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BACK TO SCHOOL:
AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF ADULT STUDENTS
AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

A Thesis
presented in fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Education
at
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

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December, 1988

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were two-fold: to establish a profile of the adult student returning to secondary school on the basis of a selected sample [N=36], and to derive from an indepth and systematic view of the everyday experiences of this sample an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student. In meeting these objectives, a further priority for the study was: to elaborate upon the application of field research techniques within an educational setting. This involved the provision of an ongoing autobiographical component to the report, detailing the 'processes, pitfalls, dilemmas, and discoveries' encountered during the development and implementation of methodological and analytic strategies. Throughout the 1984 school year, data was collected from the sample of adult students, school Principal, Dean of Adult Students and classroom teachers, using a selection of field research techniques (e.g., participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, diary accounts, and documentary materials). The data was gathered within a broadly categorised symbolic interactionist perspective and subjected to a 'grounded theory' form of analysis. This 'emergent' form of analysis, combined with the data gathering strategies, provided a basis for the elaboration of the social and cultural landscape necessary in this initial attempt at documenting the processes of becoming an adult student. The outcome of using these two approaches in tandem was the identification of six 'factors of influence' as organizational headings to subsume the day-to-day experiences of becoming an adult student: Returning to School; School Policy, Adult Status and the Role of the Dean; In the School; In the Classroom; Decision Points; and, Goal Achievements. Furthermore, two overriding themes indicated the processes through which the adult student was, at one and the same time, both 'integrated' into the overall school culture and 'differentiated' as a member of the separate adult student subculture.

The notion of these processes of becoming was subjected to a theoretical elaboration incorporating the establishment of a conceptual model and explanatory constructs. From this cumulative form of theory development, linkages were indicated suggesting a group of 'common processes' existing across a variety of different comparative contexts. In addition to the recommendation that the further development of theories of such processes need to explore such linkages, the final sections of this report discuss a number of implications and uses which might be derived. For instance, it is suggested that this preliminary, yet extensive, investigation provides both descriptive data and theoretical categories which may be of use to: teachers, adult students, policy-makers and researchers interested in the study of adult students in secondary schools, developments within the areas of methodological and analytical strategies, and in elaborating the processes of becoming. Finally, an overall implication arising from the report is that the complex, dynamic and individualistic nature of the processes involved in becoming an adult student lends little support to deterministic models and theories, or to superficial accounts derived from 'one-shot' methodologies and perspectives of such processes and experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the cooperation of a number of people and organisations, and I hereby acknowledge my appreciation for their contribution.

Professor Ivan Snook, Dr. David Battersby, and Dr. Roy Shuker supervised my research. In particular, I convey my gratitude for the guidance, support, constructive criticism, friendship, experience and insight provided by Dr. Battersby and Dr. Shuker, for it was upon them that fell the considerable task of overseeing the research throughout all of its phases.

I was honoured to be awarded a University Grants Committee Scholarship, and wish to thank the Committee for the financial support this provided for the research.

My colleagues, both at Massey University and the Hunter Institute of Higher Education, gave willingly both inspiration and helpful advice. Professor Ray Adams and Professor Ivan Snook provided not only guidance but support in a variety of forms which enabled the research to proceed. I am also especially indebted to Mr. Bill Maley for the opportunity to finish writing this thesis at the Hunter Institute of Higher Education.

Mr. Iain Galloway and Ms. Carole Gordon from the National Council of Adult Education need special mention for their considerable assistance, enthusiasm, and friendship throughout the research, as does Ms. Penny Fenwick of the Department of Education.

In addition, a number of people and organisations in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada responded with information and encouragement regarding the research. With apologies for the necessity to resort to a listing, I extend my gratitude for their efforts and considerable appreciation for their support to all of the following: Madeline Arnot; Sandra Ashman; Dr. Richard Bagnall; Len Barton; Sandra Battle; Dr. Julia Berryman; Dr. Elizabeth Bird; Dr. Roger Boshier; Dr. Robert Burgess; Jo Campling; Dr. Lynn Davies;

Rosemary Deem; Dr. Sara Delamont; Dr. Chris Duke; Professor S.J. Eggleston; Dr. Janet Finch; Dr. Elizabeth Gerver; Dr. Mary Hamilton; Ann Harrison; Eileen Holly; Dr. J.C. Horobin; Dr. Arlene McLaren; Dr. Roland Meighan; K.L. Oglesby; Dr. Marie Strong; Professor Margaret Sutherland; Dr. J.E. Thomas. Furthermore, to Arthur Stock and Elaine Pole of the National Council of Adult Continuing Education I am particularly indebted for their provision of a listing of relevant literature and newspaper reports of the United Kingdom situation, and the staff at the Manchester Equal Opportunities Commission who provided additional background information.

The staff from a number of schools and organisations within New Zealand gave both encouragement and information related to the conduct of the inquiry. I especially wish to acknowledge the contribution of the staff and adult students at Makora College for their considerable assistance.

To the sample of 36 adult students who so willingly took me into their group and confidence, and so openly talked for such lengths and in considerable detail of their experiences, as well as the Principal, Adult Dean, and teachers at the school, this thesis owes much more than an expression of gratitude.

Finally, to my family who have provided the understanding and support, often under adverse conditions, I dedicate this thesis. To Heather, I present this thesis as but a small token in return for those countless hours of night-nursing, reading of material, and support which has been responsible for the completion of this document.

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INTRODUCTION

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first
time.*

(T.S Eliot)

In 1974, the first adult students enrolled in day-time classes in New Zealand secondary schools. During the following decade, the numbers of such students steadily increased until in 1984 there were some 3700 distributed throughout the country. These adult students have come to form a significant proportion of the secondary school population with, in a few locations, their numbers exceeding the school-aged pupil roll. And yet, our knowledge and understanding of their experiences during the return to school is far from extensive.

To date, accounts of adult students in secondary schools have taken either of two forms. There have been numerous media reports consisting, usually, of one-off interviews with teachers and adult students. Through the focus upon such concerns as 'goals', 'problems', and 'achievements', such media accounts have sought to convey some impression of adult student experiences in returning to school. The second type has appeared in what is broadly categorised as the 'research literature'. This has typically reported the perspective of school staff as they recount, and reflect upon, their experiences of the adult students in a particular school. While serving some purposes, much of the existing literature is held to be deficient on a number of counts. For instance, there has been a tendency to rely upon the use of one-off interviews and questionnaires to collect data on adult students, at the expense of seeking to provide an indepth account of their experiences. Furthermore, much of the literature is heavily weighted towards the presentation of the

'teacher perspective' to the detriment of understanding the perceptions the adult students have of their return to school. The outcome of these and other deficiencies in past accounts has been the failure to provide a comprehensive view of adult students everyday experiences and the processes they undergo during their return to secondary schooling.

It was against this background that the present study developed and the objectives were derived. The aims for the research were to focus upon a sample (N=36) of adult students in a secondary school: to establish a profile of the adult student; and, to derive from an indepth and systematic account of their everyday experiences an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student. Before proceeding, it appears pertinent at this point to establish two conventions of terminology which have been adopted throughout the report. First, the term student is used to designate adult student, whereas pupil refers to members of the school-aged population. Where others have adopted the generic 'student', the author has substituted the appropriate differentiating term and distinguished this by either brackets or italics. A second usage involves the phrase processes of becoming as an abbreviated form for 'processes of becoming an adult student'.

In setting out to achieve the objectives, the study aimed to make contributions in several areas. First, by providing an initial insight into the notion of these processes of becoming and the transitions the term implies. Second, to establish a preliminary set of 'grounded' categories which could prove a profitable point of departure for further research on adult students and the overall processes they experienced. Finally, and developed as a further priority, this study aimed to make a contribution in the area of methodology. In this context, the author was predisposed towards the view that the existing literature reporting field research methods in educational settings was somewhat lacking in accounting for the processes, problems, pitfalls, and issues involved in the conduct of this type of research. On this basis, the present study seeks to provide an ongoing autobiographical component detailing the actual conduct of the investigation.

The report of the research undertaken to fulfil the objectives and priorities outlined, is comprised of five chapters. The first indicates the historical background to the admission of adult students to New Zealand secondary school day-time classes, briefly reviews the existing literature, and discusses the objectives of the present study. The second chapter, in focussing upon the design and methodology, presents a rationale for the adoption of a field research approach to data collection and details the particular approaches used, while exploring some of the issues encountered during their application. An account is also provided of the sample of adult students, staff, and the school chosen for the study. Chapter Three presents an examination of the development and processes of applying the analytical strategies used to approach the data gathered during the course of the investigation. In Chapter Four, the focus is upon providing the indepth insight into the day-to-day experiences of the sample as they underwent the processes of becoming an adult student, while Chapter Five comments upon the theoretical significance of these processes. This is followed by a concluding statement which discusses the outcomes of the present research in terms of the objectives and priorities, and speculates upon the implications these hold for adult students and the application of the methodology. The first volume includes a bibliography of the research and literature consulted during the study. A second volume contains the appendices which form an important reference point to the report. These provide a comprehensive profile of the people which form the base of the investigation, case study details of particular events and copies of the questionnaires and interview schedules that were used during the research. The appendices also include extended discussions of the historical antecedents of the research methodology and the ethical considerations this approach raised, and the elaboration of a series of recommendations concerning adult students in the secondary school.

CHAPTER ONE

IN THE BEGINNING : RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The first section of this chapter outlines the historical background to the first admissions, in 1974, of adult students to New Zealand secondary school day-time classes. This is followed by an examination of the decade of growth and development up to 1984, the fieldwork year of the present investigation. Despite this growth, the adult student in day secondary classes has not been subject to any indepth investigation, as an overview of the media accounts and research literature and commentary reveals. On the foundations of this review of the situation, literature, and the influences stemming from the researcher's own biography, the overall focus and objectives of the present study were developed.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

The fieldwork for the present investigation was conducted in 1984, the year in which the provision for adult admissions to day classes in secondary schools completed its first decade. In recognition of this, and acknowledging that present contexts owe something to their historical foundations, this section outlines the antecedent conditions which contributed to adult students gaining access to day-time secondary school classes. This is not, however, to provide a full accounting of the historical development of adult education in New Zealand, a task beyond the scope of the present thesis and already extensively documented in the literature (for instance, Boshier, 1980a; Dakin, 1978a, 1979; Garrett, 1969; Hall, 1970; Thompson, 1945; Williams, 1978).

Adult education in New Zealand appears to have been part of the culture throughout history. Indeed, Ranganui Walker (1980) argues that the Maori had a tradition of adult education, based on the *marae*, which stretches back to antiquity. Similarly, Thompson (1945) and Dakin (1978a) report that the early European colonists arriving during the mid-1800s imported with them a view strongly supportive of education in general, and forms of adult education in particular. Even the voyage of the colonists to New Zealand was seen as providing an educational opportunity and classes were held on board ship for both children and adults, and the New Zealand Company equipped each settlement with a library including a copy of the Encyclopedia Britannica and other literary materials (Hall, 1970).

Also 'imported' along with the settlers and their libraries was a form of the British Mechanics' Institute, which was soon to be operating in almost every centre of population (Dakin, 1979). While the original British form had both a vocational training and political function (Legge, 1982; Thompson, 1945), the New Zealand version had primarily an educational 'aim' through the provision of:

The main activities [being] library service, lectures and classes, but in the early days the provision of meeting places for clubs and societies was a major function.

(Dakin, 1979, p.5)

Accordingly, from the early days of settlement, it is possible to discern elements of a perception and accompanying facilities supportive of adult education actually prior to the establishment of any national scheme of formal education (see, Hall, 1970; Lander, 1981). While the turn of the century was to see the virtual demise of the mechanics' institutes (Hall, 1970; Thompson, 1945), they did appear to be part of a thread of development of adult education imprinted upon New Zealand culture from its historical beginnings.

This development, however, was in a piecemeal fashion rather than representative of a coherent philosophy and programme for adult education (Boshier, 1980c; Dakin, 1980). Furthermore, it predominantly reflected variations of themes 'imported' from Britain (Thompson, 1945), a pattern which continued through the early 1900's. Initially, various church organisations, the YMCA and YWCA, and the

Women's Franchise Leagues, performed at least some broad 'educational' functions as 'replacements' for the mechanics' institutes, but it was perhaps the establishment of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) in New Zealand which provided the next 'significant' development (Hall, 1970; Shuker, 1983). Formed during the First World War, the WEA achieved some considerable success for:

More than any previous movement it had aroused real interest in adult education among many sections of the public. It had gained the official support both of the university and of organised labour, and the era of State support was not far distant. From the beginning it had drawn its membership from a fairly wide field, though in this it had encountered criticism from within and without the movement. With all their shortcomings, its tutorial classes were by 1919 providing opportunity for serious study to upwards of 1,000 men and women, while public lectures, short courses, and educational conferences had reached a much wider public.

(Thompson, 1945, pp.83-84)

Despite the increased participation, adult education in the 1930's remained an adjunct to 'mainstream' provisions, and those involved were predominantly from the 'middle class' and already 'well educated' (Boshier, 1971; Williams, 1978). In short, as Shuker (1984) reports, while the WEA initially catered for a working class clientele, by the 1930's it had been subject to 'middle class capture', a pattern which then continued to characterise adult education in the New Zealand context (Benseman, 1979a). This adult education, also, was engaged in outside working hours and generally dissociated from career prospects. These facets of provision and participation contributed something to a perspective which continues to see adult education as a 'leisure-time' activity, and a 'luxury' item at that (Thompson, 1945; Williams, 1978).

The period between the two World Wars saw further developments in the area of adult education. Increasingly, the universities undertook to provide various courses through 'Extension Departments', while 1938 saw the opening of the first designated 'Community Centre' attached to Feilding Agricultural High School. Again, as Dakin (1979) reports, the influence of British provision was evident as these New Zealand Community Centres owed something to the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges set up during the 1920s and 1930s (see, Poster, 1971), as

well as the Danish Folk High Schools. When opening Wairarapa College, the then Minister of Education, Peter Fraser, publicly announced his decision and perception of the function of Community Centres such as that at Feilding:

At the Feilding Agricultural High School, Mr Fraser said, he hoped to undertake an experiment which would, in his opinion, be of great and lasting value to the people of the Dominion. If it were successful, the experiment would be extended elsewhere. He had said that education ceased only with the grave. There was a need for educational institutions holding out friendship and a welcome to boys and girls after they left school; to adolescents and adults - giving them the opportunity after they had taken up working life of obtaining still further education.

('The Wairarapa Age', February 9, 1938.
cited by Dakin, 1979, p.14)

While these comments were perhaps among the first supporting a concept of 'life-long' education, the Community Centre remained a relatively rare aspect of the New Zealand educational provision, with only five being established by the end of World War 2 (Auckland Community Schools Working Committee, 1977; Dakin, 1979; Easterbrook-Smith, 1975; Williams, 1978).

Further development of Community Centres following the war was not to occur and, like earlier provisions for adult education, their role began to decline (Lander, 1981). At least part of the reason for this was the increasing number of adults undertaking evening class studies at their local secondary school:

At the same time [1950-1955] a rapid development in the educational field tended to detract from the appeal of the community centres because it demonstrated that some of the educational services supplied by these institutions could be provided by programmes of adult classes organized at schools.

(Dakin, 1979, p.169)

Such classes were more widely accessible than the offerings available at the few community centres and the Government appeared reluctant to duplicate resources where a secondary school could provide similar services (Department of Education, 1962). These classes continued to proliferate throughout the 1950s and 1960s offering a variety of subjects ranging from the so-called 'hobby

options' - such as millinery, pottery - to examination-based courses for School Certificate and University Entrance and post-school technical education. In short, the secondary school became the focus of 'community education' for adults during the 1950's and 1960's as:

They served limited geographical areas, often in new housing areas of cities; often the secondary school possessed a monopoly of community facilities; a greater proportion of families had a child attending the school; perhaps a increasing proportion of parents had also had a secondary education; secondary school boards had, in the main, responsibility for one school and were, therefore, more attuned to community needs. Facilities like halls, gymnasias and swimming pools were not routinely provided, and were funded by community fund-raising and government subsidy. The community, then, had some right to use school facilities and, as a result, secondary schools have attracted a wide range of uses by community groups.

(Lander, 1981, p.44)

During the 1960's, the development of Technical Institutes, and the accompanying 'conversion' of the Technical High Schools to general comprehensive schools, saw the decline of evening school provision for technical education (Macpherson, 1969). At the same time, however, this was more than adequately compensated for by a steady growth in the demand for access to further and continuing education, a demand which the schools found increasingly difficult to service. In the larger urban centres, the evening school classes were generally held in the former Technical High Schools. This situation arose due to the fact that, first, these schools and, subsequently, the provision of evening classes for adults were both founded in terms of the Manual and Technical Instruction Regulations dating back to the early 1900's (Dakin, 1980). Although this saw the classes in one central location, there remained difficulties of access for those in the outer suburbs who might have wished to avail themselves of the opportunity. Indeed, such access would also appear to have been limited to those who had the 'freedom' of attending during the evening, a factor which may have excluded many of those with family responsibilities, particularly women. Also, the evening class was restricted to a 30-week programme which, coupled with the 'once-a-week' class, limited access to any variety of content and made the attainment of credentials such as School Certificate and University Entrance a two-year project in most instances. Furthermore, the Seventh Form level of subjects - leading

to access to such professional tertiary courses as law and medicine- was not available.

Despite these difficulties (see, Dakin, 1980), the development of evening classes during the 1950's and 1960's provided a further thread leading to the admission of adult students to secondary school day classes.

In summation, the provision of adult admission to secondary school day classes owes at least something to the antecedent conditions of adult education from the Maori *marae*, the early days of European colonization, the development of the WEA, university extension courses, organisations such as the YMCA, Women's Division of Federated Farmers and Country Women's Institutes, community centres, the evening class and the general development of formal education. As noted by Herbert (1982), each of these 'threads' from the past contributed to the debate in New Zealand during the 1970's when all aspects of educational provision were subjected to scrutiny.

'LIFE-LONG LEARNING': A CHANGE OF FOCUS IN THE 1970s

The new developments of the 1970's saw certain key ideas concerning adult education receiving exposure in a number of published reports and in public forums. For instance, the Housing Commission Report of 1971 advocated that the school assume a more prominent role in providing community facilities, a recommendation which provided a catalyst for consideration of the concept of community schools within New Zealand (Lander, 1981).

In 1972, a New Zealand Committee on Lifelong Education (UNESCO, 1972) produced a report which advanced the notion of learning as a lifelong process for everyone, rather than as something restricted to younger people. This Report also pinpointed a number of areas of special concern, including: the absence of any comprehensive education entitlement, and; the special needs of women, ethnic minorities, and those living in rural areas without direct access to present adult education provisions. The UNESCO Committee considered that there was a need both for school-aged pupils to have access to

evening school classes and for adults to be admitted to day-school classes, stating:

3.5 That the new regulations recommended by this Committee provide for access by secondary pupils to the field of continuing education and for the attendance of adults at secondary school classes.

