schooling with employment (Sunter, 1992, p. 18). The study by King and his colleagues (1988) in Ontario which included 4,620 students in Grades 11 and above, found that nearly two-thirds of them work part-time. (p. 26). Likewise, in the U.S., it has been estimated that between half and two thirds of all high school students participate in formal part-time work during the school year. (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 304).

Although the figures on actual numbers of employed teenagers vary by source due to the economic cycles, regional variations and differences in the time period and age group covered, there is a general consensus that the proportion of working students in Canada and the United States has increased substantially in the last two decades. (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 75).

Lawton (1994) in his literature review concurs that the trend of rising student employment is clear and unmistakable (p. 3). In fact, this movement has been described by some as the "third-wave employment", which has evolved from one family member working as breadwinner in the first wave to two adults in a nuclear family working in the second wave, to youths seeking employment while attending school in the third wave. According to some educators, the third-wave employment will bring about long-term effects that "may be substantially more far reaching than other social change we have endured thus far." (Giles, 1992, p. 21).

Intensity of work commitment

Not only did the number of employed students increase, the time they devote to part-time work has also increased in recent years. (Donaldson, 1992, p. 4). Overall, Canadian full-time students between ages 15 and 24 worked an average of 14 hours per week in 1990. (Sunter, 1992, p. 18). Among the 17-19 year-olds in Canada, the number of working hours increased appreciably from an average of 15 hours per week in 1986 to 23 hours per week in 1990. (Statistics Canada, 1994, p. 20).[2] Sunter (1992) also found that as students get older, the average hours of work also increase and that male students tend to work longer hours than females in every age category. (p. 18).

2. The average weekly hours are based on average annual hours of 792 in 1986 and 1,180 in 1990 divided by 52 weeks.

Reasons for work

Most of the research that investigates *why* students work reveals that students today are employed for reasons very different from their counterparts in the past. In the period surrounding the post World War II era, the reasons for teenage students to work were to contribute to the financial needs of the family, and to prepare oneself for a future job after high school. In some cases, youth employment "actually assumed the characteristics of an apprenticeship." (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 75).

In contrast, students in the 1980s and 1990s work to purchase consumer goods and personal luxuries and to support their current life styles. (King, et al., 1988, p. 28; Bachman & Schulenberg, 1991, p. 18; Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, pp. 75-76; Winkler, et al., 1993, p. 5). The 1988 study by King et al. in Ontario confirms that only a small percent (15%) of students work because of the need to supplement family income, to save for the future or to support oneself. Indeed, 85% of the working students cited personal spending as the main reason for working. They tend to spend in the areas of "clothes..., records, entertainment and visits to fast food emporiums." (p. 28).

Other frequently cited reasons for working include: socializing with friends who are also working (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 76); gaining independence (Giles, 1992, p. 23; Winkler, et al., 1993, p. 5) and desiring to be part of the adult world. (Donaldson, 1993, p. 51).

Nature of the jobs

In recent years, the nature of part-time jobs in Canada has changed from full-time summer employment and/or after-school and weekend work to shift work during the weekdays and evenings. Such work can occur "throughout the week, [and] during any time of the day." (Donaldson, 1992, p. 3). Some students work more hours than they have planned to during the school term because they are called to work by their employers whenever there is a shortage of staff.

The majority of working students are employed in jobs which are low paying and involve routine tasks that require minimal skills and little formal education. These jobs are also characterized by less desirable working hours, and a lack of career building perspective or occupational development. (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, pp. 76-77).

According to the data collected by Statistics Canada, over two-thirds of workers between the ages of 15-19 in 1991 were employed in occupations in the service (29%), clerical (21%) or sales (19%) categories. (Statistics Canada, 1994, p. 21). The most frequent jobs are sales clerks, waiters/waitresses, cashiers, cooks, service station attendants, stock clerks and janitors (Tanner & Krahn, 1991, p. 289) and the most common work places are fast food establishments, restaurants, retail stores, supermarkets, and gas stations. (King, et al., 1988, p. 28; Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 76).

Most part-time employment does not provide the opportunities for students to use or practise the cognitive skills and knowledge they learn in school. (Jesse & Marquart, 1992, p. 37; Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 76). In fact, a study of Canadian students in Alberta indicates that their part-time jobs devalue basic literacy and numeracy skills, but emphasize functional skills such as punctuality, cleanliness, honesty, courtesy and dressing properly. (Jesse & Marquart, 1992, p. 35).

Another study of working students in Alberta by Giles (1992) corroborates the findings by Jesse & Marquart (1992). Giles (1992) found that:

1. Only nine percent of employed students reported that there is a connection between the skills they learn in school and the job-related skills.
2. Fifteen percent indicated that their jobs require no use of basic literacy and numeracy skills.
3. Almost half (44%) equated the literacy skills required on their jobs to the skill level of what they had acquired in grade 6.
4. Students found the most important skills required by their jobs are "personal skills, such as punctuality, appearance and cooperative work attitudes." (p. 22).

Relationships between student employment and other aspects of student life

The concern about youth employment is quite a recent phenomenon, because it has been considered as beneficial and positive experience for students in the past (Steel, 1991, p. 420). The argument used to be that part-time work

> teaches young people proper work habits, strengthens their work ethic, instills a sense of responsibility, forces them to learn "that money doesn't grow on trees," keep them "off the streets" and "out of trouble", and provides job skills for the future...Acquisition of appropriate work values and skills while still in school should help smooth the potentially difficult transition into the work world. In Canada and the United States such assumptions have generated a variety of educational programs designed to give young people early exposure to paid work while still in school.

(Tanner & Krahn, 1991, p. 282)

However, in recent years, these underlying assumptions about the benefits of youth employment have been challenged. This may be due partly to a growing body of evidence which shows mixed and often negative consequences related to this kind of employment. In addition, the changing societal context, and the new meaning and nature of adolescent employment may also have led educators to rethink the merits of combining work with school for teenage students.

Academic achievement

Many recent studies in Canada and the U.S. found that part-time employment has positive influences on students' academic performance[3] when students work moderate hours, but has negative consequences when they work extensive hours (King, 1986; King et al., 1988; Brown & Steinberg, 1991, p. 5; Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 310; Donaldson, 1992, p. 4; Barone, 1993; pp. 68-70; Winkler, et al., 1993, p. 3).

