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About the Presenter:

Dr. Yvette Piha Lehman is a Professor at the University of São Paulo (São Paulo/Brazil). Dr. Lehman is the Director of the university's Applied Psychology and Vocational Counseling Center. Lehman is involved in studies of career changes and the university dropout phenomenon. Lehman is a member of the Brazilian Society of Psychoanalysis.

Title of Paper: **A Study on the University Dropout Phenomenon: Education Paradigm Changes and Their Consequences**

Abstract:

We try to elaborate in this work the subjective, social and market determinants that impact the professional re-selection process and its dynamic in order to define a specific service model for this population.

We have observed a growing number of university students in crisis with the course they have chosen. In many cases this crisis ended in the abandonment of the course. This is a new phenomenon, without precedent in the history of Brazilian higher education. As such it requires close attention to the quality of the link that the student has had with the university and his satisfaction with it.

Re-selection cases dealt with by a private university's Vocational Counseling Service between 1998 and 2002 were analyzed. In all, there were 180 students from public and private universities and from several different courses.

Significant differences were observed between the variables that influence the decision to drop out made at the start of the university course, halfway through it and at the end of it. . The crisis also emerges at different moments depending if the student is in a private university or a public institutions of higher learning.



In analyzing the factors that lead youths to drop out, we noticed that the lack of an elaboration process at the initial selection stage plays an important role. A Vocational Counseling service at the start of the decision-making process could have a positive effect, helping reduce dropout rates. There are several different reasons for dropping out halfway through the course and at the end of it.

We also observed that youths who undergo vocational counseling when they are in crisis with their university course manage to elaborate their doubts and re-connect to their initial professional project in a more harmonious fashion. Most of them do not drop out.

There is a definite need for public vocational counseling policies and for the development, inside universities, of student service centers that deal with this new phenomenon – the student in crisis.

Key Words: vocational counseling, university dropout rates, public policies.