(UNESCO, 1972, p.9)

The Committee advocated a changed perception of educational provision incorporating open access to all levels, regardless of age, economic position, or status, and suggested that all avenues of education should be accorded equal prominence as part of the view of the lifelong nature of learning.

Overall, the UNESCO (1972) report envisaged a number of significant changes being required within educational provisions, namely that: those re-entering the workforce would require various forms of retraining; most adults continue to have some needs for further learning beyond the period of formal schooling; social and technological change required greater availability of access to education; curricula pressures saw many younger students narrowing their options; and, the increased availability of educational opportunity was necessary to distribute this resource more equitably across all sectors of the population.

In turn, although not necessarily in any causal relationship, these general perceptions appeared to run through many of the cases mounted for increasing access to all levels of education (for instance, Benseman, 1979a, 1979b) which followed during the 1970s. Certainly, many of these ideas were to surface during the Educational Development Conference of the early 1970s, where the strengthening of links between school and community was assigned priority. Similarly, the Labour Party Manifesto for the 1972 elections contained some points which appeared directly related to those from the UNESCO Committee:

Increased emphasis will be placed on the role of schools in the community and encouragement will be given to involving pupils in community work. Similarly schools will make more use of individuals from outside the school for special services and programmes. Attention will be given to promoting the use of educational facilities as

community and youth centres for study, recreation and cultural pursuits.

(New Zealand Labour Party Manifesto, 1972.
Cited by Dakin, 1979, p.176)

Once in Government, the Labour Party implemented the two major recommendations of the UNESCO Committee on Lifelong Education. This resulted in the setting up of an inquiry into 'continuing education' as part of the ongoing Educational Development Conference, and the appointment of an officer in the Education Department with responsibility for continuing education.

Although the National Government, in 1970, had initiated a forum for the discussion of 'educational priorities', the incoming Labour Government, in November 1972, extended both the scope and time available for the consideration of educational provision within New Zealand, as well as seeking to involve all sectors of the community in the process. In short, all aspects of education - formal, informal, at all levels - were opened up to debate during the Educational Development Conference (EDC). As an exercise, this saw an unprecedented participation by a wide cross-section of the New Zealand population involved in the discussion of a range of educational issues (Lander, 1981). By the completion of the EDC (Advisory Council on Educational Planning, 1974), over 8,000 submissions were received from individuals, from the 4,000 study groups representing some 60,000 people, from seminars and other public meetings, from educational organizations, and from overseas educationalists invited to participate. At the end of 1974, the Advisory Council on Educational Planning (1974), responsible for the coordination of the EDC, published its final report. Before this appeared, however, two of the recommendations to emerge from the EDC - and also included in the UNESCO Committee Report of 1972 - had already been implemented.

The first saw four pilot community schools set up in Auckland in 1974. These received some additional staffing allowances, finance and accommodation facilities, and involved two secondary schools - Aorere College and Rutherford High School - an intermediate school - Mount Eden - and a primary school - Freyberg Memorial. Each of these schools received an additional senior teacher as 'Director of

Community Education', a modified relocatable classroom as an administrative centre, a small incidentals grant and some provision for extra cleaning and clerical assistance. They were required to set school objectives within a framework of 'expanding the use of the school to cater for the educational, recreational and cultural needs of the wider community' (Auckland Community Schools Working Committee, 1977; Roth, 1979). The second recommendation was the provision of access of adults to day school classes. In 1974, this required a legal dispensation from the existing Education Act for the two pilot secondary schools, which appears to have been extended to other schools as they made application to admit such adult students:

The initial impetus for establishing secondary education for adults in day schools came from the plight of a twenty-seven year old taxi driver, married with two children who obtained his U.E through night school but needed to obtain a University Bursary in order to achieve his goal of studying medicine. Special dispensation to allow this man to be admitted to Hagley High School seventh form was sought from the Director General of Education in 1974... . Eight adult students were enrolled at Hagley in that year... .

(Macintosh, 1978, p.1)

Although Macintosh would appear to be referring to the 'initial impetus' as far as the particular school was concerned, rather than the general case which owes its origins to considerably more than this one case, this does indicate the change which had taken place in education within New Zealand. Prior to 1974, the age of 19 was the upper limit of eligibility for 'free' (non fee-paying) admission to day secondary school classes and those older than this were then required to seek further school-based credentials through evening classes or by correspondence courses. The change in direction implemented in 1974, then, opened to the general population a further option for access to these examination-based qualifications, and did so on the basis that this access should be free from financial requirements in terms of fees. However, other aspects of the Advisory Committee's recommendations were not to be implemented. For instance, it was held that:

An expansion of this scheme [entry to secondary classes] is most desirable and we wish consideration to be given to making financial provision for such students. It is not

realistic to think that, simply by removing institutional barriers, large numbers of students will be recruited from groups which have not had a lengthy secondary education. Positive measures need to be taken by way of bursaries, work releases and the extension of correspondence learning.

(Advisory Council on Educational Planning, 1974,
p.100)

A decade later, there were still no financial provisions for adult students returning to secondary school, beyond some Social Welfare payments as will be discussed at a subsequent point in this thesis. The Advisory Council also noted 'with approval' the planning of the first community school which was to include a 'pre-school, community centre, heated swimming pool and additional parking facilities'. Opened in 1976, Nga Tapuwae College, was to remain the only purpose-built community school while others - even those with considerably larger adult student enrolments - were left to fund and administer their own 'pre-school' or creche facilities (see, Bradley, 1984a, 1984b; Kohia Teachers Centre, 1979), as well as providing from their own resources any other facilities, such as an Adult Student Commonroom, they deemed necessary. As both Bradley (1984a, 1984b) and Herbert (1982) report, those schools which have initiated their own creche facilities - some 10 between 1974 and 1978 - had significant increases in adult enrolments (see also, Kohia Teachers Centre, 1979). However, the Education Department (Circular 1977/79, August 1977; Circular 1981/124, September 1981) has continued to emphasise that they will not provide any assistance - financial, facilities, or staffing - to establish such centres. Indeed, the majority of schools admitting adult students receive only the extra staffing allowance brought about by the increased roll, with the provision of all buildings, furnishings, and equipment being related solely to the school-aged pupil enrolment.

The four Auckland schools remained officially designated as 'pilot' schools until 1975 when they and seven other schools were termed 'school-based learning centres'. Seven of these 11 schools - Freyberg, Epsom Normal (Primary), Aorere, Rutherford, Nga Tapuwae, Aranui, Ashburton - received a full package of assistance comprising additional professional and ancillary staffing plus an annual grant. Four others - Glenfield, Feilding, Newlands, Hagley - received an

annual grant. As Herbert (1982) reports, by early 1980 seven urban schools (five in Auckland, one in Christchurch, one in Ashburton) were receiving the full 'package' of assistance although a total of twenty schools were being 'helped' - a term which was not elaborated upon to become involved in community activities.

While the admission of adult students to day classes was not fully written into the law until the 1976 Education Act, by 1975 a total of 55 schools was involved, in 1976 there were 146 schools with adult students, and by 1979 the number had increased to 190 schools. The period between 1974 and 1984 was marked by a growth in this provision as increasing numbers of adult students returned to day-time secondary school classes.

A DECADE OF GROWTH: 1974-1984

From the initial 77 adult students who enrolled in 12 schools during 1974, the next ten years were to see a continuous growth in numbers, as Table 1 below illustrates.

TABLE 1
Adult Students at Secondary School:
Full-time and Part-time Enrolments
at 1st March, 1974-1984¹

YEAR	NUMBER OF FULL-TIME ADULTS	NUMBER OF PART-TIME ADULTS	FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT OF PART-TIME ADULTS *	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1974				77
1975	[Figures for Full-time and Part-time Not Available]			480
1976				986
1977	367	1354	240	1721
1978	586	1556	554	2142
1979	644	1757	649	2401
1980	797	1756	630	2553
1981	778	2179	718	2957
1982	764	2609	726	3373
1983	754	2924	828	3678
1984	813	2944	908	3757

* Full-time Equivalent = Part-time hours divided by 20 (to nearest whole number as per Department of Education figures)

¹ Figures for 1974-1976 derived by author from Department of Education Returns (Form: E2/177). Remainder, from 'Education Statistics of New Zealand, 1985', published by the Department of Education, and checked by author from original returns. The returns of March 1 are furnished by each school in accordance with Department of Education requirements, and detail all pupils and adult students enrolled at that date.

Similarly, during this period, the distribution of these adult students saw a majority of state schools, and some of the independent schools, providing access for adult students. Over the decade, there remained few state schools which had not experienced some adult students enrolling in day classes. For instance, an examination of the figures available for the period 1978 to 1983 shows that of the approximately 200 State Form 3 to 7 secondary schools only 17 had never enrolled an adult student. On further analysis, 14 of these were Boys' schools, two were Girls' schools, and the other was a coeducational secondary school. In addition, there were 12 other schools during the same period which had adult students enrolled in only one of these years, of which five were Boys' schools, five were coeducational, and the other two were Girls' schools. As a variety of factors may contribute to this pattern, no causal links between adult admission and type of school can be substantiated, other than that in many instances an equivalent Girls' Secondary in the same area would have adult students whereas the Boys' School would not. The general trend, however, has been for the majority of schools in New Zealand to provide this opportunity, although in some centres - Masterton and Christchurch, for example - one particular school has been 'designated', often by 'general agreement' between schools, to be that which will enrol adult students.

Other variations of distribution are also apparent within the national figures for adult student enrolment during the period 1974 to 1984, including situations where a particular school may have adult students one year but not the next. Furthermore, as Table 2 indicates, these adult students in 1983 were enrolled at all class levels - although primarily in senior classes - and, as in most areas of continuing education (see, Blakley, 1977), women were predominant.

While the majority of New Zealand secondary schools have experienced adult students enrolling, the numbers in many cases have remained relatively small within a particular school. Indeed, a majority of schools would have 10 or fewer adult students in any one year, but there are some exceptions to this.

Table 3 groups the numbers of State Forms 3 to 7 secondary schools in 1983 within four categories of adult student enrolments (in

TABLE 2
Returns of Adult Students as at 1 March 1983
New Zealand State Secondary Schools¹

REGION	ROLL	Fm 3		Fm 4		Fm 5/1st yr		Fm 5/Other		Fm 6/1st yr		Fm 6/Other		Fm 7		TOTAL	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	F.T	P.T
Northern [N=144]	F.T F.T.E 104506					10	30	5	14	53	183	15	39	7	17	373	934
		0.25	5.8		5.55	4.52	54.42	1.45	16.25	15.48	98.03	11.55	55.4	2.7	13.4		
Central [N=104]	F.T F.T.E 69734		2		3	17	17	9	19	31	67	16	24	6	9	220	711
		0.35	4.05	0.2	2.9	14.7	39.4	10.1	26.92	5.75	78.86	3.56	33.32	1.9	12.15		
Southern [N=88]	F.T F.T.E 48578						5	5	16	6	17	17	66	5	13	150	1228
			4.15	0.2	0.65	12.35	11.55	12.45	48.8	6.5	55.7	25.9	106.9	4.8	17.15		
TOTALS [N=336]	F.T F.T.E 222818		2		3	27	52	19	49	90	267	48	129	18	39	743	2869
		0.6	14	0.4	9.1	31.57	105.37	24	91.97	27.73	232.59	40.61	195.62	9.4	42.7		

KEY:

- F.T = Full-time
- F.T.E = Full-time Equivalent of part-time adults. Calculated by dividing number of part-time hours by 20
- N = Number of schools in sample
- Roll = Full-time secondary school-aged pupils (excludes pupils in Work Experience and Deaf groups, as well as adult students)
- Total: F.T = Total number of full-time (minimum of four subjects) adult students
- P.T = Total number of part-time (maximum of three subjects) adult students

¹ Figures compiled from Department of Education Form E2/177. By definition, State Secondary Schools include all those in receipt of Government financial grants. These figures, therefore, include both Integrated and Alternative Schools. In 1983, there were 50 such schools of which seven had small numbers (< 10) of adult students. In preparation of Department statistics, which provided the basis for Table 1, each figure is 'rounded' to the nearest whole number. It is this process which accounts for the difference in figures for 1983 between this and Table 1.

1983, a total of 7 from 28 Independent Secondary Schools had adult student enrolments - with a maximum of three in any one school).

TABLE 3
Ranges of Adult Enrolments
State Forms 3-7 Schools, 1983

RANGE OF TOTAL ADULT ENROLMENTS *	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS **
0	45
1-10	89
11-20	44
21-50	20
51+	9

* Includes number of part-time and full-time adult students

** Excludes 50 Integrated Schools, of which only seven had adult students in the 1-10 range

In the New Zealand Education system, there also exist Forms 1-7 schools and Area Schools.¹ In 1983, 28 of such schools had no adult students enrolled, 46 had between one and 10, four had 11-20, and one had over 21.

A further indication of the pattern of change, and variations in distribution, of adult student enrolments can be determined by examining the data for a selected group of secondary schools. In Table Four, six secondary schools and their pupil and adult student enrolments are shown for a five-year period.

While all of these schools are in the 'upper range' as far as adult admissions are concerned, with Hagley High School and Newlands

¹ The New Zealand schooling system is comprised of three levels: Primary, Intermediate, and Secondary. The Intermediate level consists of Forms 1 and 2, and, generally, specialist schools are provided for this group, except in those locations where the numbers of pupils are not sufficient to maintain two separate schools and a Form 1-7 school is provided. An Area School is one which provides for all three levels within the one institution and these are located in rural communities where the total school enrolment is small. For instance, in 1983, there were 35 Area Schools with enrolments ranging between 18 and 238 pupils (average roll 87) with 69 percent of these schools having under 100 pupils.

TABLE 4
Pupil and Adult Student Enrolments:
Six Selected Secondary Schools, 1979-1983¹

SCHOOL	1979			1980			1981			1982			1983		
	PUPIL	ADULT PT	STUDENT FT	PUPIL	ADULT PT	STUDENT FT	PUPIL	ADULT PT	STUDENT FT	PUPIL	ADULT PT	STUDENT FT	PUPIL	ADULT PT	STUDENT FT
AORERE	1082	67	30	1113	37	25	1103	32	14	1072	27	27	1066	18	17
GLENFIELD	1103	26	34	1169	24	34	1229	25	17	1281	25	16	1328	35	15
MAKORA	579	37	10	524	66	9	536	77	5	533	124	7	589	11	10
WELLINGTON HIGH	723	36	28	717	[N/I]	41	756	28	51	752	22	32	817	33	51
NEWLANDS	699	226	7	752	203	9	722	216	3	698	251	4	716	36	10
HAGLEY	685	195	77	613	132	66	541	547	62	516	653	73	569	795	67

¹ Selected on bases of: (1) Region: Aorere and Glenfield in Auckland City [Northern Region]; Makora in Masterton [Central Region, rural town]; Wellington High and Newlands in Wellington City [Central Region]; Hagley in Christchurch City [Southern Region]; and (2) Size: from 'average' to the two largest adult student enrolments in New Zealand Secondary Schools, Hagley and Newlands. Source of data: Department of Education Form E2/177, March 1 Returns, derived by author. No indication was available as to reasons for variations, most evident in the figures for Newlands.

PT = Number of part-time adult students

FT = Number of full-time adult students

having the largest adult student enrolments within New Zealand, it does become evident from all the data presented in this section that these students do form a 'significant' proportion of the New Zealand school population. During the present investigation, a number of school personnel in casual conversations reported the adult student enrolment as a 'necessary' factor to enable the continuation of the senior level course options they were able to provide. Yet, despite the point that the total numbers of such adult students, if all in one area, would fill at least three New Zealand secondary schools, the literature discussing this aspect of the educational environment is most notable by its absence. It is to the consideration of this literature that discussion now turns.

THE ADULT STUDENT IN THE LITERATURE

In the historical context, it is evident that children and adults have undertaken educative experiences together in the past. For instance, Jackson (1980) points to the fact that the Owenite and Chartist movements fruitfully combined the learning of adults and children. Similarly, the 1945 film *The Corn is Green*, portrays adults seeking an improvement in educational levels alongside pupils in the classroom as 'natural' to the extent of not warranting any particular mention or explanation. On the other hand, it is also possible to suggest that more recent times have seen somewhat of a dichotomy of perception becoming more widespread. Although not without some 'comic' elements, the return of adult students to tertiary education has recently been portrayed in the media as a source of 'self-esteem' and 'personal development and achievement', perhaps best exemplified in the success of the film *Educating Rita*. The notion of the adult returning to school, however, receives a different emphasis in Osborne's (1970) television play *The Right Prospectus* where the focus was upon the 'comedy' of returning to wearing school uniform and the contexts of school discipline.

At least in some sense, this dichotomy permeates the literature. While an extensive literature now details the 'mature age' student at

tertiary level (for instance, Ashman and Pedder, 1980; Boshier, 1971b; Hopper and Osborn, 1975; McLaren, 1982), little exists pertaining to the adult student at secondary school level.

THE MEDIA: THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

This is not to suggest, however, that the situation of adults returning to secondary school has been totally ignored. Certainly, the media has given some attention to the issue. From the early years of adult admission to secondary school, the media has contained some commentary on returning adults, often in the form of letters to the editor, as the following example from the *Waikato Times* illustrates:

Sir, I am wondering whether it is such a good idea that adults come back to the classroom to study along with the pupils. They seem to get the advantages of school and not the disadvantages. I am a fifth form student and just recently we had two women come into our history class. On the third day they arrived twenty minutes late and not a word was said. They just walked in. A student would get an essay on lateness for that. They cannot use the excuse of being new, as I and quite a few others were new to the school this year and that excuse was not accepted. They also get individual attention. I find that the teacher will go and see how they are getting along and help them. We cannot get this individual attention so why should they? Another aspect which annoys me is that they don't wear uniforms. Admittedly a few do but the majority don't. It doesn't seem fair that while they are in thick jumpers we are in uniform. I don't think the system goes down at all.

(Letters to the Editor, *Waikato Times*, 15 June, 1976)

All pupil opinion of adult students has not been confined to the negative sense as others have supported their return and presence in the school (see Appendix H).

While Dakin (1980) suggests that the presence of adult students in secondary schools is now so 'commonplace' that media attention has 'waned', newspapers and television continue to report upon this group. Some of these report teacher perceptions of the return to school. For instance, one such article quoted teachers involved with adult students at their two schools as stating that:

...those that go back to school are those that have been tossed to the bottom of the scrap heap...they try to claw their way up that heap, and it's a struggle. [Adult students return] because they want academic qualifications to improve their employment opportunities...
 ...at present it seems as though the Government expects people who have been living independently for a couple of years, to be suddenly re-subsidised by their families or from some other source while they are back at school. This pressure to support themselves financially while studying makes them enormously different from their classmates who are automatically financially supported by their families. Such pressure...puts stress on the adult student which is non-existent for their classmates. For those...in serious financial dire straits there is little option but to get part-time work to supplement their income, which creates further problems as work interferes with their studies. [Yet] the standard of academic achievement by adults has been extremely high because the students have the maturity, and conviction to fulfil their ambitions.