For example, King and his colleagues (1988) in Ontario found that average school marks for students who work less than 16 hours are slightly higher than students without jobs (pp. 32-33). However, as the weekly work hours increase to above 15 hours, average school marks decrease incrementally for every additional five hours worked. Specifically, the average marks for Advanced program students drop from 76% for those who work 6-10 hours to 72.5% for those who work 26-30 hours. (p. 33).[4]

Similarly, in the U.S., Brown & Steinberg (1991) found that students who are employed less than 10 hours of work each week enjoy "a modest 'academic edge' over students without work". (p. 5). But if work commitment increases beyond this point, the GPA (grade point average) of students begins to fall noticeably. Another U.S. study by Steinberg & Dornbusch (1991) reported a similar pattern with students working 1-10 hours a week achieving the highest GPAs compared to their non-working peers and peers who work extensive hours. (p. 308). On the other hand, "students who work more than 20 hr per week have grade-point averages that are about one third of a letter grade lower than those of their peers who work 10 hr a week or less." (p. 310).

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3. Academic achievement is usually measured in school marks or grade point averages

4. Only Advanced level students were examined, because at the General level, homework is not normally expected and tests and exams are usually brief. (King, et al., 1988; p. 32)

Most of the studies are able to pinpoint a specific threshold level beyond which negative consequences for part-time jobs become more obvious. The work hour threshold may differ from study to study, but the most common range appears to be between 10-20 hours per week. (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 310). Another common finding among previous studies is that the negative relationships between extensive work hours and school outcomes are consistent across ethnic, SES and age groups.[5]. (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 304).

Studies which used measures other than school marks or grade point averages for academic achievement also found negative results related to youth employment. For example, Giles (1992) indicated that 45 percent of the working students in Alberta "either failed or withdrew from at least one course in their previous semester. As well, 12 percent of these students failed or withdrew from at least half of their high school program during the last term." (p. 22). Such rates are appreciably higher than the overall failure rates at the school and provincial level.

Only a few recent studies found *no* negative effect on student GPAs for those who work extensive hours. One example is a study by Mortimer, et al., (1993). The authors suggested that the maintenance of good grades may be a result of working students "manipulating their courses, avoiding those that are difficult and require a lot of homework... [and] teachers have reduced their expectations of youth, acknowledging that adolescents have little time for homework because of their paid jobs." (pp. 17-18). In other words, all these accommodations made by students and teachers in the learning and teaching processes may mask some of the true magnitude of the negative consequences of extensive work hours.

School retention

Several studies in Canada have explored the relationship between leaving school and part time work. One example is a study by Sullivan (1988) which found that just over half of the early school leavers in Ontario actually had a job of some kind before dropping out. Moreover, 60% of early school leavers in Ontario indicated that "having a job played a large part in their decision to leave school." (p. 37).

Some studies went further to explore the association between work intensity and school retention. For example, King, et al. (1988) found that students tend to think more of leaving school as their work hours increase. The percentages of students *thinking of* dropping out

5. A few exceptions have been found in the studies by Sunter (1993) and Barone (1993) which show the differential impact of part-time work on male and female students.

increase progressively from 29% to 59% among those who work 10 hours or less to those who work 26 hours or more per week. (King, et al. 1988, p. 36).

Another example of this kind can be found in the School Leavers Survey. The study which includes 18-20 year-old Canadian youths who no longer attended high school in 1991 provides evidence that students who work limited hours (less than 20 hours per week) have higher retention rates than students who do not work at all. The pattern that moderate work hours reduces the risk of dropping out is found consistently across gender, family background and performance level of students. (Sunter, 1993, p. 47).

Conversely, the risk of dropping out increases as the working hours per week increases for male students. King, et al. (1988) also noted that it is the General program male students who are more likely than other groups to work long hours and to drop out of school. (p. 35). Sunter (1993, p. 45) found that working more than 20 hours per week for male students is associated with a rise in the dropout rate. In particular, "the risk of dropping out was 60% higher for men with jobs that demanded long hours than among those who were not employed." (Sunter, 1993, p. 49).

Sunter (1993) concluded that the lengthy hours of employment may facilitate the dropout process for male students "by providing tangible and immediate rewards that outweigh the more abstract and long-term benefits of graduation." (Sunter, 1993, p. 52). This concept is resonant with other previous studies which indicate that part-time work provides at-risk students with more personal satisfaction at work than they find in school. Work then becomes "a source of success for those who experience little success at school." (King, et al., 1988, p. 36). The findings by Karp (1988) confirm that one of the most common reasons for early school leavers to quit school is that they find working more important or better than going to school (pp. 162-164).

Interestingly, the relationship between long working hours and higher dropout rate is not found among female students in Sunter's analysis of the School Leavers Survey (1993). In fact, among female students, the group most likely to drop out is the one without employment. However, it is not clear from the study why extensive work hours have different impacts on the school retention behaviour of male and female students.[6]

6. Although excessive work hours tend to impact most students negatively, such a relationship is less clear for female students in the area of school retention.

Study habits

There is also evidence that working long hours may take its toll on the learning process of students. (Thompson, et al., 1991, p. 16). Research confirms that students who work extensive hours reported "more mind wandering and exerting less effort in school." (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 310). The same study also found that such students tend to engage in "cheating [and] copying assignments" to reduce the deleterious effects of employment on their school marks (p. 310).

Jesse & Marquart (1992) found in a Canadian study that the coping strategies of students who work long hours include "getting by," "skimming" and being "clean and neat." (p. 36). Specifically, "65% of the students interviewed indicated that their work interfered with required reading and writing assignments and close to 45% revealed that it caused problems staying alert in class." (p. 37). King, et al. (1988) also found that those "who worked many hours said it negatively influenced their homework, their study habits, their school marks, their concentration in class, and even their temperament." (p. 32).

