

Alternative Choices for Youths with Feelings of the “Inability to Continue”

– Through the practices of a local free school –

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This paper describes and probes into the practices of a free school that accepts students who have found difficulty in continuing at regular schools for various reasons, including refusal to attend school. The author focuses on the environments and conditions, or the “alternativeness” offered at this free school, which contributed to changes in the propensity of the inability to continue in the life of these students.

The paper focuses on their daily activities and school life, along with the dynamic relations between students, staff members as instructors, and the principal of the school, depicting their dialogue and interactions as episodes.

An analysis of these episodes shows factors working beneath such interactions. These include latitude regarding time, increased one-on-one interactions, the feeling of a “family” when being together, more choices of commitment regarding activities, and safety and confidence engendered through candid conversation styles and laughter at the school. The staff members and manager also keep an attitude of accompanying students in pursuing their own decisions. All these are found to be important for changing discontinuity to continuity in the life of these students.