

# Streaming in schools analysis essay



## Considering Streaming in Secondary Education in Canada and its

**Advantages** In the field of secondary-school education in Canada, there has been an intense debate about to what extent the practice of streaming of students should exist. At the secondary level of schooling in Canada, the form of streaming involves “ distributing students across various types and levels of courses” according to Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller (1992). In this paper two levels of streaming will be considered; 1) academic and vocational split of schools, and 2) the placement of the required subjects (eg. math, English, science).

The main debate about streaming is whether or not it increases inequality of the socio-economic status of the people within the society. The main criticism of streaming in the secondary-level education argues that it creates inequality between the students from wealthier families and the students from poorer families. However, streaming within schools can reduce the gap between “ bright” students and “ poor” students in their academic performance. Other critics of streaming argue that it creates segregation and different “ cultural reproduction” as outcomes of the streamed education (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

Although the critics argue that different streams generate different cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes (Oaks, 2005: 201) to students, it does not always results in higher-streaming students getting more “ valuable” cultural capital and knowledge than lower-streaming students. Students in streams learn in a more corporative and productive environment that suits their needs and goals, with the similar peers. The core criticism of streaming claims that it widens inequality in the society because students from

wealthier families are more likely to enter academic programs than the students from poorer family backgrounds (Davis and Guppy, 2006).

However, the inequality of the social class exists in every society, and it is not essentially due to the split...