Other studies that investigated the impact of part-time employment on homework time reinforce that long work hours distract students from homework (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 77; Steel, 1991, p. 421; Brown & Steinberg, 1991, p. 5; Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 308). For example, Steinberg & Dornbusch (1991) found that as work hours increase beyond 20 hours per week, homework time drops off significantly. (p. 308).

School attendance

A strong relationship between part-time work and the rate of absenteeism from school has been found in a number of studies. Winkler, et al. (1993) in their review of literature found that as the working hours increase above 25 hours per week the number of school days missed jump significantly. (p. 2). Lillydahl's study (1990, p. 13, in Lawton, 1994, p. 9) also confirms that the average days absent from school increase from 0-2 days to 10 days a month when the working hours increase from 11 hours to 18 hours per week. Such a finding is worrisome, since absenteeism is one of the known correlates of high school dropout rates (Lawton, 1994, p. 9), and there is evidence that high absenteeism rates are related to low academic achievement of secondary students. (Brown, 1995). Although it is difficult "to prove that part-time work is the cause of increasing absenteeism, ... both higher absenteeism and more commitment to work are important elements of a pattern of behaviour that is associated with the weakening of the ties between student and the school--part of the process of

marginalization that leads to a student's decision to drop out of school." (Lawton, 1994, p. 10).

Extracurriculuar activities

A relationship between part-time work and extracurricular activities is also apparent in several studies. A study of approximately 8,000 California and Wisconsin high school students representing different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds verifies that students with part-time work commit less time to extra-curricular activities than students without work (Brown & Steinberg, 1991, p. 5). At the same time, Brown and Steinberg (1991) also found that extracurricular activities tend to enhance students' school performance in terms of higher GPA (grade point average) and longer homework time. Hence, the authors were concerned that the time taken from such academically enhancing activities is being used to increase participation in activities such as part-time jobs, which are potentially "academically alienating". (p. 6).

In Canada, King (1986) provided confirmation that students who work 1-14 hours per week are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than those without work. But those who work 15 or more hours are most inactive in this area. (p. 79) In King's study, the point at which part-time work intrudes on the students' opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities appears to be 15 hours of work per week, after which the participation rate in extracurricular activities drops appreciably.

Substance use

Research studies in the U.S. and Canada (e.g. Goldstein, 1991, p. 4; Thompson, et al., 1991, p. 1; Tanner & Krahn, 1991, p. 281) indicate that working students tend to be involved in substance use (alcohol and/or cigarette use) more often than non-working students. In addition, many of these studies support the hypothesis that as time commitment to part-time jobs increases, the frequency of smoking cigarettes, use of alcohol and illicit drugs and other problem behaviour also becomes more obvious. (Bachman & Schulenberg, 1991, pp. 14-15; Mortimer, et al., 1993, p. 14).

Data from the 1991 study by Steinberg & Dornbusch substantiate that students who work more than 10 hours a week reported higher incidents of "drug and alcohol use, higher rates of delinquency, and more frequent psychological and psychosomatic distress." (p. 310). Possible reasons for the link between youth employment and substance use suggested by Mortimer, et al., (1993), Steinberg & Dornbusch (1991) and Tanner & Krahn, (1991) include:

- those who work longer have more disposable income to enable them to engage in such activities;
- work-related stress and stress associated with juggling school, work and other activities may induce working students to turn to alcohol and drugs;
- part-time work lessens the amount of parental control by removing them from home and the supervision of parents;
- working students may have more contact with young adults who may "induct them into more adult styles of leisure activity" (Mortimer, et al., 1993, p. 19) and influence them to engage in such behaviours. (Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991, p. 310; Tanner & Krahn, 1991, p. 299);
- as adolescents move into the adult role of employees, "they will experiment with other *adult* behaviours, including alcohol use." (Tanner & Krahn, 1991, p. 299).

Teachers' opinions of working students

Very few studies have attempted to examine teachers' perception of student employment. Goldstein (1991), however, investigated the perceptions of a group of 47 grade 10-12 high school teachers in Connecticut about adolescent employment. He found mixed results. On the one hand, most teachers felt that part-time student employment fosters increased independence and sense of responsibility, and improves self-concept. On the other hand, a majority of them also felt that youth employment leads to "a greater focus on both immediate (versus long-term) goals and on materialism and status." (p. 8). More than half of the teachers were also concerned that adolescent employment leads to "increased cynicism about work" in general. (p. 8).

Almost all teachers perceived that student employment impacts school performance negatively. They felt it distracts students from homework completion and exam preparation. Only a small minority of teachers believed that it has positive impact (e.g. carry over of traits required on the job to the classroom, and greater appreciation of the value of education.) (pp. 10-11).

Slightly over half of the teachers in Goldstein's study reported that the increased number of working students has prompted them to change the way they taught. (p. 13). Some of the strategies used to accommodate the needs of their working students include:

- increasing discussion time because working students have more examples to contribute;
- changing examples to suit students' work experience;
- allowing more time for reading in class because working students tend to come to class unprepared;

- o and giving fewer and shorter homework assignments.

Close to half (47%) of the teachers in Goldstein's study admitted that they have lowered their expectations regarding working students, and over a quarter (28%) indicated they have lowered their grading standards. (p. 14). These findings concur with previous findings that as students devote less time to their school work because of employment, teachers "often lowered their expectations of students by giving fewer outside assignments and placing greater emphasis on in-class work." (Goldstein, 1991, p. 5). Donaldson (1993) also reported that teachers try to avoid failing working students by recognizing the strengths and talents of these students whenever possible and some "compromise by awarding a C grade when performance is not satisfactory." (p. 55).

Goldstein found this trend disturbing because:

> The danger is a downward synergistic spiral: As teachers lower expectations for performance, students feel more comfortable devoting more time to their jobs which negatively impacts classroom performance; this, in turn, reinforces further lowering of standards, a situation with dire long-term consequences for the community as a whole.
>
> (Goldstein, 1991, p. 16)

Almost all teachers in Goldstein's study thought that employment curtails the time spent on extracurricular activities. More than half (60%) of the teachers who directed such programs indicated that they changed the time of extracurricular activities and reduced the number of meetings to accommodate the schedules of working students (pp. 11-12).[7]

Other potential costs of student employment

The literature also discusses many potential costs and long-term risks of intensive youth employment that are difficult to quantify. For example:

- o Capable students who work extensively at the expense of getting average grades may risk losing scholarships and admission to programs of their first choice. (Donaldson, 1992, p. 4). Quotes from students who work extensive hours, like "I passed but I could have done better" and "I graduated, but 'I was a mental dropout.'" capture very well some of the potential costs of employment. (Donaldson, 1993, p. 55).
- o Students who work prolonged hours may "risk extending the time needed to obtain a high school diploma." (Donaldson, 1992, p. 4).