(The Guardian Newspaper, May 10, 1983)

This report then noted that financial difficulties were the most common cause of student 'drop-out' from school.

Similar themes are evident in the majority of the media accounts of the adult student returning to secondary school:

But the main problem is money. Adult students were generally in a bad financial situation, Mr Cox [Guidance Counsellor] said. "Most of them are going without a lot of things - only just getting by. It's a courageous thing to do - a huge sacrifice." Adult students do not qualify for the ordinary unemployment benefit as they are not available for work, a prerequisite for getting the dole. The executive officer for the National Council of Adult Education, Mr Iain Galloway, said that while social welfare spending was a large cut of government money, assistance to adult students was not a priority. He compared the situation to Britain, where unemployed adults can continue claiming the dole while studying up to 23 hours a week. "That's the sort of option we should be exploring", he said. Adult student Lesley Ratapu, 25, says she is on the breadline. "Fortunately my family are very supportive". Some of the students work part-time and night shift to finance their schooling.

(The Dominion, March 13, 1984)

The media has also provided some accounts of adult students' perspective on their return, again through the 'one-off' form of

interview dealing with various issues. For instance, nearly a full page article under the headline of "Mothers back at school find new confidence and outlook" appearing in the *Wairarapa Times Age* (11 June 1983) contains the comments of five women enrolled as adult students, as well as remarks made by the Dean of Adult Students and references to 'many' and 'other' students at the school. In this report, it is suggested that 'most' of the sample 'left school at 15 without qualifications or regrets'. However, competition in the workforce with more qualified people had led them to evaluate their position and decide to return to school. The general impression is conveyed of a group of individuals 'determined' to make the most of the opportunity and 'succeed' in gaining various credentials. The return to school, however, is not without some difficulties and re-adjustments:

All say it was extremely hard getting back into a study pattern. The first month back at school was mentally exhausting, they say, but things became easier as they fitted into school life. One thing which everyone chuckled about was their self-consciousness about putting their hand up in class to answer a question. Gratefully, this improved with time, and they'll wave their arms around along with the best of them! Going along to sit external exams at the Town Hall is no less hair raising for the adults than it is for the senior pupils. "It's totally different from sitting an exam at school," says Cheryl McRae, "and you get escorted to the toilet if you please!" All agree it is impossible to study with the children around, so most study is done late at night or early in the morning. A daunting prospect indeed, but all manage.

(*Wairarapa Times Age*, 11 June 1983)

This report, as do others of a similar nature, also notes that these women experience various 'adjustments' or 'changes' in terms of their lives outside school:

In fact, all the women taking part in this interview said the same thing - because they have less time around the home, more work gets done in a shorter time. And because they see less of their children they value far more the time spent with them and utilise it much better. Many have seen a change in their husbands - for the better - in the support and encouragement they are given. Others are not quite so enthusiastic. ...this drop [in enrolments during the year] is due partly...to some people finding that outside commitments don't allow for time for school.

(*Wairarapa Times Age*, 11 June 1983)

These media reports generally convey an impression that the school, and the pupils, 'benefit' from the return of adult students to the classroom. Here, the adult student is seen as bringing a 'wider experience' to the situation, as well as a 'greater enthusiasm and motivation', and acting to 'stimulate' conversation and discussion. Such remarks, however, are usually derived from teacher perspectives rather than the adult students. The following is a typical example:

Mr Cox said adult students had a good effect in the classroom. "I think the adults really stimulate the teachers. It makes the classroom more of a team, breaks down the authoritarian thing." The younger students accepted the adult students well, he said. "They enjoy the fact that the adults raise the tone of the classroom."

(*The Dominion*, 13 March 1984)

The adult student is seen to 'benefit' from the 'opportunity' to undertake this 'second chance' education, particularly through gaining credentials, although other generalised outcomes such as 'self-esteem' are mentioned along with such issues as:

"If my daughter sees me doing my homework it gives her the incentive to do hers". A few women are at school with their children, which has provided them with time of sharing and an equaliser - mum quite often asks her son or daughter for help with her homework!

(*Wairarapa Times Age*, 11 June 1983)

Overall, media reports within New Zealand have managed to convey a number of issues pertaining to the return of adult students to secondary school. In general, the impression is gained of a 'highly motivated' group who return seeking credentials. Although not without financial 'difficulties', this group 'achieves' both credentials and an increased 'self-esteem'. The adult students bring a number of 'benefits' to the school - both in terms of increasing roll numbers and in their 'contributions' to 'motivation' and 'discussion' - and relate 'effectively' with the school-aged pupils.

On the other hand, such media reports lack depth in accounting for the experiences of 'being' an adult student. Understandably, reports reliant upon the 'one-off' interview with a particular sample can only provide what amounts to a rather tantalizing 'glimpse' of the experiences of the group who have come to form a 'significant' part of

the New Zealand educational scene. While not disputing the service such media reports provide in raising public awareness of adult students, it can be suggested that understanding of the issues and experiences confronted by these individuals returning to school requires considerably more depth than can be provided by the media, or any form of data gathering reliant upon single interview situations. Despite a number of such media reports over the decade, there has been little increase in knowledge about adult students with most reports merely repeating the same generalized observations. Similarly, this form of reporting upon the experience appears to have done little to effect any changes to the situation, particularly that concerning provisions and financial assistance for the returning adult student.

Accordingly, it is appropriate now to examine the research literature in order to determine whether these issues have been addressed in any greater depth.

PRIOR RESEARCH AND COMMENT: THE NEW ZEALAND CONTEXT

The existing literature on the New Zealand experience of adult students in secondary schools can be broadly categorised as fitting either of two groups. The first reports general commentary upon the situation, without exception from the perspective of members of teaching staff or other academics. The second, and represented by only two instances, recounts research investigations. These two 'forms' of the literature will be addressed in turn.

As the focus of the present investigation is upon the adult student in day secondary school classes, it appears inappropriate to address the wider issue of Community Schools in New Zealand. While such schools have adult admissions as part of their overall structure, the aspects of community involvement beyond this are held to be outside the ambit of the current study. For instance, the detailed recommendations made by the Auckland Community Schools Working Committee (1977) predominantly address the notions of improving the 'community school' context and only passing mention is made of the adult student in day-time secondary school classes. Indeed, this report merely notes that such adult students return to school for:

...second chance formal education to gain entry qualifications for a career. To keep up with their own teenage children. Personal interest with no new career in mind. Social contact.

(Auckland Community Schools Working Committee, 1977, p.20)

In terms of the recommendations made, the Auckland Community Schools Working Committee (1977) does suggest that such schools require an Adult Student Commonroom, Guidance Network, and creche facilities, for the returning adult students, as well as a necessity to cater for a wide range of 'educational needs' among the adult population. Similar comments and recommendations are apparent in further examples of the literature which addresses the broader community schools concept (see, Herbert, 1976; Roth, 1979).

Two reports by committees set up under the auspices of the Department of Education (1976a, 1976b) to address aspects of secondary education in general make some references to adult students in day secondary school classes, and also recommend the provision of a creche, commonroom facilities, and financial assistance for the returning adult student. Here again, the adult student is referred to only in a relatively superficial and generalised form:

Adults are attending classes at secondary schools mainly to get qualifications. ...many adults find it easier to study with closer supervision than at night school or technical institute. They [schools] are a valuable means of enabling school leavers to get second chance education, to improve their general education, to refresh forgotten knowledge and to study prerequisites for tertiary courses. Adult students change the whole learning environment of a school. Teachers have been challenged by the keen motivation of adult students and have responded by seeing their adolescent students with new eyes. There is a danger that adult students, who are almost exclusively in examination courses, may demand too much attention from teachers. Generally, few problems have resulted from the presence of adults.

(Department of Education, 1976b, pp.33-34)

In 1981, as part of a detailed examination of secondary schooling in New Zealand, a further report emanating from the Department of Education (1981) reiterated many of the same points on the basis of a survey of the 283 State Secondary schools with adult students

attending day-time secondary classes. Again, relatively generalised information forms the bulk of the account of the adult student provided in this report:

The great majority of these adult day students attended only part-time. Most frequently they were married women, and of the rest about half were single men. Three-quarters of these adults attended classes for only part of the week, although the others were full-time day students. Most were studying courses leading to qualifications such as University Entrance, Sixth Form Certificate, or commercial certificates. Some of these married women students had pre-school children, and nine schools had creches which looked after the children for a small fee with their mothers attended classes.

(Department of Education, 1981, p.97)

As with the media, such literature provides only a superficial account of the adult student at secondary school with little detail or insight into the dynamics and complexities of the experiences of the returning adult student.

While those reports discussed above focussed either upon the notion of 'community schools' or the secondary system in general, other literature does address more explicitly the day-time adult student in secondary school. For instance, the Kohia Teachers Centre (1979) lists the 'case studies' of four schools - Pakuranga, Aorere, Glenfield, Hagley - as they have provided for the returning adult student. Each school's report outlines the facilities it has, the 'rules and regulations' governing attendance and such related issues, enrolment procedures, student Progress Reports, and student Leaving Forms, along with a page statement on the 'experience' the school has with its adult students. On the basis of this, the report makes some general recommendations for school 'policies' on adult enrolments:

Important to stress to adults the need for them to be socially responsible - eg. handsome adult male and naive teenage girl. Resentment can come from adults' freedom (uniform, smoking). Irregular attendance or lack of punctuality can cause tensions. Adolescents should recognise adult sacrifices - no income, busy domestic schedule as well as study, the difficulties of returning to study. Constant contact with Dean and Guidance Counsellor essential. An end of year social put on by the adults for the staff is recommended. Changes of any sort [timetable, bell times] should be notified well in advance. Adults [in class] not sit all

together, but integrate with adolescents. Teachers called Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms. Adult students called by first names, as are adolescents. Adults and adolescents should all be treated as students. A bursary is essential, a commonroom should be available, a day-care centre is recommended.

(Kohia Teachers Centre, 1979, pp.22-27)

While such reports may provide some general 'guidance' for the members of school staff, no insight is given in terms of the experiences of the adult students themselves, nor is any rationale provided for the various recommendations other than that these are held to 'expedite' the 'integration' of the adult students and 'reduce' potential 'conflict' with school staff and pupils. Similarly, the report by Bradley (1984b) recounts the experiences of one school in terms of such aspects as 'publicity', 'facilities', 'financial provisions', 'guidance', and others, without any indication of the nature of student, teacher, or pupil, experiences, during the return of the adult student to the secondary school. Again, then, such a report provides general information for the school but with no indication of either the experience of the adult student, or the substantive basis upon which the 'recommendations' or 'suggestions' may be rationalised or justified.

There exists further commentary upon adult students in the secondary school which again reflects the perception of, usually, members of the school staff. For instance, Leggatt (1975) reports the situation at Hagley High School in the following terms:

[Adult students] are people who left high school after 2 or 3 years. One or two arrive with some University Entrance subjects, a number have some School Certificate passes, but a great many have no formal qualifications. Their backgrounds are fascinatingly diverse. The men include a hair stylist, an electronics technician and a police dog trainer. The women, too, have experienced a variety of jobs. Most of the men have left their existing positions and returned to school with a clear understanding of the qualifications they require in order to enter a chosen and different occupation. These goals include teaching, medicine, veterinary science and accountancy. Some of the women have similar ambitions but many of them are not quite so clear about their ultimate goals. Many are solo mothers, unqualified, unemployed, and on their own. For many of them a return

to school and the acquisition of some formal qualifications is seen as opening the way to a better job than they could presently earn. But there are also many who are attending classes not because they want a job but because they want to learn. School for them provides a satisfaction and a stimulus which their lives have lacked.

(Leggatt, 1975, p.30)

Leggatt (1975) also reports on the 'outcomes' or 'benefits' seen to accrue to the school from the presence of adult students in the classroom:

Nearly all teachers feel that the attitude and application of a class improves with the presence of adult students. The adults do introduce into classes a greater motivation, a greater amount of experience and a more mature approach.

(Leggatt, 1975, p.32)

Not, however, that all teachers are reported as seeing the return of adult students in a 'positive light', as the following example illustrates:

Another [Guidance Counsellor]...spoke with contempt of adult women students: "There are lots of adults coming back to school because of their housewives' neuroses and that sort of thing. They think that all they have to do is sit in class and they are going to get School Cert and U.E. They don't realise that if you were dumb at school you are going to be dumb as an adult." (G.C. Male).

(Abigail, 1983, p.13)

As with the media reports, the research literature surveyed to this point presents little more than a generalised account of, usually, school and teacher perceptions of adult students in day secondary school classes. In most instances, these accounts tend to be superficial and provide little substantiation for the views proclaimed, and certainly do not lend any depth of analysis into the overall experiences of the participants involved.

There is very little literature reporting actual research conducted with adult students, and others involved in their return to school. Indeed, only two such reports exist within the New Zealand context despite the decade of adult admissions to secondary school and the increase in their numbers throughout the country. The only

national survey of adult students, teachers, Principals, and school-aged pupils, was conducted by questionnaire in 1976. In this research, separate questionnaire booklets - ranging in length from the pupil questionnaire of eight pages to the adult form of 24 pages - were distributed to every school enrolling adult students. While the research also proposed to adopt 'follow-up' interviews with a selected sample, this was not carried out. Leaving aside the inherent deficiencies of one-off, paper-and-pen survey and questionnaire techniques in providing detailed elaboration of the experiences of these participants, the research received only a brief general report (Department of Education, 1977). This report did not provide any details of the actual questionnaires, their distribution and analysis, and noted only generalised findings. For instance, following a brief summation of the age distribution, credential-based goals and future study goals, and status as either part-time or full-time, for the population of 549 adult students surveyed, the following is the full description of outcomes from the adult student questionnaire:

Adjustment did not seem to have been a major problem: 42 percent reported no real problems in going back to schools, and 34 percent said it had been hard but that they were coping. Adults often reported that there had been changes in the atmosphere of schools, and in the approach to teaching. These changes were seen by 63 percent as having made their return easier. There seems to have been no problem of relationships with teenage students (or none perceived by the adults): 94 percent of the adult students said that the teenagers were either friendly or tolerant. Almost all (96 percent) of the adult students would recommend returning to school to other adults, which gives a strong indication that, from their point of view, returning to school was worth-while.

(Department of Education, 1977, p.23)

Similar accounts are then reported for teacher, principal, and school-aged pupil questionnaire responses.

The second research report is the 'Hagley Research Project' containing an account of two studies available only in cyclostyled format from the school. The first study (Vincent, Drake, and Jackson, 1977) sought to compare 'performance' between those 'pupils' (a generic term in the report used to include both adult students and school-aged pupils) who return to secondary education - termed 'disjunctive education' in the report - with those who continue

'sequentially' through all stages of their secondary education-termed 'sequential education' by these authors. In the two and half pages reporting this 'preliminary investigation', the research hypothesis is stated as "disjuncts perform significantly better than sequents in individual subjects" (Vincent, Drake, and Jackson, 1977, p.1). The hypothesis was tested by comparing marks from the two populations in both internal and external examinations at the Sixth Form level. The mean scores for each group - the entire population available - in a variety of subject areas are then presented, along with standard deviations. However, the subject areas were not held constant over the three examinations - two internal school and the external University Entrance - which provided the results for this survey. Indeed, only Geography, Biology, and Chemistry are common, while Art, English, History, and Accountancy figure in only one of the examinations, with Physics on two occasions. The report contains no explanation for this difference. On the basis of t-tests, the results are then compared and found to support the overall hypothesis. As the authors report, this 'support' must be approached with caution as there are a number of variables between the two populations which could distort the results. For instance, the adult students ('disjuncts') were compared only with those school-aged pupils who were not Accredited University Entrance, a pupil population which might be expected to differ from the adult student group. A number of possible variations between the populations suggest themselves: the pupils are required to take a minimum of four subjects, the adult students are not; the pupils who were not accredited might be expected to be of a 'lower academic ability' than those who were accredited - no such 'control' was applied to the adult student population; among others. Accordingly, such research again provides little detailed information regarding the experience of the adult students, and certainly does not lend itself to establishing any significant differences between the achievement in examinations of the two populations with the 'hypothesis' support being at best tenuous.

The second study involved interviews with a sample of those adult students who withdrew from school during the year. As Hogan and Hay (1977) report, their objective was to ascertain why such students left school initially - when pupils - why they enrolled later as adult students, and then why they withdrew from this. A sample of 11 - from

the population of 50 who meet the criteria of withdrawing during the year - was interviewed. This selection was based on the fact that the sample were "those who responded to the first telephone call and/or lived within easy motoring distance from the College or the interviewer's home" (Hogan and Hay, 1977, p.1). Each adult student was asked three questions:

1. *Why did you leave school originally?*
2. *What made you decide to re-enroll as an adult pupil?*
3. *Why did you withdraw from classes this year?*

(Hogan and Hay, 1977, p.1)

On the basis of the responses, the authors - noting the limitations of sample size - report some general answers, rather than detailed responses, to these three questions:

Question 1: ...9 of the interviewees left school without gaining School Certificate or equivalent qualification. Five gave social reasons or financial hardship as their reasons for leaving school and four claimed that they left because they disliked school or their teachers. Two of the eleven felt that they had achieved their level of educational expectation when they left school.

Question 2: Nine of the respondents resumed study because they needed further education to improve their job opportunities. One returned to school after a psychiatric illness on the advice of her doctor. One returned out of interest.

Question 3: Most of the students seemed to have experienced some fear of not coping, some to the extent that it may have led to their withdrawal before classes began. From the reasons cited...the following were given as most important: two cited financial reasons; three claimed they could not cope with school organisation (crowds in the corridors, timetables, etc.); two felt that they couldn't cope with the subject levels, and two cited ill health. Offers of new jobs and family upsets were given by four of the interviewees.

(Hogan and Hay, 1977, p.2)

And this represents the full data provided by this report. However, an 'appendix' (untitled) comes with the package of material in the 'Hagley Research Project' which does contain edited transcripts of these interviews with the adult students, who are also named with their address provided. An examination of these transcripts provided little by way of further information, with each 'interview' being reported in less than a page. Again, this provides little indication of the nature of the experience of the adult students, and certainly

little more than some generalised information regarding issues which may influence student withdrawal.

On the basis of this examination of the research literature, then, it can be reported that little information or insight is provided into the experiences of the adult students in New Zealand secondary schools. There has been no attempt to tap the dynamics and complexities of the everyday experiences of adult students, and little by way of a substantive basis provided for any recommendations which have been made. Much of this literature is primarily concerned with providing 'hints' and 'tips' for teachers and schools as to 'how' they may 'attract' and 'manage' their adult students. In short, the existing literature has done little more than present generalised accounts of the return to school by adult students, almost exclusively from the point of view of school staff, typically adopting psychological terminology and orientations, with only infrequent reporting of aspects of the experience from the student perspective. What little 'research' exists, is limited in extent, or in detail, and has relied on the 'one-off' questionnaire or interview format, providing little more than a superficial account of adult student experiences with no more depth than already existing in the variety of media reports. Indeed, the media remains the predominant source of adult student perception of their experiences at secondary school.

