A Phenomenological Study of Former Alternative High School Students' Perceptions About Their Experiences

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF FORMER ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Amy F. Wodnicki
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
December 2009
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This research is a phenomenological study of former alternative high school students’ perceptions about their educational experiences. The primary purpose of this study was to gain insight into the shared experiences of these former students. Data were gathered from a series of focus groups, individual interviews and archival data. This study investigated the effectiveness of alternative education from eight different perspectives. The study identified success in terms of student support for their alternative education experiences. From their perspectives, alternative education was a positive experience.

This study identified a number of positive effects associated with alternative secondary education. These positive effects were: improved attendance, increased academic interest and awareness, connectedness and belonging, graduation from high school, and current success. From the perspective of these students, their experiences have been positive.