7. That may be the reasons why working students reported slightly more participation in extracurricular activities than non-working students in Goldstein's study which tends to contradict most other research.

- When work consumes so much time, "some adolescents miss out on a valuable 'moratorium' period which should be available to explore alternative identities and to develop close interpersonal relationships." (Mortimer et.al, 1993, p. 3).

- The consumer lifestyles that students work to support "can seduce and 'suck them into the marketplace.'...[so that] by the time they graduate, they may have established a lifestyle characterized by consumerism, debts, and interest payments." (Donaldson, 1992; p. 4).

- The 'premature affluence' of teenage workers may feed "the fires of materialism," (Goldstein, 1991, p. 9) and may lead to "a generation of consumers who have expensive tastes and who show little discipline in saving for 'big ticket' items like housing." (Goldstein, 1991, p. 5).

- At the societal level, student employment has created "an adolescent subculture designed around activities that need financing, a subculture directly linked to the economy which serves it and fuels it through cheap labour." (King, el al., 1988, p. 29).

Equality of opportunities

Race/ethnicity

Very few studies have addressed the question of whether youth employment helps to reduce inequality of opportunities in society. During the 1970s, one of the rationales for youth work programs in the U.S. was to enhance the employability of racial/ethnic minority students who were more likely to encounter barriers in subsequent employment. Adolescent employment was perceived "not only as a means of facilitating youths' career development but also as a potential means of reducing initial inequities of opportunity." (Steel, 1991, p. 420).

However, the existing research evidence appears not to support such a notion. For example, a study by Steel found that part-time work in high school does not seem to improve the future opportunities of racial/ethnic minority groups in particular.[8] One of the areas Steel examined was the length of post-secondary schooling which is a strong predictor for future employability.

Steel found that long hours of part-time work during high school affect the subsequent post-secondary school enrolment of Black youths more severely than White youths. Her data show that among youths who worked long hours in high school and who later moved on to post-secondary programs, the length of time enrolled in such programs decreased at twice the rate for Black youths as compared to White youths. Steel then concluded that for Black youths,

8. The data for the study were drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), a longitudinal study of over 12,000 youths who were between 14 and 21 of age in 1979. Steel's study focuses on a subset of youths who were 17-18 years old in 1979.

"early work experience appears to represent an attractive alternative to schooling, with those who are more involved in employment (as indicated by the hours worked per week) less likely to be enrolled in subsequent years." (p.435).

In terms of grade point averages (GPAs), it appears that no ethnic/racial group is immune to the negative impact of extensive work hours. While Barone's 1993 study indicates that extensive work hours have more negative effects on the grade point averages (GPAs) of African American students than those of White students (p. 72), Steinberg & Dornbusch (1991, p. 310) found that White and Asian students have "more to lose academically by working long hours." (p.310). Steinberg & Dornbusch explained that since White and Asian students tend to earn higher GPAs than the African-American or Hispanic American students to begin with, therefore the drop in GPAs is more apparent for the former two groups due to the magnitude of the decrease.

Gender

The impact of work hours on subsequent enrolment also differs between males and females. While working additional hours is associated with increased subsequent enrolment for White females, the reverse is true for White males. It appears that while youth employment helps to reinforce the value and importance of schooling for females, it becomes a competing alternative to schooling for males. (Steel, 1991, pp. 437, 442-443). This finding supports the Canadian findings by Sunter (1993) regarding the impact of work hours on school retention for male and female students.

Age

In terms of age differences, Barone (1993) found that younger students (grade 10) compared to those in grades 11 and 12, "experienced the most dramatic drop in GPA for similar hours worked." (p. 70) Therefore, he suggests that the working hours of the younger students should be limited.

Student Employment in Toronto

This section focuses on the part-time work experience of Toronto high school students. Specifically, it will examine the characteristics of employed Toronto high school students and the possible links between intensity of employment and students' achievement and other activities. The data are extracted from three sources: the 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey, the Ontario Provincial assessment of student writing, and a local school survey on the after school activities of its students.

In terms of the scope of student employment in Toronto, data from the 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey indicate that 40% of all students in the Toronto high schools work part-time and their average hours of work is 14 hours per week. (See Table 1). This means both the proportion of working students in Toronto and their work hour commitment are similar to other working students in Canada and the U.S. (Sunter, 1992, p. 15; Brown & Steinberg, 1991, p. 5).

Characteristics of working students in Toronto

Gender

In Toronto, there is only a slight difference between male and female students in work status and intensity of time spent working. Overall, 40% of male students compared to 41% of females work part-time. (See Table 1). And the average hours of work per week for males is 15 and 14 for females.

Despite the small differences, male students consistently work slightly longer hours than females. This applies to students in all program levels, of all age groups and most of the SES and racial groups. This finding also parallels other studies in Canada and the U.S. (Sunter, 1992; King, el al., 1988, p. 34; Barone, 1993, p. 73).

Age

The percent of Toronto students working part-time increases progressively as the students become older. Table 1 shows that while 28% of the 15 year olds work part-time, the percentage goes up to 54% for the 18-19 year olds. Average work hours per week also increase as the students get older. Table 1 illustrates that the average work hours go up incrementally from 9 hours per week for the 14 year olds to 19 hours for students 20 years old and over.