The most pressing need, then, for research on the adult students is that which provides an indepth and systematic analysis of their everyday experiences. This would appear justified in that it would provide an holistic view of the experiences, rather than the superficial accounts presently available. From this, the problems the adult students encounter, how they adjust to their situations, their successes and failures, as well as the relationships they develop with others in the social context, will be seen in the wider context of their everyday experiences, within and outside the school. Such research would provide a more substantive basis for the derivation of policy and recommendations which could pertain to the admission of adult students to New Zealand secondary schools - information of use not only to school personnel, but adult students themselves and those responsible for policy formation at all administrative levels. In short, the fact that adult students form an increasingly significant

portion of the New Zealand educational system would appear to warrant more depth of information than is presently available upon which to base both policy and practice. Such depth, it is suggested, might come from an elaboration of the everyday experiences of these adult students as they return to school.

THE LITERATURE: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

While it appears that New Zealand is unique in the area of adult student admissions to day-time secondary school classes in terms of the length of this provision and in the proportion of population undertaking such a return, other countries have adult students in secondary school. For instance, Herbert (1984) reports that:

A survey of Ontario schools by Lorne Rachlis for a doctoral thesis identified 138 schools with at least 20 daytime adult students (people over 18 and out of school at least one year). Sixty three of these were elementary schools with 5929 adults in adult only classes and 75 were secondary schools with 3461 full and part-time adult students in both adult only and mixed-age classes.

(Herbert, 1984, p.3)

While the doctoral thesis referred to by Herbert was not located by the researcher, a personal communication from a colleague who had visited the site indicated that this research had a primary focus upon the administrative aspects of dealing with the influx of adult students - a majority of whom were involved in courses in English as a Second Language - to the particular school.

Similarly in the United Kingdom there is some provision for adult students to return to secondary school. The Scottish Council for Research in Education Newsletter (April, 1984) notes that some 950 adults were attending daytime school classes throughout Scotland during 1982/3. An article in the *Kentish Express* (13 November 1981) reports that adult students, on a limited basis, were being admitted to Ashford division schools in a scheme termed 'School Link'. A survey of the 125 L.E.A's in Britain received 61 replies which reported a number of schools providing for adult admissions, or at

least 'interested' in developing the provision as a future option (Community Education, *Network*, 2(7), July 1982).

In general, such reports reflect basic similarities with their New Zealand equivalents. Again, the media accounts from the United Kingdom note the 'motivation', 'achievement', and general 'reasons for return' as was reported for New Zealand adult students, while others note that some members of the public are 'in favour' of the notion (*Times Higher Education Supplement*, 14.5.82) and some are 'opposed' (*South Wales Argus*, 1.10.81) to adult students returning to school.

A search of the literature conducted for the author by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, and an extensive correspondence with many individuals in the United Kingdom, provided no further instances of more indepth research on adult students in daytime secondary school classes. Overall, then, it appears that the situation in the United Kingdom is at least similar to that in New Zealand. Numbers of adult students are being admitted to secondary schools alongside school-aged pupils, yet little research has been undertaken on the experiences of those involved. As in New Zealand, the predominate focus of the United Kingdom research literature has been upon the 'mature age' student in tertiary education (for instance, Ashman and Pedder, 1980; Hopper and Osborn, 1975; Macdonald, 1978b), adult education in a general sense (for instance, Legge, 1982; Michaels, 1978; Thompson, 1980a), and upon the 'community schools' concept (for instance, Fairburn, 1971; Hutchinson, 1974; Jennings, 1980; Percy, Powell, and Saunders, 1982; Poster, 1971, 1982).

The literature from other countries, then, adds little to that available in New Zealand concerning the return of adult students to daytime secondary school classes. Overall, the literature provides little beyond superficial and generalised statements, often based, at best, on single-case interviews or questionnaire data.

At this point, discussion has illustrated the historical antecedents to the provision for adult admission to secondary school classes, and the nature of the existing literature which addresses the situation of the returning student. However, the present

investigation also owes something to the 'historical background' of the researcher involved.

THE INFLUENCES OF THE RESEARCHER'S BIOGRAPHY

The objectives and intentions of the present research were developed over a period of time, and were not solely the outcome of a review of the literature and consideration of the numbers of adult students enrolled in New Zealand secondary schools. There are those aspects of the researcher's biography which also impinge upon the conduct of the inquiry and require some elaboration at this point (Battersby, 1981a; Burgess, 1985b; Pollard, 1985; Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955). Indeed, characterising many of the autobiographical accounts (see, Burgess, 1984b, 1985a; Shipman, 1976) of research within educational settings are the authors who provide an indication of those aspects of their biography which have influenced both the selection of a particular area of sociological inquiry and the conduct of the research itself. One such source of influence derived from the author's recent biography involving his studies within education, sociology, and field research, particularly that emanating from within the British 'tradition' (for instance, Burgess, 1981c, 1984a; Corrigan, 1979; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Willis, 1977; Woods, 1979, 1983). However, this influence was not restricted to the British literature as other sources (for instance, Battersby, 1981; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Spradley, 1980; Wolcott, 1973) exerted direct effects upon the conduct of the inquiry. Furthermore, the researcher's 'background' experiences had, in the period immediately preceding the present investigation, involved a research project (Battersby, Cocklin, and Vincent, 1983) incorporating the application of a variety of methodological strategies including interviews, observational techniques, questionnaires, and documentary materials.

This research and study experience, allied with an extensive review of the literature, predisposed the researcher in two general directions. First, towards an appreciation that the interpretive

paradigm (see, Battersby, 1981a; Woods, 1983) may provide a more valid set of sociological explanations of human behaviour, through its emphasis upon the active, individual and idiosyncratic nature of people in the social context. Second, and related to the foregoing, the researcher adopted a view that the everyday experiences of adult students were individualistic, interactive and ongoing. Furthermore, it was considered that: these experiences could result in personal, and sometimes situational, change; they did not necessarily proceed at an even pace; critical events could occur, and do so in a variety of patterns; and sources of influence upon an adult student could be varied and individualistic.

The selection of the particular group and objectives for the research, and indeed aspects of the implementation of research strategies, also owe something to the background and experiences of the researcher prior to his full-time student status at university.

During the early stages of a 10-year career as a secondary school science teacher, the author was party to the debates in a Boys' College regarding the admission of adult students to secondary school classrooms, both during the Educational Development Conference and the implementation of the recommendations which occurred in the mid-1970's. Some of the staff members were concerned that the school was under an obligation to admit women students to a situation lacking facilities - such as toilets and a place where they might relax between classes - to cater for them. As a result of these views, such members of the teaching staff recommended that either the school not admit women students or, should such entry be allowed, that they not be expected to have these students in their classes. While this remained a perspective held by these teachers, the following year saw the admission of the first adult students to the school. Two of these, both women, were allocated to the researcher's Fifth Form Biology class. Initially, this brought some personal concerns. First, both students were older than the author, who was in his fourth year as a teacher. Second, they were placed in a class of 30 second-year Fifth Form boys, perhaps best described as a 'difficult' group in terms of discipline and work habits. Finally, there was a lack of information, and expertise on the teacher's behalf, as to how such students should be taught, or treated, in the classroom. By the end

of the year, both adult students attained success in the School Certificate examination and, subjectively, appeared to have 'improved' the classroom situation and to have 'enjoyed' the experience. Despite this contact, the author considered that he lacked a real insight into such issues as:

- (a) What are the characteristics and background of these adult students?
- (b) Why do they return to school?
- (c) What are their experiences as adult students?

It was in consideration of these general issues that the selection of adult students as a group in the present research context proceeded. In addition, the review of the research literature indicated that little progress had been made towards addressing these concerns during the intervening years between the author's teaching experience with these students and the time this study was begun. Those few accounts which did exist, as discussed previously, primarily reported the generalized statements of Principals or teachers as they reflected upon their experiences of their school's involvement with adult students. The perspective of the adult students could only be derived from reports in the media (for instance, *Guardian*, 10.5.83; *Wairarapa Times Age*, 11.6.83; *The Dominion*, 13.3.84). These accounts, which further influenced the direction of the present research, indicated that students' backgrounds, their reasons for return, and the nature of the experience are all highly individualistic. These points were also substantiated by the experiences of a neighbour who, in 1982, had returned to school as an adult student. On the basis of comments she made to the author at this time, it appeared that issues such as 'home-life', 'relationships' - within and outside the school, adjustments to the role of 'student', 'study requirements', and her personal achievements, formed part of multi-dimensional, dynamic, ongoing, and interactive processes occurring within the everyday experiences of such students.

A further aspect of the present study also derived from the author's review of the literature and his own subjective experiences in applying methodological strategies in a longitudinal research

project. In short, and as will be elaborated in the following chapter, this was a perception that there was a dearth of accounting for the 'realities', as opposed to the 'ideals', of the research process in the majority of the literature reporting research in educational settings, certainly at the time the study was initiated.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In light of the background, review of the literature, and predispositions elaborated in this chapter, the present study focussed on a group of adult students in secondary school and sought to achieve the following broad objectives:

1. To establish a profile of the adult student on the basis of a selected sample; and,
2. To derive from an indepth and systematic view of the everyday experiences of this sample an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student.

With these objectives provided, it remains to summarise the present chapter prior to the discussion of the research design and methodological strategies adopted in this study.

SUMMARY

During a decade of provision, and a continuing growth in numbers resulting in the formation of a significant population, a review of the literature demonstrates that little attention has focussed upon the adult student in day-time secondary school classes. What literature is available, reports generalized teacher perceptions of the processes and circumstances of these students, with perhaps only the media conveying some impressions of adult student perspectives. Furthermore, the foregoing review of the literature indicated that the accounts reflect predominantly a predisposition towards psychological explanations and

terminology of 'human behaviour' providing no elaboration of the experiences or processes involved in becoming an adult student.

As an outcome, then, of both the review of the literature and researcher biography, the author selected to focus upon the adult student in a New Zealand secondary school. In particular, and further reflecting the literature and predispositions, the present study had as a priority to provide a preliminary account of the experiences faced by such adult students. This was to occur through the provision of a profile of the adult student, based upon a selected sample, and then the indepth and systematic analysis of the everyday situations faced by this group of adult students. A second priority for the study was also derived from both the literature and researcher biography, and concerned the generalised 'aim' of providing an ongoing detailed account of the research process itself.

In turn, these two priorities underpinned, and were themselves elaborated by, the determination of an appropriate research design and methodology as is discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses: (a) the research design adopted; (b) the historical antecedents of the methodology; (c) the ethical principles underpinning the research; (d) the selection and basic characteristics of the site and sample; and, (e) details of the methodological strategies and their application in the investigation.

While it is possible to present the aims of research in a relatively concise form during the writing of a final report, this tends to neglect the developmental processes which characterise most investigations. Indeed, such a presentation tends to ally itself with the somewhat *fait accompli* model of research writing, perpetuating an 'ideal' linear research process whereby the researcher starts with a problem, collects data, analyses this data, then writes a final report (see, Burgess, 1984b, 1985a). From such a model, an impression is often gained of a completely orderly, unproblematic process, more so when no mention is made of the methodological, ethical, social, or political pitfalls, problems and dilemmas which face the researcher during the conduct of an inquiry (see, Battersby, 1980; Cocklin, 1985a). For instance, such well-known studies as those by Corrigan (1979), Hargreaves (1967), Jackson (1968), Smith and Geoffrey (1968), and Willis (1977), exclude any discussion of the issues and dilemmas facing the researcher conducting fieldwork in educational settings, beyond the occasional provision of a brief methodological appendix to the research report. As Bates (1980) argues, such instances may be interpreted as representing the continuation of the ideological assumption that 'research', particularly within the 'ideal/linear'

form, progresses in a systematic procession of discrete 'stages' from inception to conclusion devoid of social or political influences. However, this model has been subjected to an increasing level of critique and there is a considerable body of literature from areas such as the natural sciences (for instance, Watson, 1968) and from sociology and anthropology (for instance, Becker, 1958, 1964; Bulmer, 1977a, 1982b; Cassell, 1980; Cassell and Wax, 1980; Roth, 1962; J.E. Sieber, 1982; Sjoberg, 1967a; Wax, 1957) which reminds the researcher that the conduct of an inquiry is an immanently social process. As such, research involves numerous problems with considerable overlap and interrelationship between 'phases', producing a non-linear research process (see, Burgess, 1982i). The consideration of such issues has given rise to the presentation of autobiographical accounts detailing the actual, as distinct from the ideal, conduct of research. Among this literature, the works by Powdermaker (1966), Whyte (1955), and collections edited by Bell and Encel (1978), Bell and Newby (1977), Bell and Roberts (1984), Habenstein (1970), Hammond (1964), Roberts (1981), Shipman (1976), and Vidich, Bensman and Stein (1964) provide examples. Yet, while there has been a considerable growth in the application of qualitative methods in the field of education, such accounts from educational settings are in the main relatively rare. As Burgess (1984b) notes:

...we lack first-hand autobiographical accounts on qualitative research in educational settings which highlight the principles and processes involved in the actual conduct of social research.

(Burgess, 1984b, pp.7-8)

One of the intentions of this thesis, then, is to document as fully as possible the principles and processes of this study of adult students returning to secondary school. This will involve the provision of an autobiographical component to the report so as to indicate the nature of the "...success, failure and discovery during a research project" (Burgess, 1984b, p.9).

THE FIELD RESEARCH APPROACH

In developing a design and methodology for the research, Trow's (1957, p.33) injunction was adhered to, namely, that: "...the research problem under investigation properly dictates the method of investigation". On the basis of this dictum, it was evident that the objectives of the present research required a longitudinal form of investigation and, furthermore, that field research methods would provide the indepth and systematic view of the day-to-day experiences during the year these adult students spent at secondary school. For the present study, the rationale for the adoption of this particular approach was based on the assumption that this would most adequately yield the broad data base required from such a preliminary and exploratory investigation. It was also considered that such a longitudinal study, drawing upon a variety of data-gathering techniques, would provide the most viable means of arriving at an holistic view of the adult students' everyday experiences. This certainly appears to be the case when such an approach is contrasted with past studies which, relying predominantly upon single-case interviews or questionnaires, have generally produced a somewhat superficial and piecemeal account of these experiences (for instance, Hogan and Hay, 1977).

Burgess, (1982a, 1984a) distinguishes Field Research as a generic term for a number of methodological strategies providing for the systematic and indepth investigation of an event, group, institution, or geographical locality. Field research in the sense adopted in the present thesis encompasses techniques of participant observation, interviews, and a number of documentary methods and is seen to incorporate such approaches as ethnography, case study, qualitative research, interpretative research, fieldwork and field research as conducted by both anthropologists and sociologists.² The view proposed by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), of direct influence upon the

² It was this terminology which, in turn, created some difficulties in determining a title for the present thesis. As each of these 'forms' of research is often accompanied by an implied set of methodological, analytical, and theoretical perspectives, it was considered that while 'field research' provided a general description of the approach adopted, the title should reflect the dominant methodology used, namely 'observation'.

present research, provides a succinct statement of the methodological position adopted by the field researcher:

The field researcher is a methodological pragmatist. He sees any method as a system of strategies and operations designed - at any one time - for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him.

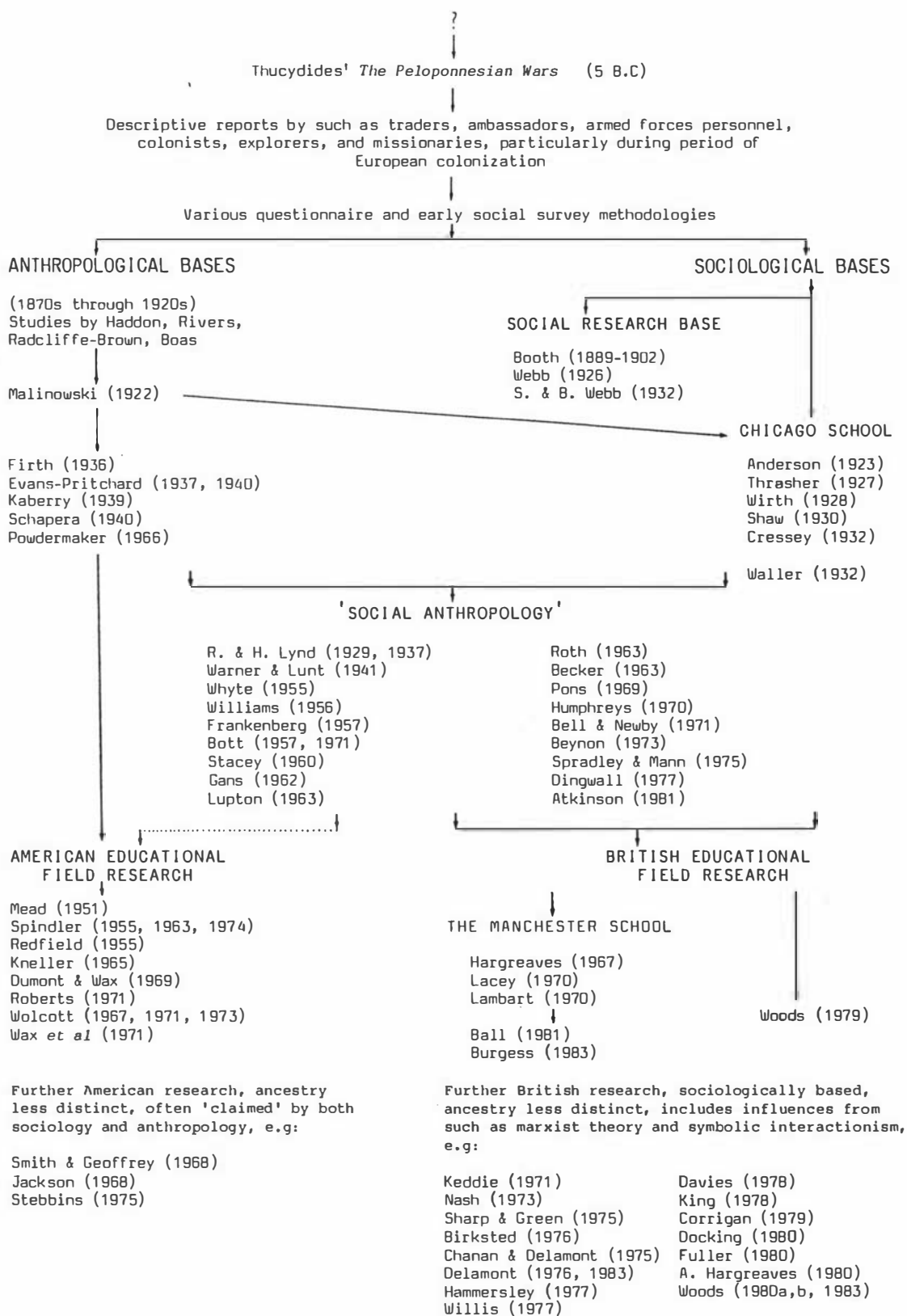
(Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, p.7)

It should not be implied, however, that field research itself provides a panacea in the sense of being without its own inherent difficulties. Central to this method is the researcher as the main instrument of the investigation (Burgess, 1982b), which makes the conduct of the inquiry itself a social process. Such an interactive technique is not without pitfalls and problems, many of which are well documented in the literature (for instance, Battersby, 1980, 1981a; Becker and Geer, 1957; Burgess, 1982a, 1984a, 1984b, 1985a; McCall and Simmons, 1969; Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955; Wax, 1957). This literature does indicate some of the difficulties involved in observation and interviewing, in relationships with participants, as well as those pertaining to the methodology, ethics, and analysis. In accordance with the overall 'intention' of providing an autobiographical account of the research process, particular problems which arose during the conduct of this study will be presented as the discussion proceeds.

