

**QUALITY of LIFE  
and  
ATTENDANCE  
in  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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# DECLARATION

**I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.**

(Signed) *Carl Leonard*

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
DE&T	Department of Education and Training, Victoria
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NSWDET	New South Wales Department of Education and Training
NSWIEU	New South Wales Independent Education Union
NSWTF	New South Wales Teachers Federation
QSL	Quality of School Life Instrument
VIEU	Victorian Independent Education Union
Workcover	Workcover Authority of New South Wales



# ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents the results of a study to assess the impact of a stress management, a self-development, and a relaxation technique on the quality of school life and attendance of 448 Year 5 and 6 students in 16 classes at 4 Lower Hunter Valley primary schools in New South Wales, Australia, in 2000. The importance of contextualising student quality of school life as a key indicator of school effectiveness and measure of school improvement, is also argued.

The Quality of School Life questionnaire (Ainley & Bourke, 1992) scales were used pre- and post- intervention as indicators of student perception of aspects of their school life including stressful and satisfying elements. Various student, teacher, and class contextual variables were also investigated.

Overall, the interventions implemented in this study appeared to have had some small impact on student quality of school life, student absence, teacher stress, teacher satisfaction, and teacher absence. Of particular interest are the apparent differential effects of some of the interventions for: teachers and students, classes, schools, and, at least in part, the effectiveness of the implementation of the interventions. Possible explanations of these differences are discussed while implications including the apparent importance of positive peer relationships and an exciting and enjoyable curriculum in ensuring students have a high quality of school life are described.

In the broader context of school effectiveness and school improvement, it is hoped that further investigation will be undertaken of the intervention strategies explored and refined in this study, and perhaps other strategies intended to enhance student quality of school life. In particular, interventions are needed that facilitate the establishment of classroom environments where students and teachers want to be, where educational outcomes are enhanced, and students are led to a broader life experience.