Table 1: Work status and work hours of Toronto secondary students, 1991

	% of Students who Work	Average hour/week
GENDER		
Female	41%	14 hr
Male	40%	15 hr
AGE		
14 year old or younger	23%	9 hr
15 year old	28%	11 hr
16 year old	40%	13 hr
17 year old	48%	14 hr
18 year old	54%	15 hr
19 year old	54%	17 hr
20+ year old	43%	19 hr
RACE		
Aboriginal	34%	15 hr
Asian	35%	14 hr
Black	37%	15 hr
White	45%	14 hr
PARENTS' OCCUPATION		
Professional	40%	11 hr
Semi-professional/technical	44%	14 hr
Skilled	42%	15 hr
Unskilled	42%	15 hr
Non-remunerative	35%	15 hr
PARENTAL PRESENCE		
Both Parents	42%	13 hr
Mother Only	40%	14 hr
Father Only	38%	14 hr
On my own	37%	17 hr
PROGRAM LEVEL		
Basic	28%	13 hr
General	39%	17 hr
Advanced	42%	13 hr
Overall	40%	14hr

Such differences in work pattern between the younger and older students are consistent with research findings from other sources (Sunter, 1992, p. 18).

Race/Ethnicity

The proportions of students who work part-time by race are shown in Table 1. It shows that employment is more prevalent among White youths (45%) than among Aboriginals (34%), Asian (35%) and Blacks (37%). Other sources from the works of Steel (1991, p. 429), Barone (1993, p. 71), Bedenbaugh & Garvey (1993, p. 7) and Lawton (1994, p. 3) also confirm that Whites are more likely than Blacks, Latinos and other non-Whites to work.

Although there is only a small difference in the work hours among the four major racial groups, work commitment varies substantially among the ethnic subgroups. For example, work hours range from 18 hours per week for the Portuguese to 10 hours per week for students of Jewish background.[9]

Family SES

Toronto students who reported that their parents are employed in semi-professional/technical jobs are most likely to work part-time. Other sources by Lawton (1994, p. 3) and Bedenbaugh & Garvey (1993, p. 76) also agree that students with parents from the middle socio-economic class are more likely to work than those at the highest and lowest SES groups. However, in terms of work hours, Toronto students from the lower SES categories tend to work longer hours than those from the higher SES groups. (See Table 1).

Parental presence

Students who live with both parents represent the highest proportion working, but students living on their own tend to spend more time on part-time work than any other groups (average 17 hr. per week). (See Table 1).

Program level

Advanced level program students (42%) are more likely to work part-time than students in the General (39%) and Basic (28%) programs, but students in the General level tend to work the

9. See Table 3, p. 8 in Cheng, et al. (1993) The 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey, Part II: Detailed Profiles of Toronto's Secondary School Students, Toronto Board of Education, Research Report #204.

longest hours on average (17 hours vs 13 hours for both Advanced and Basic levels). (See Table 1). Similarly, King, et al. (1988) found that students taking General level courses tend to work longer hours than students from other programs. (p. 27).

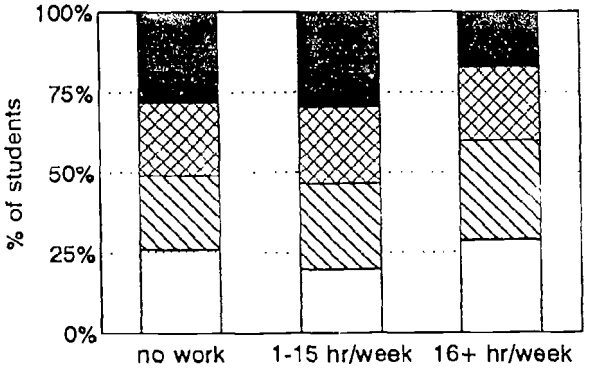
Relationships between part-time work and other aspects of student life

Academic achievement

The 1991 Toronto Every Secondary Survey contains data that enable us to examine the relationship between part-time work commitment and academic achievement. Achievement, in this case, is measured by student marks in the core subjects of English and Math. It is apparent in the data that students who work limited hours (1-15 hours) have a definite edge in school marks over their peers who work extensive hours (16 or more hours each week) and a slight advantage over students without work. (See Figure 1).[10]

Specifically, 30% of the Toronto high school students who work moderate hours achieve high marks (of at least 70) in both English and math, compared to 17% of their peers who are employed extensive hours, and 28% of those who do not work. This finding which favours students who work moderate hours concurs with previous findings in other jurisdictions, using school marks or grade point averages as measures of achievement.

Figure 1: Academic achievement and part-time work commitment



	no work	1-15 hr/week	16+ hr/week
high in Eng & math	28%	30%	17%
high in Eng or math	23%	24%	23%
average in Eng & math	23%	27%	31%
at risk	26%	20%	29%

10. For further reading about this particular finding, see Yau, et al. 1993, p. 21.

Further analyses reinforce the clear advantage of students working modest hours over those working extensive hours. Such an advantage is evident in males and females, and students of all age, racial, socio-economic groups, and program levels. (See Appendix 1) Likewise, in the majority of cases, students who work moderate hours tend to do slightly better than their peers without part-time work among all gender and racial groups and most age groups.

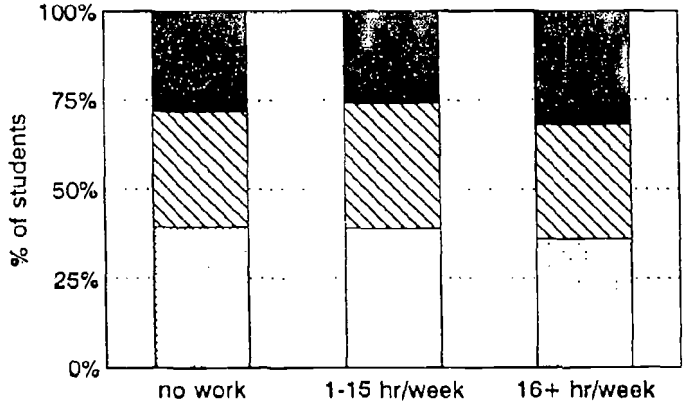
The Ontario 1991-92 provincial writing results for Toronto grade 12 students also demonstrate a similar relationship with part-time work commitment. Those who work 1-10 hours perform noticeably better in writing than those who work more than 10 hours and slightly better than those without work. (Yau, 1994, p. 10, Figure 8).