FIELD RESEARCH: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1983, the year of the preliminary phases of the present investigation, there existed a considerably literature reporting the results of applying field research methodologies in educational settings. Yet, few of these provided much beyond a brief methodological appendix which this author could draw upon in order to establish the methodology for the present research. Accordingly, while this thesis was directly influenced by the writings of those listed in Figure 1 under the heading of *British Educational Field Research*, and itself is seen as part of this 'tradition', other fields and 'traditions' were also a source of methodological detail. As well as the information derived from the British literature - and the

FIGURE 1
Educational Field Research: a Suggested 'Family Tree'
with Selected References



methodological writings of Becker (1970a), Burgess (1982a), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Bulmer (1977a), Schatzman and Strauss (1973), and Spradley (1980) - the development of the methodology, then, owes something to the historical antecedents and the application of such methods in a variety of social settings. The consideration of this historical development of the methodological strategies served a two-fold purpose. In the first instance, it located the research as part of the overall historical context, something which remains relatively uncommon in educational settings with some exceptions (for instance, Burgess, 1981c, 1983). Then, as Delamont (1981) argues, a consideration of both the historical literature and applications from other settings provided the researcher with a broader range of insights into both methodology and interpretation than would be available should reading be restricted solely to the educational literature.

From this background of influences upon the writings of other authors, and the researcher's own readings within this 'antecedent' literature, the methodological strategies adopted for this research emerged. This, however, presents something of a dilemma. A complete review of such an extensive literature is beyond the scope of this thesis, yet such influences require some form of acknowledgement. It is for this purpose that Figure 1 is provided, and further details of the historical development of field research methodologies are incorporated in Appendix I which forms an important reference for the present section.

On the basis of the examination of the historical context of field research methodologies, two central points emerged. The application of field research methods in education is a relatively 'recent' phenomenon, and what does exist is somewhat lacking in its provision of methodological detail - although the publications by Burgess (1984b, 1985a, 1985c, 1985d) during the progress of the present research considerably augmented what was available. As an outcome of these considerations, a subsidiary objective was derived for this study. Directly related to the autobiographical account the thesis endeavours to convey, this objective is stated as seeking:

To elaborate upon the application of field research techniques within an educational setting.

It is towards this particular objective that the present thesis seeks to provide details upon all aspects of the processes and conduct of the research.

The preceding discussion has outlined the nature of the general methodological approach adopted for the present study. However, it is pertinent to note that the particular data gathering techniques utilised were subject to developmental processes which continued throughout the research 'preliminaries' phase of 1983 and then during the fieldwork year of 1984.

As an integral component of these initial considerations of methodological strategies, attention was also focussed on the development of a set of guiding ethical principles for the conduct of the present investigation. At this point, these principles are outlined in terms of their contextual application prior to an account of the role adopted by the researcher, details of the site and sample, and the elaboration of the data gathering techniques.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

With the 'Codes of Ethics' of the American Anthropological Association (see, Spradley, 1980) as a guideline, this investigation was conducted under a perspective which took an 'open' rather than 'covert' approach, involving the principle of 'informed consent', and taking steps to provide anonymity for those involved through the use of code numbers (see, Cocklin, 1985a).

A strict adherence to such Codes of Ethics in field research situations is made somewhat problematic by the origin of such codes within biomedical research and their universalistic nature (see, Burgess, 1984a; Cassell, 1980; Cassell and Wax, 1980; Galliher, 1982; Wax, 1982). Accordingly, the adoption of something of a 'mid-point' between strict adherence to the Codes and the 'unrestricted' pursuit of an inquiry appears to be both warranted and justified (Bower and de Gasparis, 1978). This is not to suggest that a policy

of 'anything goes' is therefore acceptable and that the complete abrogation of responsibility is being advocated. As Dingwall (1980) remarks, research should be able to proceed with a 'clear conscience' and many would wish to express something of a 'moral outcry' (Adelman, 1985) at some of the investigations conducted under the name of field research, as indeed have a number of authors (Burgess, 1984a; Horowitz, 1974; Sjoberg, 1967b). What does seem to be required, in connection with all aspects of the ethical conduct of field research, is the self-reflection upon the inquiry (Cassell and Wax, 1980) accompanied by the more widespread discussion and illustration of such instances, perhaps in the form of 'documented casebooks' (Trend, 1980), or certainly as an integral component in the reporting of any research. The recent trends in the educational field research literature indicate an increasing awareness of the need to document the ethical component of the research enterprise as autobiographical accounts are provided of this aspect of the inquiry (for instance, Battersby, 1980; Burgess, 1981c, 1985b; Fuller, 1984; Hammersley, 1984; King, 1984). This more recent accounting from educational settings is supported by a considerable body of literature dealing with ethical issues in the conduct of social research from a variety of fields (for instance, Barnes, 1979; Becker, 1964; Bulmer, 1982b; Cassell, 1980, 1982a, 1982b; Cassell and Wax, 1980; Horowitz, 1974; Roth, 19962; Sieber, 1982; Sjoberg, 1967a; Wax, 1980, 1982).

From a review of this literature (see Appendix J), it is suggested that it is incumbent upon researchers to provide some form of accounting for the strategies adopted within the day-to-day interaction between themselves and the participants (see, Burgess, 1984a, 1984b; Dingwall, 1980) as they relate to the ethical component of the research enterprise. It is in recognition of this that the following discussion addresses the contextual aspects of the three basic guiding principles within which the present research was conducted. The literature from which these principles were derived is examined in greater depth in Appendix J which provides a reference point and elaboration for this section.

THE RESEARCH SITUATION: 'OPEN' OR 'CLOSED'?

While 'open', rather than 'covert', approaches were to be adopted in the present study, it was evident from the research context that such a simple dichotomy did not cover every eventuality and that some elements of 'secrecy' did exist (see, Burgess, 1985b; Roth, 1962). As will be detailed later in the elaboration of the methodological strategies, for instance, there were situations where a 'covert' element was involved both in observations and in the access to some documentary materials. Certainly, as far as non-participants within the school were concerned, the only potential sources of information regarding the researcher's role in the school were a brief newspaper report of the investigation and comments possibly made by participants in the research. Even in those situations where non-participants were informed of the research, there was no guarantee that this would be understood or recalled. The Office Staff at the school are a case in point. Although introduced to them by both the Principal and Adult Dean prior to, then again during, the fieldwork year, the researcher found that he had to restate his position and 'purpose' whenever seeking information or appointments with senior staff through the School Office.

Also of some concern in the conduct of the research is the extent to which those participating will tend to assign some other status to the researcher or make assumptions regarding the processes or focus of the study (see, Burgess, 1984a; Pollard, 1985; Woods, 1979). In the relationships with the teaching staff, for instance, there remains an element of concern that the researcher's status, where the Principal introduced him as an 'ex-teacher researching adult students', assumed priority, despite expressions of the intentions to involve them in the research. Moreover, although participating staff members were 'informed' that all comments made to the researcher were likely to be recorded, there appears no way short of constantly reminding them of the fact that the researcher can guarantee that they remain aware of this aspect of the process. This relates particularly to those situations in which 'passing remarks' were made to the researcher in the corridors, staffroom, school grounds, and other occasions where it remains possible that the teachers were unaware that these would be

recalled and later placed in the fieldnotes (Hargreaves, 1967; Woods, 1979). In such instances, however, any potential 'conflict' of ethics was resolved when examination of data so obtained demonstrated that it did not "...impinge on the individuals concerned" (Woods, 1979, p.300).

While note-taking and recording served as constant 'reminders' to the adult students of their involvement in the research, even here there remains the possibility that they might assume that a particular comment is of no relevance to the research and unlikely to be recorded. Some indication, however, that the adult students were aware of the fact that 'anything' could be of interest came from instances where the author was told during discussions to 'get this down, it could be important'. As this occurred in a variety of instances, and covered a wide range of information, it appears possible to suggest that the adult students viewed 'all information' as 'of interest' to the research.

Finally, in relation to the 'openness' adopted, there were those situations where the researcher did not follow the dictum of 'The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth'. In the present research, there were occasions where the 'white lie', the 'equivocation', the 'silence', and the 'falsely naive question' have been adopted as means of obtaining more information, protecting confidentiality, and to prevent undue pressure and influence being exerted upon participants (Atkinson, 1981; Bok, 1978; Burgess, 1984a).

INFORMED CONSENT

The fact that an open approach was adopted for the present research forms an integral component of the practice of informed consent as the researcher is always willing to discuss the research methodology, or himself, in response to questions from the participants (see, Dean, Eichhorn, and Dean, 1969b). It was this consideration which led to the production of a 'Letter of Consent' (see Appendix B) given to all those adult students who participated in the research beyond the completion of Part 1 of the questionnaire (see Tables 6 and 8). The contents of this letter also formed the

basis of comments made to each participating staff member at the time of our first meeting.

As Oakley (1981) reports, while the researcher may be asked many questions regarding personal background and the research, the present context saw, primarily, background information being sought by the participants with only 'How's it going?'-type queries relating to the research processes. Also, there were no requests from participants to view the notes the researcher was taking, although, unlike Hammersley (1984), no efforts were made to disguise either the fact that they were being taken or the actual content. This applies only to those situations, however, where note-taking was done with participants present, and there were occasions where notes were made following a conversation or session out of view of the participants. Although this was a strategy of convenience, rather than an attempt to disguise note-taking, it still raises the concern that participants were unaware of this process. There was only one student, at the very beginning of the fieldwork year, who asked about the 'aims' of the research, and he was the first to receive the standard 'definition' which was then incorporated in the 'outline' (see Appendix B) presented to all participants, namely, that the researcher was 'interested in all aspects of the experiences during the year, inside and outside the school'.

Consent was continuously negotiated in that students were asked to present themselves for interviews and discussions, they willingly accepted the presence of the author and his recording of their conversations, and completed questionnaires and documentary materials for him, all under the principle of emphasising their 'voluntary participation'. The fact that some adult students did 'decline' to take part in the study, either from the outset or 'withdrew' at a later stage, perhaps indicates the success of this aspect of the research. A full assessment of their understanding of the principle of informed consent would require an examination of the reasons for their non-participation which, in most cases, was not forthcoming despite efforts made to elicit the information.

During the present investigation, the only 'concern' expressed by

participants - a few adult students, and many of the teachers-regarding the research, involved the 'anonymity' of responses.

'ANONYMITY': THE USE OF CODE NAMES

In response to such enquiries, as part of the principle of informed consent, and in consideration of the literature pertaining to the recording and dissemination of data (for instance, Morgan, 1982; J.E., Sieber, 1982), the participants were told that code numbers would be utilised in the present research. At the same time, they were informed that this process could not be taken as a 'guarantee' of complete anonymity, and certainly the identification of site and perhaps sample remains a possibility, particularly in a relatively small country such as New Zealand. While every effort has been made to protect identity, including that brought about by the delay between the fieldwork and the dissemination of data, the adoption of code numbers does not necessarily preclude identification.

Also related to this aspect of 'anonymity', as well as other ethical considerations, there are those situations where the presentation, and even recording, of data is influenced by ethical issues. In some instances, decisions have been taken to present the incident without providing the details given by the participant (see, Burgess, 1985b). One adult student provided very detailed accounts of an ongoing relationship with a married man - including such aspects as names, dates, and locations - as a source of influence upon her during the course of the year. For obvious reasons, such detail has been deleted.

With this account of the guiding ethical principles provided, and the recognition that these exerted influence upon conduct in the field (see, Cassell and Wax, 1980), consideration is now given to the processes leading to the adoption of the role of 'researcher' in the present study.

THE RESEARCHER ROLE

In determining the role to be adopted, a number of alternatives were briefly considered. As Wolcott (1975) explains, the potential researcher is somewhat constrained by the roles which are available in the school. Along with that of 'researcher', the only roles apparently open for the present research were those of 'teacher' or 'adult student'.

The role of 'teacher' was rejected as it offered no guarantees that any adult students would necessarily either take the author's specialist subjects of Science and Biology or be assigned in any numbers to his classes. While, in other situations (see, Burgess, 1984a; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970), researchers have taken a role as teacher in order to, at least in part, provide some 'return' to the school for access to the site, it was considered that the restrictions this would place upon the present research far outweighed any benefit likely to accrue, either to the researcher or the school. In light of the researcher's own prior experiences (see Chapter One) as a secondary school teacher, with adult students, there appeared little point in undertaking any official role as a teacher, more so with the particular focus of the research being upon the adult student experience. As Woods (1979) reports from a similar situation, the researcher was already familiar with school life and teacher perceptions, and this was seen as allowing for the advantage of adopting the role of researcher unencumbered by the obligations, commitments and conflicts inherent in trying to meet the requirements of a teaching role.

The second 'role', that of adult student, was summarily dismissed as it implied the adoption of a 'disguise' involving the rejection of the basic ethical principles of the research.

Some consideration was also given to attending classes, along with the adult students, in the role of 'researcher'. The logistical problems precluded this option as adult students were to be found in a variety of classes, and form levels, at any one time. As well, there was no 'group' who could be followed through a selection of subjects.

There was also the ethical issue that the presence of the researcher in the classroom, under the basic tenets of the research, would require negotiation of access and informed consent with all those in the class. Such a procedure would have entailed access negotiation with the Department of Education, Education Board, parents, pupils, teacher, and adult students. In addition, the author was aware that most teachers would probably be somewhat reluctant about having another adult present in the room, particularly if they saw the visitor in some form of judgemental role (Burgess, 1985b) or as a 'spy' (Battersby, 1980). As staff members were aware of the researcher's former status as a teacher, these possibilities appeared to effectively preclude any classroom observations in the present research situation.

On the basis of these considerations, the role of 'researcher' was adopted and maintained throughout the research, further details of which will be considered when discussion addresses the topic of field relationships later in this chapter. In the present context, this role may be stated as assuming the characteristics of a somewhat 'marginal position' (Woods, 1979). The researcher was 'involved' in the relationships developed within the research process, and from these came to be 'identified' as 'part' of the framework of the situation, yet did not undertake a role typically identified with the institution. This role of 'researcher' was also variously 'interpreted' by those in the school and there were situations where it appeared that it was held to mean, among others, 'counsellor', 'confidant', 'judge', 'ex-teacher', 'expert', and 'arbiter' in matters of dispute. It was in view of these, that all participants were 'informed' of the researcher role, and attempts were made to adopt a non-judgemental position and to at least minimize researcher effects.

To this point, discussion has presented an outline of the general approach adopted to meet the research objectives, the ethical principles which underpinned the conduct of the investigation, and the role adopted within the field. In the following sections, first, the site, then the sample, and finally the details of methodological strategies employed are examined.

THE RESEARCH SETTING

Following from the selection of adult students in secondary school as the focus of the research, the derivation of objectives from the research problem, and while considerations as to methodology and ethical principles continued, attention was directed towards establishing possible sites for the conduct of the study. It was during this process that the researcher made an examination of national enrolment statistics (see Table 1) in order to ascertain numbers of such students overall and at particular schools. From both the research literature (for instance, Leggatt, 1975; Hogan and Hay, 1977) and media reports it was evident that a number of the adult students enrolled at the beginning of a year would be likely to leave school, many within a few weeks of commencing their studies. In following the procedures of 'casing the joint' (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973), it appeared appropriate to use numbers of adult students enrolled at a school as one of the initial criteria of selection of the site. While no 'minimum' number was envisaged, the concept of 'suitability' of the site proposed by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) was taken to suggest that numbers should at least be 'sufficient' to ensure that some remained at school for the course of the year of fieldwork. The other criterion, forming the second 'structural condition' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), concerned the need for any site incorporating methodological strategies of intensive observation to be within a reasonable travelling distance for the researcher, conforming to the strictures of the resources of time and finance available.

These processes of initial selection indicated that of the six schools within the requirement of distance (approximately 20-30 kilometers), only two satisfied the criteria of numbers.³

Accordingly, attention was directed towards these two schools

³ Of the other schools, three had no adult students enrolled in either 1982 or 1983, the year before and year of initial selection. The remaining school, at the upper limit of the distance criterion, had eight adult students enrolled in 1982 and 16 in 1983, numbers which were considered as 'insufficient' to justify selection.

with the following numbers of adult students enrolled:⁴

	Part-time	Full-time
Site A: 1982:	171	4
1983:	122	6
Site B: 1982:	21	30
1983:	34	28

By early June of 1983, the pre-fieldwork year, two potential sites satisfying the structural conditions of distance and numbers had been identified.⁵ The final phase of the process of 'casing the joint', where the researcher gathers information regarding the site and people, and prepares to negotiate access, was then undertaken. To a certain extent, much of this information had already been gathered from the processes of initial selection and the researcher's own background of experiences as a secondary school teacher. This final phase was therefore more concerned with completing the process of site selection and negotiating access. The following discussion examines this negotiation of access and site selection which then resulted in 'Site B' becoming the school where the investigation was conducted.

⁴ These figures were derived from Department of Education March Returns (Form E2/177). It is appropriate at this point to note that some doubt exists as to the figures for Site A, at least, as representing the actual situation. First, from examination of the Department Returns, there were situations where it was not possible to distinguish accurately between numbers of 'part-time' adult students and 'part-time' pupils. Furthermore, these figures sometimes appeared to refer also to those enrolled in Pre-employment courses, as some schools considered these as 'adult students'. Finally, the Dean at the school expressed 'surprise' that there were 'that many', considering that it was 'less than that'. The general impression gained, was that both schools had similar numbers, with Site B having more at the mid-year stage when the schools were visited. While this, to some extent, calls into question the overall accuracy of the figures presented in Chapter One for adult student enrolments, it is still held that such cases as Site A do not necessarily detract from the point that 'significant numbers' of adult students attend New Zealand secondary schools.

⁵ A further school was to also be involved during the fieldwork year. Located some 100 kilometers distant, this school was visited on a few occasions and the adult student questionnaire and some interviews were conducted with a sample of adult students. This site had been selected on the basis that it had a creche and was situated in a small rural community. However, data has not been incorporated in the thesis from this school as it was considered that the methodological difficulties - both those resulting from the factors of distance and infrequent visits as well as the point that there was little consistency of involvement among the sample over the year - were such as to render this inappropriate. In addition, a consideration of the data available from this site indicated that little that was different was to be gained. Accordingly, as did Hammersley (1984), a decision was taken to focus upon the one site for inclusion in the present thesis.