Homework hours

Figure 2 provides evidence that extensive work hours curtail students' commitment to homework. It shows that 32% of the Advanced level program students who work long hours spend minimal hours (0-5 hours per week) on homework compared to 26% of students who work moderate hours. (See Figure 2). Only Advanced level program students are included here because homework hours spent by their peers in the General and Basic programs are low (7 and 5 hours per week) compared to Advanced level students (11 hours). Hence, the likelihood of employment hours further reducing homework hours for students in the General and Basic programs is minimal. (See Yau, et al., 1993, p. 9)

Detailed analyses show that the negative impact of extensive work hours on homework applies to both males and females, and most of the age, racial, and SES groups. (See Appendix 2).

Figure 2: Homework and part-time work commitment

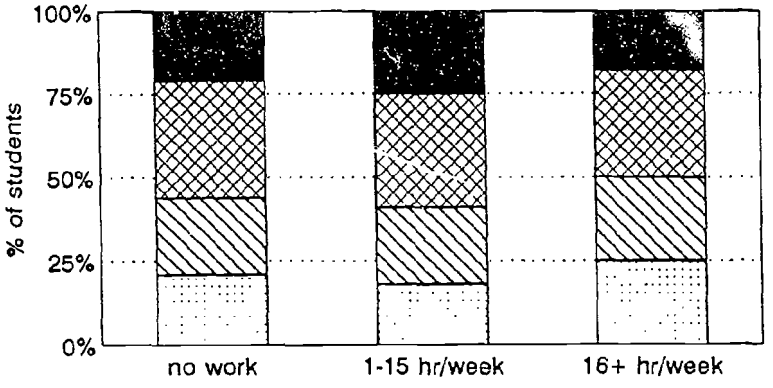


	no work	1-15 hr/week	16+ hr/week
0-5 hr homewk	28%	26%	32%
6-10 hr homewk	32%	35%	32%
11+ hr. homewk	39%	39%	36%

Extracurricular activities

When students were asked to indicate how often they take part in extracurricular activities, it is quite apparent from Figure 3 that those who work 16 or more hours are not as active as their counterparts who worked 1-15 hours. Interestingly, unemployed students are not necessarily more involved in such activities as those who work moderate hours.

Figure 3: Extracurricular activities and part-time work commitment



	no work	1-15 hr/week	16+ hr/week
often	21%	25%	18%
sometimes	35%	34%	32%
rarely	23%	23%	25%
never	21%	18%	25%

Appendix 3 shows that the link between a lack of involvement in extracurricular activities and extensive work is consistent across all gender, racial and program level groups and most age and SES groups.

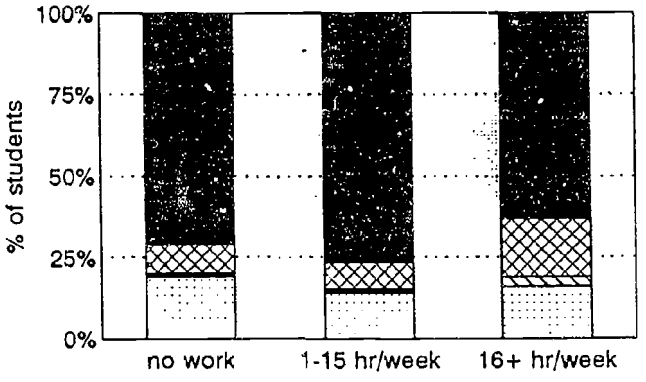
Post secondary plans

The data from the 1991 Every Secondary Student Survey shows a definite association between intensity of work and post secondary plans for Advanced level students: the aspiration to attend university is highest among those who worked 1-15 hours, and lowest among those who worked 16 hours or more, and students with no part-time jobs tend to fall in between the two extremes.[11] Specifically, while about three-quarters (76%) of the Advanced program students who work modest hours plan for university, only two-thirds (63%) of their peers who work

11. Only Advanced level program students are included because the General and Basic streams do not lead to university.

extensive hours think about going to university. And the proportion of non-working students who aspire for university is 71%. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Post secondary plans and part-time work commitment



	no work	1-15 hr/week	16+ hr/week
university	71%	76%	63%
community college	9%	8%	18%
work full time	1%	1%	3%
not sure/other	19%	14%	16%

Further analysis confirms that this same pattern which favours students who work moderate hours is replicated in all gender, age, racial and SES groups. (See Appendix 4).

Substance use

In 1994, 71 grade 12 students from one Toronto high school were surveyed to find out their part-time job status and ways they spend their time after school. Although the sample is small and may not be representative of the entire student population in Toronto, nonetheless, a strong pattern emerges which shows that appreciably more students with jobs than their unemployed peers take illegal substances (37% vs 15%). This result is consistent with previous research about a strong association between youth employment and substance use.

In sum, it is evident from a variety of data sources that the characteristics of Toronto students who combine schooling with more or less part-time employment are similar to those of students from other places in Canada and the U.S. Moreover, the relationships between hours of student employment and school achievement and other school-related activities found in Toronto replicate what have been found elsewhere.

Suggestions for future research

While the existing research provides much insights about student employment, it also raises many questions that need to be answered by future investigation. One key question is: What is the process through which moderate work hours may enhance schooling outcomes while extensive work hours may jeopardize achievement? Future research which focuses on the quality rather than quantity of adolescent work experience may provide more insights into this area.

Another interesting question raised in the existing research is whether or not the observed relationship between intensity of part-time work and school outcome is one of cause and effect, and if so which is the cause and which is the effect. "Will increasing amounts of part-time work cause a student's marks to fall" and eventually drop out? Or "Do lower marks cause some high school students to work more as they increasingly come to see the workplace as an alternative to school..."? Could it be that students who are already not enthused with school "selected themselves into an extensive commitment to part-time work?" (Lawton, 1994, p. 7). In that case, long hours of work, may indeed "reflect a growing disinterest in, and detachment from, school." (Sunter, 1993, p. 52). Although a few studies in the past have looked at this kind of "selection hypothesis", the results were inconclusive. (Lawton, 1994, p.7).

Another related question is: If working long hours is one way students react to other pre-existing problems, what then are these problems? (Bachman & Schulenberg, 1991, p. 18). Other relevant questions raised in the literature include: Why do extensive work hours tend to have opposite effects on school retention for male and female students? (Sunter, 1993, p. 52). Do different jobs lead to different worker outcomes? Are co-op or other jobs organized and supervised by school personnel more beneficial to students than "natural" jobs that have no school supervision? (Lawton, 1994, pp. 15-16). Answers to these questions will have implications for policy makers in terms of designing policies and programs that will make part-time work more worthwhile and less detrimental to students.

Suggestions to alleviate the problems related to part-time work

This final section of the report will summarize suggestions found in the literature aimed at alleviating the negative correlates of student employment and enhancing its positive effects. One strong theme that emerges is that all stakeholders (students, parents, school staff, employers and concerned citizens) need to work in collaboration because the problems associated with youth employment transcend the boundaries of educational institutions, and are too onerous for the schools to tackle alone. The suggestions and recommendations from the literature are organized around the following areas:

1. Educating students and others about the consequences of part-time work

   All the key players need to be cognizant of the potential short-term and long-term problems associated with youth employment. Students, especially, should be made aware of the consequences of part-time employment on their school work and their future life chances, so that they can make informed decisions about their work hours, and the types of work which would help them in their future careers (Donaldson, 1992, p. 5). This responsibility can be shared in the following ways:

   - Parents can discuss the issues of part-time work with their children as "an initial step to communicate concern and support for the individual student in the school and work environments." (Thompson, et al., 1991, p. 16). Parents can actively guide their children in deciding on the types of work that are relevant and in planning their work schedules. (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79).

   - School can "offer (or require) a counseling session for students seeking school endorsement of a work permit." (Brown & Steinberg, 1991, pp. 6-7). The content of the session can include information about the potential risks of extensive work commitment, strategies on how to manage time efficiently, and how to make decisions on types of work and work schedules.

2. Regulating and monitoring extensive work hours

   - School boards can design policies, programs and regulations to curb extensive work hours of students during the school year. For example, the regulations can put age, work hours, and time of day limits on part-time work or "create provisions that would allow a minor's work permit to be revoked if requested in writing by the school principal or the minor's parent or legal guardian." (Lawton, 1994, p. 14). The underlying assumption is that through such measures, the working behaviour of high school students can be shaped in a direction that is beneficial to them and society. Although such policies, programs and regulations are not likely to slow down or reduce the trend of students employment, they "may serve to limit excess." (Donaldson, 1993, p. 55).

   - Employers can limit their hours of employment for adolescents (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79). Maximum hours is likely acceptable to employers if there are policies at the school board and provincial levels for student part-

time work because: "It is important to these companies that they maintain good will in their communities and if it were seen that they were knowingly contributing to a lower level of performance in school for some students, they would probably feel they should follow such directives." (King, et al., 1988, p. 31).

- Schools can monitor the absenteeism rate of working students, especially those who are academically at risk (Donaldson, 1992, p. 5) and communicate any increase in absenteeism rates to parents.

- Parents can also monitor more closely and curb their youngsters' working hours during the school year. (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79).

3. Promoting academic enhancing activities as substitutes for part-time work

As some researchers point out, regulating the work hours does not mean that all students who cut down on their work hours will necessarily spend more time on their school work or other achievement enhancing activities. (Steel, 1991, p. 444). Hence, it is crucial for students to have well-planned alternatives that will help them in their growth and development.

- School or school boards can offer more extracurricular activities which have "greater payoff in terms of grades, educational aspirations, and attainment." (Steel, 1991, p. 444). While Brown & Steinberg (1991, pp. 5-6) found that participation in leadership activities, clubs or interest groups correlates to better school performance, another study by McNeal (1995) found athletics and fine arts activities useful in increasing students' chance of staying in school. (p. 62).

- Parents can also play an active role in discussing alternative activities to employment which are "pleasurable, interesting, and growth promoting." (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79).

4. Strengthening the partnership among parents, educators and employers

- To improve the impact of part-time jobs on school performance, the employer community can work in partnership with the schools to co-develop curricular programs and activities that impart transferable and up-to-date technical and business skills and knowledge that are applicable to a wide range of occupations. One example of such a partnership is found in a proposed business awareness program between Ernst and Young and the Toronto Board of Education, which is to take place in Jarvis Collegiate. (Toronto Board of Education, 1995).

- Local employers can "take responsibility for providing part-time jobs for students who need them." (Ministry of Education and Training, 1994, vol. 4, p.39).

- Parents, employers, and educators can cooperate in helping students not to fall into the substance abuse trap through the work experience which has given them much disposable income, by

  - monitoring students' behaviour and spending habits;

- advising students about possible ways to spend/invest their money in a constructive way;

- providing education on substance abuse and a drug/alcohol free work environment for student workers.

o Adults such as parents, school staff and advisors from the community can become mentors for the employed students. They can guide the youth workers in developing a career path and in understanding the workplace reality. (Donaldson, 1992, pp. 5-6).

5. Strengthening communication between educators and employers

o School guidance or career counselors can become brokers of jobs by communicating to potential employers the thrust of placing students in jobs that would help them develop skills that are transferable to their future work. And when employers realize that there is an increased emphasis on the need for more meaningful and useful experiences, they might begin to provide more variety in work experience to students and "to develop job responsibilities that had more substance or worth in relation to educational objectives." (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79).

o School staff can alert employers about the academic risks and other negative correlates "that long hours and inflexible work schedules present to students", while at the same time, "school personnel can become more sensitive to employers' needs and frustrations." (Brown & Steinberg, 1991, p. 7).

6. Putting more emphasis on staff development in the area of youth employment

Teachers should be trained in

o integrating the work experiences of students into different classroom activities and lesson content to make the learning more relevant to working students (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79);

o establishing and utilizing networks of referral systems aimed at providing students access to career counselors, peer support groups, etc. (Donaldson, 1992, pp. 5-6);

o assisting students in seeking part-time jobs that are linked to their future career aspirations (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993, p. 79).