ENTRY TO THE FIELD: NEGOTIATING ACCESS

The issue of access to the research site, and subsequently to the sample, has received scant attention in much of the literature. While such methodological texts as those by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) and Spradley (1980) indicate the vital role negotiating access plays in the research, they provide only broad guidelines without presenting the researcher with much depth of information regarding this particularly important, and often difficult, aspect of the research process. In much of the literature pertaining to education settings, access, where it is discussed at all, is often presented in terms of the unproblematic task of 'seeking permission' (for instance, Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1976) to conduct the research in a particular school. The autobiographical accounts of field research in other settings (for instance, Bell and Encel, 1978; Bulmer, 1982b; Habenstein, 1970; Hammond, 1964; Whyte, 1955), on the other hand, remind the researcher that issues of access impinge upon many aspects concerning the conduct of an investigation.

In order to supplement those few accounts of access in educational settings (see, Battersby, 1981; Burgess, 1981c) which were available to this researcher, and to complement those which appeared during the conduct of the present study (for instance, Burgess, 1985b; Delamont, 1984a; Fuller, 1984; Hammersley, 1984; King, 1984), and to indicate influences upon the present research, an account of the negotiation of access to the site is presented. At a later point in this chapter, the issues of access to the sample of participants will be considered.

Access To The School

To address this issue, it is necessary to return to the period of May-June 1983 and indicate the events which transpired in respect of the schools earlier referred to as 'Site A' and 'Site B'.

As the processes of access were integrally related to those of site selection at this stage, the most expedient course appeared to be for the researcher to approach the schools in the first instance, seeking any further negotiation of access after selection was completed. It was while the author was considering with whom this initial contact should be established that a resolution to this 'difficulty' occurred. At the time, an article appeared in a local give-away newspaper (*Guardian*, 10.5.83) reporting comments concerning adult students at 'Site A' and 'Site B'. Dominating this report were remarks from the Dean of Adult Students at each school concerning such aspects of the experiences as the reasons for the return to school, difficulties faced, and achievements made by their students. In short, this report reflected many of the same concerns which the author had arrived at from his own deliberations. This, it seemed, presented an ideal solution by providing points of contact, and mutual concerns, through which initial access might be achieved.

With the article appearing during the May school vacation, contact was delayed, first, until the start of the winter Term and, second, while the author completed the processes of 'casing the joint' as far as available information allowed. By June of 1983 it was evident that further information, and any process of selection, could only be achieved through establishing contact with the school and the people concerned. It was at this point that the author formulated a letter to each Dean (see Appendix A) which introduced the researcher, noted the source of their name, and outlined the 'general intentions' of the research. The letter concluded with the suggestion that they may wish to contact the researcher to discuss 'mutual concerns'.

It was during the ensuing meeting with each Dean in July, 1983, that the processes of initial access and final selection were completed. The researcher viewed these meetings as having a two-fold purpose: first, to elaborate and explain the research; and, second, to obtain information regarding the school and its population which might aid in determining the suitability of the site for the conduct of the research. As part of this latter purpose, primary importance was attached to the Dean as a 'sponsor' of the research and that decisions relating to the selection of the site could be based on the discussion which we held. In this respect, it was seen as

facilitating the progress of the study if the Dean should exhibit an interest and understanding of the research and a willingness and ability to provide information.

While the contact with the Dean at 'Site A' was open and friendly, these selection criteria were not satisfied. In addition, this Dean reported that there were 'probably only three' full-time adult students at the school and seemed unsure of exact numbers, or of subjects being taken, of those attending part-time. From the conversation, it did appear that there were considerably fewer attending by this mid-year stage than indicated by the March enrolment statistics presented earlier in this section. Finally, when the researcher outlined the observational strategies to be employed, noting that these would be best served by access to groups of adult students out of the classroom, the Dean felt this could not be achieved as the school did not provide any place for the adult students to gather together. These factors, then, led to the rejection of this school as a site for the conduct of the research. However, one factor which did emerge from this discussion concerned the ways in which a researcher's biography may exert some influence upon the conduct of an investigation. At the early stages of our meeting, it was established that the Dean and the researcher had both attended the same secondary school as pupils and had a number of mutual acquaintances. The author's perception was that this went some way towards establishing an initial rapport which was then assisted when the researcher mentioned his own experiences and background as a secondary teacher. Although not to imply that access and rapport were conditional upon this biography, it did appear to contribute somewhat to the establishment of the relationship (see, Woods, 1979). Indeed, such was this perception that it was decided to make this biography a point to be raised in the meeting with the Dean at 'Site B' the following day.

At 'Site B', the Dean (D.1) expressed considerable interest in the project, suggesting it was 'long overdue', and exhibited an understanding and appreciation of the proposed methodology offering to provide 'every assistance' during the conduct of the research. Indeed, without any suggestion on the author's behalf and prior to the methodology being discussed, D.1 provided the researcher with a few

examples of the adult student files held by the school containing some biographical information and reports on progress. In this case, access extended to confidential files and can take place without the awareness of those being discussed (see, Burgess, 1984a), and illustrates the 'power' of those granting access within a hierarchical organisation. However, perhaps contributing to D.1's 'openness', these files were provided after she had been made aware of the researcher's former status as a teacher and occurred only after some time had been spent in discussion. Whether or not this was the case in this particular instance, the researcher's ex-teacher status did appear to exert some influence and assume some importance in the research context as will be evident at later points within this thesis.

As the Dean at 'Site B', then, met the final selection criteria and the site presented all the conditions of numbers of students and context for observational methodologies, this was adopted as the location for the present investigation. By July 1983, processes of selection and initial access had determined the site for the conduct of the fieldwork in the following year. Furthermore, it had been arranged for the researcher to hold some meetings later in the year with those adult students present in 1983, as a means of gaining some general impressions of them and some indications of the ease with which relationships could be established.

However, one further process of access required to be negotiated. It was still necessary for the researcher to meet with the school Principal in order that personal contact and approval could be established, for it is this individual who exercises the role of primary 'gatekeeper' (see, Wolcott, 1971) within the school. At the meeting held in October 1983, coinciding with that with the group of adult students, it was evident that D.1 had already informed the Principal of the intended research. She had provided him with the letter written to her, reported our conversation regarding the research intentions, and informed the Principal (P.1) of the researcher's former status as a teacher, a biographical feature which dominated the meeting and to which P.1 appeared to attach considerable significance. It was during this discussion that the Principal noted that this former status and the proposed 'full year' of fieldwork

would ensure more attention to the 'realities' of schooling than, as he termed it, the 'usual garbage' from those 'unfamiliar' with the situation and basing findings on 'one visit' which was the 'normal' type of investigation (see, Woods, 1979). In relation to the research, and in his view fulfilling the final stages of 'seeking approval' to involve this particular school, P.1's main concern was that the Board of Governors be informed of the proposed study. While he undertook to do this at their next meeting, the researcher suggested that this be supported by a letter outlining the proposed research. The Principal readily accepted this offer, suggesting that the letter (see Appendix A) be sent to him just prior to the start of the fieldwork and that he would then place it on file for the Board of Governors.

As an outcome of this meeting with P.1, full co-operation of the 'whole school', access to staff, students, and information, and a 'welcome' to the school were received. The Principal also undertook to inform the staff that the author would be present in the school for the duration of the following year. At this point, the author requested an opportunity to meet personally with the teachers such that introductions could be made and an outline of the research could be provided. This, P.1 suggested, would be best accomplished at a Staff Meeting early in the fieldwork year, final arrangements for which we would discuss at our next meeting in January, 1984.

One final aspect of access to site, and processes of acceptance by participants, is to be introduced here as it arose in connection with this first meeting with P.1. This concerns the mode of dress where the researcher attempts to 'blend in' with the participants (see, Cassell, 1982b; Galliher, 1980). Prior to the meeting with the Principal, D.1 had remarked to the author that the wearing of a tie would be a 'good idea' as the 'Boss is a great believer in them'. Although given in a jocular manner, this 'advice' was followed up on to the point where observations showed that both staff and adult students adopted a range of dress standards. The researcher decided that a mid-point should be adopted and throughout the research the author wore casual trousers, open-necked shirt, and shoes, which probably placed him in a position where general appearance was similar to some teachers and some adult students, indeed being 'mistaken' on

occasions as a member of either group. Dress, it is suggested, then aids in the processes of access and acceptance and goes some way toward making the 'outsider' at least appear like an 'insider'. The adoption of a particular mode of dress, however, may be interpreted as a form of 'deceit' in that the researcher adopts a 'disguise' in order to 'blend in'. Galliher (1980), for instance, reports that he felt somewhat hypocritical and less than honest when he cut his hair, shaved his beard, and wore a white shirt and tie when studying Mormons in Utah. In the author's situation the changes were not as marked a departure from 'normal' as in Galliher's case. Moreover, the adoption of a particular standard of dress was seen more in terms of a variety of tact and politeness (see, Cassell, 1982b). Finally, 'deceit' would appear to be more applicable when the researcher is using dress to provide a 'disguise', in other words, where those being investigated are unaware of the identity and purpose of the investigator.

This, then, completes a description of the processes of gaining access to the school, a process which saw the methodology accepted by the 'sponsors' and 'gatekeepers' and full co-operation and assistance of all those within the institution being offered. At the conclusion of this, the author provided both the Principal and Dean with his home phone number should they have any further questions regarding the research during the period up to the start of fieldwork in January, 1984. The final action of gaining access, then, was the provision of the formal letter of introduction to the Principal which was sent in January. This provided an application from the researcher for access to the school, outlined the research - along similar lines to that earlier sent to the Deans - and introduced the researcher, his status, background, and university supervisors (see Appendix A).

At this point, discussion turns to a consideration of the research site and this is followed by an examination of aspects of the participants and access to them.

THE RESEARCH SITE

Although in different contexts and from different perspectives, research by those such as Stebbins (1976) and Todd (1981) indicates the importance of the setting on social interaction and, certainly, physical attributes of the research location were to directly impinge upon many aspects of the present investigation. As well as providing a point of reference for later discussion, it appears appropriate to provide at this point an account of features of the physical environment as existed at the time of the fieldwork in 1984.

FIGURE 2
Sketch Plan of School Buildings

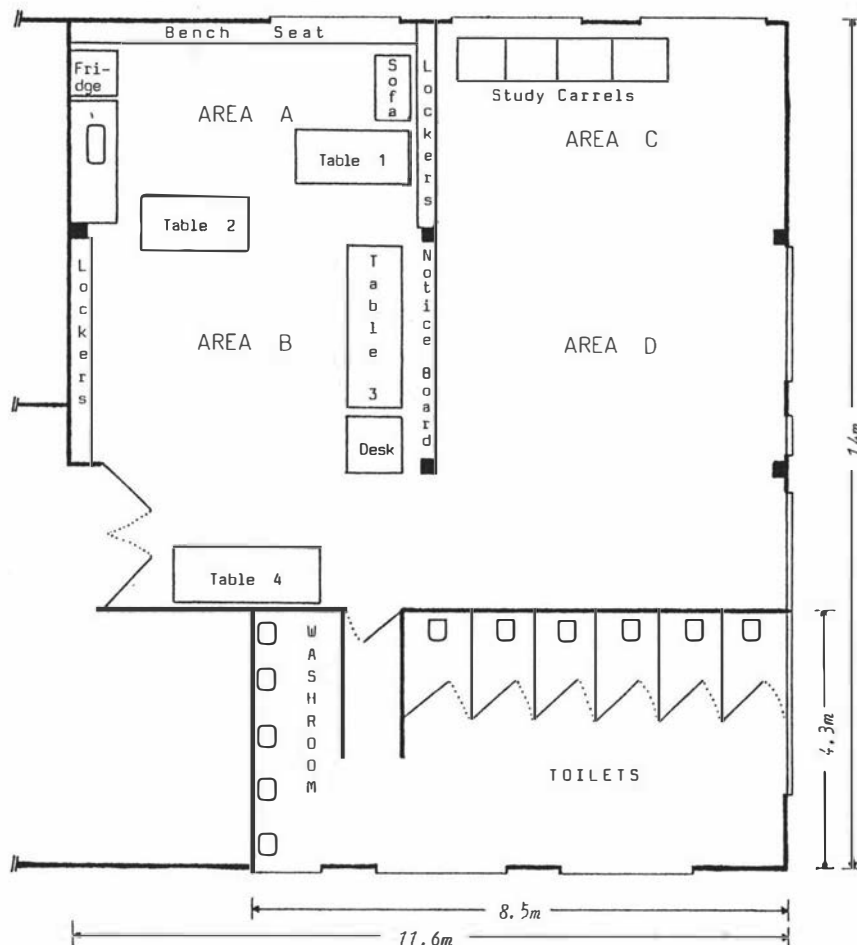


The school (Figure 2) is a multi-purpose, co-educational school, centrally located in a provincial city with a population of approximately 62,000. With a staff of 61, the school provides a wide variety of courses and subjects, many to the Seventh Form level, for its approximately 1000 pupils. Although not the only one in the city to enrol adult students, the school has something of a local 'reputation' and 'tradition' in providing opportunities for adult education. At least to some extent, this may be seen to stem from its former status as a Technical High School (up to the late 1960s) and its present provision for between 3,000 and 4,000 students enrolled in a variety of Continuing Education courses - primarily held in the evening (see Chapter One). Certainly, the school does attract a majority of adult students attending day-time classes in this city (see footnote 4), relying primarily on 'word of mouth' advertising supplemented by a small insert in the local newspaper advising that adult students will be accepted. This newspaper advertisement appears twice a year, once January and again in December.

While taken into account by the Department of Education for the determination of staffing levels, there is no financial grant, allocations of building space, nor of equipment and furnishings, provided to the school for its adult students. For instance, the Department establishes a commonroom for senior pupils, but the particular school must provide funding and space from its own resources in order to allow an Adult Student Commonroom. The school did have such a facility and it was this room which became the major site of the investigation as it was here that the researcher most frequently met and interacted with the adult students.

As Figure 3 shows, this self-contained area provided a workplace, a social gathering context, toilet facilities, and allowed for the making of tea and coffee. However, this presents the superficial details and it is with the condition of this room during the year of the research that discussion is concerned. As indicated with Figure 3, this former girls' cloakroom was also used for the storage of books, furniture and, at one stage, a rather smelly roll of carpet. In fact, the areas designated 'C' and 'D' in the figure were primarily given to this storage with only sufficient space in which the adult students could store a bicycle or two and have access to the study

FIGURE 3
Sketch Plan of Adult Student Commonroom



NOTE: Areas C and D used primarily for storage
Table 1 and Desk removed in June

carrels - which were infrequently used. Generally, then, only areas 'A' and 'B' were available for use by the adult students. Throughout the year, the adult students directed critical comments to the researcher, Dean, and their peers regarding the materials stored as well as the general conditions and appearance of the room. The researcher's impressions of the Adult Student Commonroom will serve to summarize the general conditions:

The room has a very high ceiling [and large area which, during winter, made it impossible for the two small heaters to provide any warmth, being compounded by a broken window in the door to the toilets and the fact that only those windows in Areas A and C received direct

sunlight]. The colour of the room is an 'off-grey' on both ceilings and walls both of which are plastered and, in many places, chipped and cracked. The only relief to this colour scheme is provided by the lockers and some paintings, on both them and the walls. First, the lockers are in tiers of three, wooden, many have doors broken or missing, and some are painted with names of 'pop groups' [all 'in vogue' some years ago] and slogans such as 'hot rod'. Second, the paintings on the walls include such items as a 'bear', some 'chipmunks', a green 'snake', a caricature of a former teacher, a pair of 'smiling mouths', a 'hot-dog', a 'jack-in-the-box', and an assortment of 'shapes'. The colours used are mainly dark reds, purples, and browns, with some lighter greens. This 'art-work' appears to have been the responsibility of the girls whose former cloakroom this was. The floor is boards except for a rather thread-bare carpet square located in Area A. The sofa is in a bad state of repair with large tears in the upholstery while the chairs available are mainly of the type used in the classroom and many are broken, although still usable. There is one 'armchair' which is also broken and can only be used when supported against a wall. There is only one power point available from which any heating, the fridge, and the hot-water heater must be run. The fridge is old, its door does not shut and it doesn't work very well. The hot-water heater does work satisfactorily although it does leak badly. In addition, such is the proximity of the toilets, with the door window broken, and the sound-carrying effects of the whole area, any attempt to use these is completely audible to all present.

(Fieldnotes, 16.2.84)

These conditions remained until November at which stage a start was made on clearing the stored materials in preparation for the complete refurbishing of the Commonroom. Perhaps this warrants some explanation at this point for, on a number of occasions during the course of the fieldwork, both the Principal and Dean had informed the adult students and researcher of the 'imminence' of these alterations and improvements to this facility. This in itself became a topic of discussion by the adult students as they often inquired as to 'when' these alterations would be started and were critical of the fact that it appeared unlikely they would 'benefit' during their year at school. A start on the Commonroom was not made until after the adult students had left school for their external examinations in November, 1984, being completed the following January.

The preceding discussion has described the physical features of

the research site as they pertain to the conduct of the present study. Consideration is now given to the participants involved.

THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

The selection of the sample proceeded from the principle of voluntary participation by the adult students in the research process. Each student was approached and, while informing them of the nature of the study, it was emphasised to each that participation was voluntary and that the research was separated from the school and its requirements (see Appendix B). This latter aspect was deemed necessary so as to: remove any notion of 'compulsion' should the students see the research as part of the school; and, to lend 'confidentiality' to their participation by establishing the researcher in a 'neutral' position in relation to the school. In addition, this also provided some basis for the author to establish a 'role' of 'researcher' for himself and suggest, as a consequence, that he could not provide 'advice' as he was not part of the school and could not 'interfere'.

During the course of the investigation, members of the teaching staff were also interviewed, and constitute part of the sample at this location. In order to address aspects of the processes of selection and access to this sample, the following discussion will focus, first, on the adult students, then on the staff.

THE ADULT STUDENT SAMPLE

The first opportunity to meet with a few of the adult students in the fieldwork year of 1984 occurred when they enrolled in late January. Here, the researcher was seated in the Hall alongside the Dean who, once enrolment procedures were completed, introduced the author in terms of him being 'the researcher from the university who would like to speak to you'. A second, and larger, group were met on the first day of school (1.2.84) where the researcher was again

introduced by the Dean in similar terms. Finally, there were others who were contacted by the researcher at a later date - as they were not available on the two earlier occasions - and those who enrolled during the course of the year. This provided the initial negotiation of access to the adult student sample. In all instances, either individually or as a group, they were informed of the basic intentions of the research, had stressed to them the voluntary nature of their participation, and the separation of the research and researcher from the school was emphasised (see Appendix B). At the same time, the author clearly defined his role as 'a researcher'. These features of access negotiation, in turn, reflected the ethical considerations upon which the present study was based. Following these same broad 'principles', access was 'renegotiated' with each adult student as their participation at different phases of the methodology was sought during the course of the fieldwork.

From this process, a total of 36 adult students agreed to participate in the research. A profile of these 36 participants is shown in Table 5, and more comprehensive information about each student is given in Appendix D.

With two exceptions, this represented the total population of adult students attending day-time classes at the school. The first of these was a woman taking Seventh Form Art who never came to the Commonroom throughout the year and whom the researcher never managed to meet. As no contact phone number was available, the Dean and the Art Teacher informed this student of the research and conveyed to her a request to contact the author by phone but this did not eventuate. The second exception was a 17-year-old woman taking four subjects at Fifth Form level. Although approached at the beginning of the year by the researcher, she declined to participate in the study and did not indicate any reasons for her decision. On the basis of observations during her infrequent appearances in the Commonroom, it was noted that she was very shy and did not interact to any great extent with other adult students. A number of attempts was made to establish a discussion with this student in order to consider her participation, but it was not until October that a short conversation ensued regarding recent examinations, during which she informed the researcher of her withdrawal from school that day.

TABLE 5

A Summary Profile of the Sample of Adult Students

Adult Student Code *	Age	Marital Status	Number of Children **	Prior Record ***	Level of Entry ****	Number of Subjects	Length of Enrolment *****	Job During Year
M.4	19	Single	-	16/S.C	6	5	6.5wks	P.T
M.5	23	De Facto	-	17/3	6	5	Year	P.T
M.6	19	Single	-	S.F.C subs 19/1 U.E	6	5	2 terms	-
M.7	18	Single	-	sub 16/2 S.C	6	4	2wks	-
M.8	19	Single	-	subs 16/-	7	3	Year	-
M.9	18	Single	-	17/U.E	7	1	0wks	-
M.10	17	Single	-	16/1 S.C	6	2	2.5wks	-
M.11	20	Single	-	sub 17/2 S.C	6	1	1 term	F.T
M.13	21	Single	-	subs// NZCD 15/2 S.C	6	6	6.5wks	P.T
M.15	20	Single	-	subs 16/S.C	6	4	Year	P.T
M.16	16	Single	-	15/-	5	4	Year	P.T
M.17	18	Single	-	17/U.E	7	4	Year	P.T
F.9	17	Single	-	17/1 U.E	6	3	9.5wks	P.T
F.10	31	Married	3	sub 15/-// 2 S.C	6	4	Year	P.T
F.11	22	Married/ Separated	3 (1 own)	subs 14/-	5	5	2 terms	-
F.12	24	Divorced	1	15/-	5	2	0wks	-
F.13	18	Single	-	16/2 S.C	6	5	2 terms	P.T
F.14	39	Divorced	3	subs 15/-	5	2	Year	-
F.15	19	De Facto	-	16/3 S.C	6	4	1.2 terms	P.T
F.16	22	Single	-	subs 18/S.C	6	5	Year	-
F.17	19	Single	-	17/-	6	4	Year	P.T
F.18	37	Separated	3	15/2 S.C	5	1	1.6 terms	-
F.19	38	Single	1	sub 16/-// 1 S.C	6	2	Year	F.T
F.20	48	De Facto	-	16/-	6	1	6wks	P.T
F.22	24	Separated	-	17/3 S.C	6	2	5.5wks	P.T
F.23	17	Single	-	subs 16/-	6	4	2 terms	P.T
F.24	42	Married	2	16/-// 2 S.C	6	3	Year	-
F.26	17	Single	-	subs 15/-	5	5	4.5wks	-
F.27	17	Single	1	15/-	6	5	1.1 terms	-
F.28	31	Married	3	16/-// 1 S.C	5	2	Year	-
F.29	24	Single	-	sub 17/U.E// R.N, B.Arts	6	5	6wks	F.T
F.30	32	Single	3	16/-	6	2	Year	P.T
F.31	17	Single	-	15/-	5	5	1.5 terms	P.T
F.32	30	Married	2	17/U.E// 3 U.E	7	4	Year	P.T
F.33	29	Divorced	-	subs 17/U.E// R.N	6	3	6wks	-
F.34	24	Married	2	14/-	5	2	Terms 2 & 3	P.T

* Student Code provides gender and assigned number

** Children resident in family home during year of enrolment

*** Provided, in order, is School Leaving Age/Highest School Qualification [S.C = School Certificate; S.F.C = Sixth Form Certificate; U.E = University Entrance], and // Post-school qualifications [NZCD = New Zealand Certificate of Draughting - M.11 having completed some subjects; R.N = New Zealand Registered Nurse]

**** Denotes class level enrolled in at beginning of year

***** Period of time student observed to be attending school [attendance and nature of the attendance record will be further elaborated at a subsequent point of the thesis]

THE STAFF SAMPLE

In addition to the Principal and Dean, the members of the teaching staff who taught the adult students were interviewed on two occasions during the fieldwork year, as well as participating in some informal conversations with the researcher. Comprising this sample, then, were the Principal (P.1), Dean (D.1), Deputy Principal (D.P.1) and 19 other members of the teaching staff. This included all but two of the teachers involved with adult students during the present research. Of the two exceptions, the Typing teacher had only one adult student who left by mid-year, and the Alternative Mathematics teacher was unavailable to the researcher on the occasions of both interviews. However, this latter teacher did speak informally to the author and indicated much the same general impressions of the adult students as derived from other staff members.

Access to the Staff, 'guaranteed' by P.1 at our meeting the previous year, was negotiated on an individual basis at the time of the first interview in June of 1984 under the same principles as adopted with the adult students. First, however, the researcher was introduced by the Principal at a meeting of the Staff on February 20, some 2.5 weeks into the First Term of 1984. While some teachers had met the author during the enrolment period, this was the first opportunity to meet with all teachers at the school. Following the introduction by P.1, the researcher was given 'a minute or two' to present an outline of his 'study of adult students'. As such, this allowed only sufficient time to present a summary account with emphasis being given to the point that it was intended to involve teachers in the investigation as well as the adult students. The description of the research concluded with a request that those interested, or seeking clarification, could meet with the researcher at the end of this meeting or, should they wish, approach him at any stage of the year. P.1 then outlined the author's previous teaching record - establishing his credentials? - promised the 'full co-operation' of the whole school, emphasised that the research would involve the 'entire year' - a statement which drew some general 'approval' from the staff, extended an open invitation to the staffroom, and suggested that the researcher should remain for the

remainder of the meeting such that staff could approach him when it concluded. The latter point appeared to indicate a 'trusted' role for the researcher as he was then privy to a number of confidential discussions pertaining to the school and some of its pupils. Although the 'sponsorship' apparent in the present research appeared to have little direct effect upon the course of the investigation in terms of restrictions of access, suggestions as to methodology, or recommendations regarding the focus, there was some extent to which this perception of a 'trusted' relationship exerted influence. It certainly alerted the researcher to the importance of making every effort to provide confidentiality for the participants, within the realization that complete guarantees cannot be given (see, Johnson, 1982; King, 1984; Morgan, 1982; Wild, 1978).

It was as a further outcome of this meeting, and the implied co-operation of staff, that the researcher determined to approach each staff member on an individual basis when seeking their participation in the study. At this time, the intentions of the research, its methodology, and the voluntary nature of their participation were provided. Furthermore, in line with the basic ethical principles of the research, the staff were informed of their right to review their comments after they had been recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Hopefully, it was these aspects and the relationships between the researcher and staff members that led to their full co-operation, rather than P.1's 'promise' during the staff meeting. Perhaps an indication of the staff view of the research is contained in P.1's remarks at the end of the year when, asked about the affect of the research in the school, he replied:

It's had no negative effect whatsoever. Nothing negative. There has not been a negative comment or anything like that. It's been darn good to have you around. People have commented, really, that you have been doing your job in a very professional manner. If you had been 'poking your nose in' - you know - kind of thing - people would have felt maybe a little bit 'yuk' about it - threatened. But, no, none have said that to me.

(P.1, Interview, 28.11.84)

In summary, then, 36 adult students, the Principal, Dean, Deputy Principal, and 19 teachers, formed the total sample of participants at the school. This group was 'selected' on the basis of voluntary

participation which, along with processes of access negotiation during the course of the fieldwork, saw them informed of the basic intentions of the research, its methodology, the role of the researcher and his separation from the school, as well as of their rights to view the information regarding them which was being recorded - although none were to do so.

This section has provided an outline of the characteristics of the sample involved in the research, as well as considering the principles of selection and access to the participants. The topic of discussion now moves to an elaboration of the particular methodological strategies adopted in the present investigation.

FIELD RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

In the conduct of field research, as previously indicated, the researcher generally adopts a pragmatic approach to methodological techniques utilising an integrated variety of strategies directed towards the problem under investigation (see, Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Trow, 1957). The adoption of such 'methodological triangulation' (Denzin, 1970a), or 'multiple strategies' (Burgess, 1982g, 1984a), is part of the process whereby the researcher seeks to provide different perspectives on the social setting, thereby overcoming the potential for inherent bias residing in a reliance upon a single investigator, using a single method, producing a single set of data (Burgess, 1984a; S.D., Sieber, 1982; Wax, 1971; Zelditch, 1982).

For the purposes of the present research, methodological strategies utilised included: participant observation; interviews; telephone conversations; diaries; questionnaires; and, documentary materials. Overall, the 'focus' of the strategies was primarily upon what Woods (1979) terms 'naturalistic or behavioural talk', that which was part of ongoing events. While these methods are described separately in the discussion which follows, and participant observation occupied the majority of the researcher's time in the

field, this is not to imply any inherent 'superiority' of one strategy over the other (see, Becker and Geer, 1957, 1958b; Trow, 1957) for their use overlapped during the conduct of the research.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

This, the 'principal method' of field research (Burgess, 1982d), involved the researcher gathering data while interacting in the social setting under investigation (Becker, 1958; Bogdan, 1972; Friedrichs and Ludtke, 1975; McCall and Simmons, 1969; Spradley, 1980). Within a method which utilises the researcher as the main instrument of the investigation, much attention has focussed upon the role of the researcher as a participant in the social setting. Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) argue that the participant observer may be in a formal or informal role, concealed or revealed in relationships with the participants, and located on a continuum from 'active' to 'passive' interaction. Similarly, Spradley (1980) distinguishes varying degrees of involvement in the face-to-face interactions characteristic of this method as ranging from 'no involvement' to 'high involvement', and, consequently, a range from 'non participation' to 'complete participation'. In a typology of 'master roles', Gold (1958) distinguishes four field roles: the 'complete participant'; the 'participant-as-observer'; the 'observer-as-participant'; and, the 'complete observer'. For the present research context, the predominant role fits most closely to that of the 'participant-as-observer' where the researcher and informant are aware that they are involved in a field relationship. However, such 'typologies' do not fully provide for the change and development which, as Janes (1961) and Olesen and Whittaker (1967) indicate, are likely to occur in the role of the researcher at different phases of the investigation. The description of research as being 'participant observation', or even specified as involving 'participation-as-observer', merely serves to indicate the general nature of the research relationships and does not account for the variety of the process, nor, as Gans (1982) illustrates, the many personal aspects of this methodology.

It is being suggested here that it is necessary for the researcher to indicate the nature of the participant observation

adopted within the particular research context, rather than placing reliance upon such generalized 'descriptors' as exemplified in the various typologies. The elaboration of the form of participant observation applied in the present research occurs by a description of: 'Role Relationships'; 'The Nature of the Observations'; 'The Researcher in the Field'; and, 'Key Informants'.

Role Relationships

At the school, the processes of observation commenced with the initial considerations of this as a potential site for the investigation. There were general observations of the school and staff made in which the researcher was in a role of 'complete observer' (Gold, 1958), while reconnaissance of the site in preparation for the research was conducted. This form of relationship may also be held to have existed during the research where 'observations' were made of people who remained 'unaware' of their involvement in a field relationship with the researcher.

During the fieldwork phase of the investigation (see Table 6), while the participant-as-observer role was predominant, it was found that this role varied with both time and individual participants. Similarly, the phases of the research role, such as those described by Janes (1961), also differed between individuals. For instance, while the relationships with some of the adult students moved rapidly through the phases from 'newcomer', to 'personal acceptance', and a form of 'imminent migrant' where participants expressed interest in the findings of the research (see, Janes, 1961), others remained at the initial phases. Although the author was considered a 'member' of the group sufficient to be asked to take part in a 'fun relay race' at the school athletic sports (21.2.84), it was noticeable that F.19, in particular, often did not reply to the researcher's greetings even by the end of the research. As Burgess (1984a) recounts in a similar situation, it was almost as if the researcher did not exist for this particular participant, although perhaps it is pertinent to note that F.19 generally did not respond to greetings from other adult students on the rare occasions she was present in the Commonroom during the fieldwork year.

TABLE 6
Diary of Selected Events in Fieldwork Year

<i>Date</i>	<i>Day Code</i>	<i>Events</i>
	*	**
TERM ONE (62 School Days)		
24 Jan	1	Contact O.1 to arrange for meeting with adult students.
26-27 Jan	2-3	Enrolment period. Part 1 of Questionnaire issued. Initial observations and contacts.
1 Feb	4	First day of school year. Part 1 Questionnaire issued to remainder of adult students.
2 Feb	5	Checking enrolments. Collection of Part 1 Questionnaire. Initial observations continue.
13 Feb	10	Diary issued to adult students.
15 Feb	12	Issuing of Diary continued. Observations becoming more interactive and informative.
20 Feb	15	Meeting with Staff, and introduction by Principal.
21 Feb	16	Researcher asked to participate with adult student relay team in school athletic sports.
16 Mar		Mid-term holiday break.
20-25 Apr		Easter. Analytical strategies focussed upon as outcome of research processes.
30 Apr	54	End-of-term interviews commenced.
4 May	58	End-of-term interviews continued. Last day of School Term.
5-20 May		May Vacation - no contact with adult students. Analysis and reflection predominate.
TERM TWO (61 School Days)		
21 May	59	Some end-of-term interviews remain to be completed.
28 May	64	Interview Principal and Dean of Adult Students.
4 Jun		Queen's Birthday weekend.
6-14 Jun	70-76	Mid-year school examinations. Teacher interviews conducted.
29 Jun	87	Mid-year School Reports issued.
6-9 Jul		Mid-term holiday break.
27 Jul		Teacher-only day.
8 Aug	110	Inspectors view some adult student work.
9 Aug	111	End-of-term interviews commenced.
17 Aug	117	End-of-term interviews continued. Last day of School Term.
18 Aug- 9 Sep		August Vacation. Phone contacts with some adult students during final week of holiday (Days 118-121). Analysis and reflection predominate.
TERM THREE (47 School Days)		
10 Sep	122	Start of Term. Some end-of-term interviews remain to be completed.
18 Sep	128	Adult students requested to compile a record of day's events - 'A Day in the Life of an Adult Student'.
28 Sep-5 Oct	136-141	End-of-year school examinations.
24 Oct	153	Part 2 Questionnaire distribution commenced.
2 Nov	160	End-of-year School Reports issued.
6 Nov	162	Adult students provide morning tea for staff in Adult Commonroom.
8 Nov	164	School Prize-giving Ceremony.
14 Nov	168	University Entrance Accrediting announced. School Certificate external examinations start. Final day adult students attendance recorded.
19 Nov	171	University Entrance and University Bursaries examinations commenced.
21 Nov	173	Second interview with Staff held over next two weeks.
30 Nov	180	Adult students required at school to return any outstanding books, collect certificates (Sixth Form Certificate, and Alternative Mathematics Certificates), and attend final School Assembly. Adult Students present a book to School Library.
3 Dec	182	End-of-year interviews commenced.
7 Dec	186	End of school year for teachers and school-aged pupils.
17 Dec	192	Attempts initiated to contact all adult students who left during the year to seek their cooperation in completing Questionnaire phase of the research methodology.
24 Dec	198	Final contact with adult students before Christmas period.
7 Jan	199	Process of contacting adult students following Christmas break commenced.
15 Jan	204	Part 3 of Questionnaire distribution started.
19 Jan	208	First external examination results available from students.
29 Jan	216	Part 3 of Questionnaire collection and interview commenced.
20 Feb	232	Last formal meeting and interview with an adult student. Fieldwork completed.
* Each day where contact occurred with a person participating in the research - adult student or staff member - was designated with a sequentially numbered 'day code'.		
** These only intended to provide an 'overview' of the fieldwork year events, with some indication of the time and contact distribution. Details of events will be elaborated during the thesis presentation.		

Certainly influencing the relationships, and F.19 is a case in point, was the degree of contact established with various participants during the course of the investigation. As such, this issue formed a primary concern during the early stages of 1984 where it became apparent that some adult students infrequently appeared in the Commonroom. In particular, those enrolled part-time (see Table 5) were less likely to be present and some never visited the Commonroom during their stay at school. Contact with these students was primarily through interview and telephone conversations. From this, then, it is possible to indicate a generalized pattern of the degree of contact with each of the adult students on the basis of their presence in the Commonroom, as is done in Table 7.

Influencing this pattern of contact was a number of factors, including the students' personal timetables (see Appendix D), their participation in the research (see Table 8), the length of their enrolment and pattern of attendance at school (see Table 9), and the researcher's 'time sampling' which led to his presence in the Commonroom at specific times. This latter consideration was based on initial observations during Term One that, at least partly due to their timetables, the optimum times for attendance in the Commonroom occurred in the morning, before school and at Interval. On this basis, the researcher adopted a pattern which saw him present in the Commonroom, typically, from 9a.m to about lunch-time, with longer periods occurring on such occasions as times of interviews. In addition, this allowed for such other research tasks as telephone contacts, interviews, and the mammoth enterprise of fieldnote transcription to be undertaken during the remainder of the day and evening.

These various factors influenced both the nature of the participation and relationships established with the informants, and indicate clearly the difficulty of typifying these under some generic terminology of 'participant observation'.

On the basis of the information provided in Tables 7, 8, and 9, it is possible to summarize the generalised role relationships within the present research. With those who remained enrolled after Term One, participating beyond Part 1 of the Questionnaire, and who were

TABLE 7
Generalized Patterns of Attendance
in Adult Student Commonroom

Student Code No.	Frequency of Attendance				For *
	Often	Week	Rare	Never	
M.4	✓				6.5wks
M.5	✓				Year
M.6		✓	✓		2 terms
M.7	✓				2 weeks
M.8			✓		Year
M.9				✓	Nil
M.10			✓		2.5wks
M.11				✓	1 term
M.13	✓				6.5wks
M.15	✓				Year
M.16	✓				Year
M.17	✓				Year
F.9	✓				9.5wks
F.10	✓				Year
F.11	✓				2 terms
F.12				✓	Nil
F.13	✓				2 terms
F.14	✓				Year
F.15	✓				1.2 terms
F.16	✓				Year
F.17	✓				Year
F.18			✓		1.6 terms
F.19			✓		Year
F.20				✓	6wks
F.22				✓	5.5wks
F.23		✓	✓		2 terms
F.24	✓				Year
F.26			✓		4.5wks
F.27			✓		1.1 terms
F.28		✓			Year
F.29	✓				6wks
F.30	✓				Year
F.31		✓	✓		1.5 terms
F.32	✓				Year
F.33		✓			6wks
F.34		✓			Year ¹

WHERE: 'Often' = Most days of the week, or at least most occasions when at school.
'Week' = At least once a week.
'Reare' = Infrequently, not for considerable periods of time.