Conclusions

It appears that adolescent employment is here to stay, and the proportion of working students will continue to rise. And since working will remain an important component of the high school student lifestyle in the 1990s (Donaldson, 1993, p. 50), parents and educational professionals should be knowledgeable of the factors that hinder or promote the physical, intellectual and social development of the teenage students who work part-time. They should also take the necessary action to help students better *integrate*, not just *combine*, school with part-time work.

In terms of knowledge, this report has attempted to synthesize existing information about the impact of youth part-time employment from the U.S. and Canada, and Toronto in particular. One central question this report tries to address is whether or not part-time work is harmful to high school students. Based on the literature, the answer appears to be a "qualified yes", *if* students work excessive hours. An over-commitment to part-time work at the expense of school can distract students from school work and appears linked to many negative consequences in their academic and non-academic development, such as a decline in school marks, an increased risk of disengagement from school and of leaving school early, and an increased tendency to be involved in substance abuse.

On the other hand, there is no strong reason to discourage youth employment of moderate hours because such work appears to be associated with positive outcomes, such as higher school marks, more time spent on homework, and more frequent participation in extracurricular activities. In other words, there are some elements of part-time work that reinforce perseverance, sense of responsibility and other related qualities that are conducive to success in school.

In short, the benefits of part-time work are determined, not only by whether a student works, but also by how much the student works. The challenge is to ensure that the cumulative negative effects of long hours of work would not offset the positive effects of part-time work for high school students.

In meeting this challenge, all stakeholders (parents, school staff and the community at large) need to work together as allies in planning policies and activities to lessen the harmful impact of part-time work and to capitalize on its positive impact as learning and teaching opportunities. In particular, the literature emphasizes the need for better communication and long-term collaboration between schools and the employer communities because of the "logical

connection between good education and good employment" (Donaldson, 1992, p. 6). And the connection is that *the high school students of today are the employees of tomorrow.* (Pratt, 1995, p. 1).

It is disturbing to find that the part-time work experience of these future employees tend to be in the low skilled or unskilled jobs in the service-oriented sector, while the future labour force demands highly skilled labour in the professional and technical fields. For example, Jesse and Marquart (1992) cite the Council of Professional Engineers who "predict a shortage of 25,000 to 45,000 engineers by the end of the decade." (p. 34). Another source estimated that while in the 1950s only 40% of all jobs required skilled labour, this percentage would go up to 85% by the year 2,000. (Toronto Board of Education, 1995, May 10, School Programs Agenda, p. 2).

However, this mismatch between the demand for new employees and supply of future graduates can be reduced, when the employer community plays a more active role in supporting the schools in delivering quality education and in developing highly skilled and educated workers who can meet the job demands of tomorrow. As emphasized in the recent report of the Royal Commission on Learning, the wider community and the schools must become part of a larger inter-connected network and share the responsibility of educating the students. (Ministry of Education and Training, 1994). This kind of collaborative multi-partner involvement is no longer a matter of choice, but of necessity in meeting the educational needs of youth in the 1990s and beyond.

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Appendix 1

Impact of Part-time work on Student School Marks

Characteristics of Students	% of students who receive high marks in both English & Math		
	Do not Work	Work 1-15 hours/week	Work 16+ hours/week
GENDER			
Female	32	36	21
Male	23	24	12
AGE			
14 year old or younger	33	34	28
15-16 year old	30	33	21
17-18 year old	28	33	18
19+ year old	15	14	10
RACE			
Aboriginal	11	16	2
Asian	35	38	25
Black	13	14	9
White	26	29	15
PARENTS' OCCUPATION			
Professional	38	42	21
Semi-Professional/Technical	29	31	18
Skilled/Semi-skilled	27	26	17
Unskilled	21	21	14
Non-remunerative	20	20	13
PROGRAM LEVEL			
Basic	14	13	7
General	10	9	6
Advanced	34	35	21
Overall	28	30	17

Appendix 2

Impact of Part-time work on Student Homework Commitment

Characteristics of Students	% of Advanced program students who do less than 5 hours or no homework per week		
	Do not Work	Work 1-15 hours/week	Work 16+ hours/week
GENDER			
Female	22	20	26
Male	32	32	37
AGE			
14 yr old or younger	28	30	28
15-16 year old	31	30	38
17-18 year old	25	22	32
19+ year old	21	24	27
RACE			
Aboriginal	38	30	64
Asian	21	20	23
Black	27	26	25
White	32	28	37
PARENTS' OCCUPATION			
Professional	28	26	33
Semi-Prof/Technical	26	24	34
Skilled/Semi-skilled	27	26	32
Unskilled	35	28	33
Non-remunerative	26	25	31
Overall	28	26	32

Appendix 3

Impact of Part-time work on Student Extracurricular Activities Commitment

Characteristics of Students	% of students who "never" participated in extracurricular activities		
	Do not Work	Work 1-15 hours/week	Work 16+ hours/week
GENDER			
Female	23	19	29
Male	19	17	21
AGE			
14 year old or younger	11	11	11
15-16 year old	18	15	19
17-18 year old	22	18	22
19+ year old	37	29	32
RACE			
Aboriginal	25	17	22
Asian	26	19	28
Black	23	21	29
White	17	16	24
PARENTS' OCCUPATION			
Professional	12	8	17
Semi-Prof/Technical	19	16	20
Skilled/Semi-skilled	20	22	26
Unskilled	27	24	24
Non-remunerative	30	24	35
PROGRAM LEVEL			
Basic	41	34	46
General	31	28	34
Advanced	17	15	21
Overall	21	18	25

Appendix 4

Impact of Part-time work on Student Post-Secondary Plans

Characteristics of Students	% of Advanced program students who plan for University		
	Do not Work	Work 1-15 hours/week	Work 16+ hours/week
GENDER			
Female	73	79	64
Male	69	73	60
AGE			
14 year old or younger	75	78	65
15-16 year old	71	77	65
17-18 year old	75	79	65
19+ year old	58	65	56
RACE			
Aboriginal	60	63	60
Asian	75	82	69
Black	61	67	58
White	70	75	60
PARENTS' OCCUPATION			
Professional	81	84	74
Semi-Prof/Technical	77	80	68
Skilled/Semi-skilled	66	72	59
Unskilled	60	70	52
Non-remunerative	58	67	57
Overall	71	76	63