NOTE: In the cases of M.6, F.23, F.31, initial attendance was 'week', but became increasingly infrequent.

* Length of Enrolment.

¹ F.34 did not enrol until mid-year, but remained enrolled at the end of the year so is accorded this 'length'.

frequently encountered in the Commonroom the processes of the participant-as-observer role and phases of development from 'newcomer' to 'imminent migrant' (Janes, 1961) were clearly evident. Even with continued enrolment and research participation, relationships with those occasionally (termed 'week' in Table 7), and rarely, in the Commonroom generally remained at the more formal phases, although most did participate willingly in aspects of the investigation. As a result of these differences in contact, the methodology adopted with those 'infrequently' in the Commonroom was primarily 'interviews' rather than 'participant observation'. There were, however, some exceptions to this general pattern. Relationships with M.6, F.28, F.33, and F.34 - all 'occasionally' in the Commonroom - also progressed through the phases of development.

Of the staff, only the Dean was met with frequently, all others being predominantly involved in the interview situation, or on the few occasions of contact around the school. As has been indicated previously, however, all staff willingly co-operated in the research and expressed considerable interest in the findings. On this basis, it can be suggested that relationships between staff and researcher also underwent similar processes of development during the course of the present investigation.

With the Dean, role relationships clearly moved through the phases reported by Janes (1961). At the beginning of the year the Dean introduced the researcher to staff and adult students as "Mr. Cocklin doing research on Adult Students". Within a few days, however, the title was dropped and a first name basis, accompanied by treatment and reporting to the author as 'friend and confidant', then characterised the relationship. This continued throughout the year, culminating in the very enjoyable lunch - for which the Dean insisted on paying - at a local restaurant in December. During the year, then, a process of development of relationships was evident between the Dean and author. However, perhaps indicative of a degree of 'role confusion', as well as a possible effect on D.1 of the researcher's presence, she was to note that the research had some influence upon her:

I guess that, to some extent, I've relied upon you. I haven't gone in to the Commonroom as often knowing that

TABLE 8
Summary of Adult Student Research Participation

Code No.	Questionnaire			Diary	End-of-Term Interviews		
	1	2	3		1	2	3
M.4	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x
M.5	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
M.6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
M.7	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
M.8	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
M.9	✓	x	x	✓	x	x	x
M.10	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
M.11	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	x	x
M.13	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	x
M.15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
M.16	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
M.17	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
F.9	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.11	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	x
F.12	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.13	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
F.14	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
F.15	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x
F.16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
F.19	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
F.20	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.22	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.23	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x
F.24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.26	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.27	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
F.28	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
F.29	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x
F.30	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.31	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
F.32	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F.33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x
F.34	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓

NOTE: Part 3 of Questionnaire when collected also involved an interview, with all except M.4, M.11, F.31, who were unavailable as then resident in other areas, and F.19 who 'did not have time' to meet with the researcher. Other than M.8, who did not participate in the research beyond the initial stages, those only completing Part 1 of the Questionnaire left school early and either could not be traced or declined to complete the questionnaire phase of the research.

TABLE 9
Adult Student Attendance Record

Code No.	Date Enrolled *	Half-Days Absent**			Date Left ***
		Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	
M.4	1/2	10/64	-	-	19/3
M.5	1/2	3	12	13	30/11
M.6	1/2	17	20	-	17/8
M.7	1/2	14/20	-	-	14/2
M.8	1/2	4	13	10	30/11
M.9	1/2	-	-	-	1/2
M.10	1/2	5/24	-	-	17/2
M.11	1/2	18	-	-	4/5
M.13	29/2	14/66	-	-	16/4
M.15	26/3	1/52	14	9	30/11
M.16	27/2	9/90	9	25	30/11
M.17	26/4	0/14	0	1	30/11
F.9	1/2	32/94	-	-	9/4
F.10	1/2	0	0	1	30/11
F.11	1/2	4	57	-	17/8
F.12	1/2	-	-	-	1/2
F.13	1/2	32	52	-	17/8
F.14	1/2	10	13	11	30/11
F.15	1/2	39	24/36	-	14/6
F.16	1/2	14	30	29	30/11
F.17	1/2	15	17	41	30/11
F.18	1/2	7	16/76	-	16/7
F.19	1/2	2	24	23	30/11
F.20	1/2	4/62	-	-	15/3
F.22	1/2	5	-	-	12/3
F.23	1/2	21	67	-	17/8
F.24	1/2	5	2	1	30/11
F.26	1/2	8/46	-	-	5/3
F.27	1/2	56	18/18	-	31/5
F.28	1/2	4	17	4	30/11
F.29	13/2	0/60	-	-	26/3
F.30	13/2	3/110	6	18	30/11
F.31	21/2	20/98	25/66	-	5/7
F.32	29/2	1/86	14	6	30/11
F.33	3/4	0/40	0/10	-	25/5
F.34	27/6	-	8/70	10	30/11

* Providing the day and month. 1/2 = first day of the school year.

** Source = School Register, but to be cautiously interpreted. For instance, M.13 and F.18 were both being marked 'present' and 'absent' for a considerable period after having left school. Further, a number of 'absences' were reported by the adult students, but did not appear in the School Register.
Total Half-Days: Term 1 = 124; Term 2 = 122; Term 3 = 94. Second figure in any column (e.g 0/40) provides total half-days of enrolment available for student.

*** Providing the day and month. 30/11 = final day of the school year. Source = researcher's records. Many students remained on School Register for some time after having left school - e.g., F.18 still recorded as 'enrolled' until Term 3.

you were there and that they could talk to you. Perhaps, also, though, that's been caused by my lack of interest in the job this year. No, I don't really think it's had any great effect upon me directly. It's been great to have you here.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

Some aspects of these role relationships were of concern to the researcher, and it appears pertinent to illustrate these at this point. As in any social setting, there were instances where the researcher did develop negative perceptions of certain participants at particular times, a process which undoubtedly also works in reverse. While consciously determined not to show such feelings, or let them direct data collection, one situation did occur where the author's impressions directly influenced the course of the investigation. M.16 was a 16-year old who had enrolled as a returning Fifth Form pupil at the beginning of the year, who was 'given' adult student status and 'arrived' in the Commonroom at the end of February. Perhaps because of this change in status, his youth, or some of his early activities in the Commonroom - such as riding his motorbike inside, using the sofa as an ashtray, turning the radio to full volume, interjecting in conversations - the researcher formed a rather negative view of him and was then reluctant to involve M.16 in the research (see Appendix D). It was not until near the end of Term Two that he was inducted and informed of the purposes of the study and the reasons for the researcher's presence - although he did indicate that he was aware of this and had been so for some time. As M.16 was a frequent participant in the interactions within the Commonroom, and often referred to by other adult students, it became essential that he was inducted into the investigation if the principles of open research and informed consent were to be upheld. Notwithstanding the retrospective seeking of his participation, in M.16's case there was a period of covert observation directly influenced by the researcher's personal preferences. This situation may also have affected other relationships in the research context. For instance, it was evident that many others shared the author's views of M.16 - teachers and adult students reporting their general 'dissatisfaction' with his change of status and personal characteristics. During discussions with other participants, the author did provide some information

regarding M.16 - such as his age - which may have carried with it the implication of the researcher's 'disapproval' of the situation. Whether or not this was the case, the incident did alert the researcher to the need to avoid indicating his personal feelings regarding either events or individuals. This was held to be particularly important where other participants made disparaging remarks concerning either a teacher or adult student. Once inducted, however, M.16 was a very willing participant and a good relationship eventuated with the researcher, perhaps most succinctly indicated by the considerable effort M.16 expended on preparing afternoon tea on the occasions the author met him at his home and the 'openness' of the ensuing discussions. Whether this was a reflection of the changes apparent in M.16 as the year progressed, or changes on the part of the author, remains a matter of conjecture.

Aspects of the researcher's background also exerted some influence upon relationships in the field (see, Burgess, 1984a; Woods, 1979). The author's experiences as a teacher directed both observations and relationships, at least on some occasions. F.10, in particular, frequently sought the researcher's opinion of her performance and consequent 'chances' for being Accredited University Entrance, and there were times when the author used his knowledge as a teacher and made replies which may have provided some encouragement or counselling. A similar situation occurred with M.13 shortly after he left school with the intention of continuing to study at home towards the end of year external examinations. During a telephone conversation where he indicated this intention, the author responded as follows:

I The only thing you might get caught by are the practical requirements of some of the sciences.

(Fieldnotes, 13.4.84)

In this case, the author was drawing upon his knowledge of the course requirements which specified that a certain proportion of science subjects were to involve practical experiences, and was providing advice in the form of 'counselling'. The extent of 'influence' in this situation appeared 'minor', however, as M.13 indicated that he was aware of these requirements. Furthermore, M.13 did not continue with his intentions to 'study' at home towards the external

examinations, a decision brought about through events occurring in his life after he left school. On the other hand, such incidents as these do indicate that 'spur of the moment' comments may exert an 'unintended' influence upon participants (see, Battersby, 1980), which the field researcher needs to take into consideration. They also alerted the researcher to the issues of 'over involvement' in the interactions which may lead to 'going native' (Gold, 1958) and establishing something of an 'over rapport' (Miller, 1969) with some participants. While this did not eventuate, it was from occurrences such as these that the researcher developed a greater awareness than may be derived from the literature alone, and which substantiate the view that field methodologies require an ongoing 'reflective' approach (Woods, 1979). At the same time, as Dingwall (1980) points out, there often arise situations where participants presume that the fieldworker is 'competent' and not in need of constant outside direction. Indeed, when the researcher is placed in a position where some form of 'advice' is demanded by the ongoing interaction their credibility may rest on it being provided. As the adult students in the present research were aware that the author had been a secondary school teacher, it appeared appropriate that some specific questions were responded to on the basis of this background. Perhaps, then, while always remaining alert to the possible ramifications and accounting for the situation, some degree of influence is an inevitable by-product of good relationships with the participants in the field.

The influence of gender in the research relationships is a further factor which receives consideration in the literature (see, Roberts, 1981; Warren and Rasmussen, 1977; Wax, 1979). Perhaps indicative of the influence of this in the present context are some comments made by F.30 towards the end of the year:

F.30 I've been wondering about U.E. I think I'll be just about right - no, I don't think I will [laugh]. Honestly, I'm just not the full quid at that time. You might have noticed I'm a little erratic at times - on a 28-day basis [laugh].

I That was one reason I didn't consider. [smile]

F.30 You should have - with the absences amongst the women - that has a lot to do with it - and their behaviour. Tensions in the Commonroom - that sort of thing.

(Fieldnotes, 29.10.84)

However, this is not to suggest that such considerations were beyond the researcher's 'expertise' as observations of F.13 and F.30 had raised this as a 'possibility', while F.14 had openly stated that menstrual tension was the 'cause' of certain behaviours and absences. What is apparent is the fact that a female researcher may be aware of different aspects of the research and attribute behaviours to these influences more readily than a male. In general, it appeared that the participants - male and female - related readily to the researcher and openly discussed all aspects of their experiences. Perhaps this was most clearly indicated when F.16 - noted as a very 'shy' individual - discussed with the researcher, before taking action, her feelings and 'fears' of 'coming out' and acknowledging her lesbianism both at school and with her family.

The Nature Of The Observations

Related to the aspects of participation and role, and also developing through time and with individuals, were the observations made in the conduct of the inquiry. At first, as other field researchers recount (for instance, Ball, 1984; Gans, 1982), there was considerable concern as to whether the 'correct data' was being gathered, an issue which became less frequent but still arose at other times during the progress of the research. This reflects part of the stresses of fieldwork which may occur at any stage of the project as the researcher faces anxiety over relationships, fears of rejection by the participants, adequacy of data, ability to complete the research, loneliness, boredom, and many other aspects relating to the course of the research and its presentation (see, Clarke, 1975; Wax, 1957; Wintrob, 1969; Zigarmi and Zigarmi, 1978). In some instances, the most expedient 'solution' was for the researcher to take a 'day off' from the field.

During the initial stages of the research, the primary purpose was the establishment of relationships, and observations were of rather limited value in terms of the 'data' gathered. This being the first time the author had employed some of the methodological strategies, the observations were further limited by inexperience for which, as Ball (1984) reports, no amount of reading of the literature

will provide an adequate preparation. The first observations focussed on establishing names, identities, and group relationships while 'eavesdropping' (see, Bogdan, 1972) on conversations as a means of determining what aspects of their experiences were being discussed. At the same time, the researcher was faced with the difficulties of what to record in the fieldnotes, problems concerning attendance in the Commonroom (see Table 7), and the difficulty of covering all those groups present without being biased towards one in particular. As Ball (1984) reports from his research, the early fieldnotes in the present study were marked by their brevity and lack of clarity. There exists in these early notes an almost complete lack of information from many participants and a bias towards those categorised as forming the 'younger group' who were more vocal, more often in the Commonroom, and with whom relationships appeared to be more readily established. Accordingly, initial fieldnotes reflect a dominance by: M.4, M.7, M.13, F.9, F.11, F.13, F.15, F.17, and F.30. It was not until the first end-of-term interviews (see Table 6) with all adult students that both relationships and observations moved beyond a rather superficial level with other than those just listed. Some concern was felt over this aspect of the inquiry as this First Term included a number of significant experiences, not the least of which was the initial contact between the adult students, the school, and its population. While efforts were made to elicit information relating to this first contact, this was mainly of a retrospective nature, substantiated to some extent by the researcher's own observations made at the time.

Overall, then, the observations made during Term One were part of the initial processes of establishing relationships, determining identities, and developing strategies for data collection, and therefore reflect the rather 'tentative' nature of this phase of the investigation. It was during these early stages that the researcher 'introduced' a tape recorder as an aid to data collection and as a means of resolving some of the difficulties in recalling conversations for later transcription. At first, the author relied solely on notes written during, or shortly after, a conversation. In this situation, there appeared many opportunities for 'mistakes' of both content and interpretation based as the notes were on the researcher's ability to later accurately recall conversations with other interactions

'contaminating' the process. Furthermore, efforts at 'transcription' during a conversation appeared to detract from the 'natural' context, and certainly did not provide the researcher with the 'freedom' to interact. As the field relationships developed, it was found that the adult students more frequently approached the researcher with information and increasingly involved him in general conversations, which placed further 'strain' upon the note taking methodology as the amount of data being gathered markedly increased. Accordingly, following the issue of the 'Letter of Consent' (13.2.84), the recorder was brought in to supplement the process of note taking. While notes were made throughout the present investigation, they came to form more of a 'back-up' strategy to the use of the tape recorder. Initially, the recorder was placed in front of the researcher and openly switched on when the adult students approached with information. On such occasions, the researcher sought permission to record the comments, noting that this would save him from trying to take notes during the conversation or attempt to recall what had been said at a later time. Increasingly, the recorder was used in more general situations of interaction, still placed with the researcher and openly switched on. This use of the tape recorder certainly increased the accuracy of the data collected, although it also provided considerably more information which required transcription. While this transcription occupied large amounts of time, it had the benefit of making the author *au fait* with the data.

The use of the recorder was not undertaken without some anxiety as to the possible effects it might have upon the relationships within the research context. These were allayed when, within a few days of its introduction, it was noted that some adult students would arrive in the Commonroom and pick up the recorder to convey information if the researcher was involved in another conversation at the time. Only one student, M.5, remained somewhat 'uneasy' about the use of the recorder:

M.5 *I don't like the interviews [laugh].*

I *Why?*

M.5 *[laugh] Hate being interviewed - the tape sitting there.*

I *Yet that doesn't concern you in the Commonroom?*

M.5 *Don't really notice it there - it's not the same -*

it's not a direct thing - it's not directed at you personally, sort of thing.

(Interview, 3.12.84)

Following the May Vacation - a period given to reflection upon the research and data transcription - observation and participation became considerably more effective as the research developed greater focus and relationships became more established as the researcher became more 'involved' (Woods, 1979) in the setting and action.

The Researcher In The Field

A further aspect of the relationships existing within field investigations concerns the 'place' the researcher occupies in the social setting. From the nature of the investigation, it is evident that the author was not a 'participant' in the sense of being involved in the processes of becoming an 'adult student'. The observations made, and the interaction between students and researcher, were confined to the 'out-of-class' context, predominantly in the Adult Commonroom and its immediate environs. The researcher made efforts to be conspicuous, to involve himself in conversations, approach participants, and actively seek information. From the start of Term Two, the researcher considered that interaction and involvement with the entire group had increased markedly from the situation in Term One. This appeared to be due partly to the fact that the group was now smaller, that many of those who left had been the 'dominant' ones from the first Term who were perhaps 'over-represented' in the early data, and from the more established relationships which followed the end-of-term-one interviews. Throughout the research, the author was seen as 'part' of the Commonroom, included in conversations, approached with information, and 'missed' by participants when not present. In short, the group appeared to accept, and on occasions so reported, the researcher as 'one of them'.

Any such form of research involving interactions results in some modification of the situation. As the present research sought to determine the 'adult student experience', it appeared important that

the researcher should seek to minimise any effects upon the participants. Related to this, the author sought to avoid taking a dominant role in conversations, declined to give opinions on contentious issues, and tried not to be identified as a member of a particular group. However, the mere presence of the researcher will exert some influence (see, Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955). During the present research, it was evident that the researcher provided a person for the participants to talk with, both in a general sense and as someone who would listen to their comments (see, Finch, 1984). For instance, F.11 and F.18 both discussed their marital problems with the author; F.32 sought 'advice' concerning her planned university course; F.10 frequently discussed her 'progress' at school; and, F.28 reported some of her home difficulties which impinged upon her return to school. In all cases, while the provision of advice was avoided in order to preserve neutrality (see, Gans, 1982), the fact that the participants had someone to talk with may have influenced them in a variety of ways. Indeed, when asked about the effects of the research upon them, most adult students remarked that they had 'appreciated' having someone to talk with, someone who was 'interested' in them and their experiences. This, and the other effect of increasing student awareness of their situation, is apparent in F.30's comments regarding the influence of the research upon her:

I What has your involvement in my research meant for you?

F.30 Um - I don't know, really - a pain in the butt from time to time - because I can't see the end result. It's been interesting. It's made me think about what I'm doing, and about things around me at school. I'm probably more aware of things that are happening, because I've had to be - and when do I get my copy of the thesis? [laugh]. But, seriously, it has made me more aware.

I Has it had any influence upon you?

F.30 No - not really. Not in the sense that it's changed anything - just made me more aware. It's been good having you to talk with - even though you never gave any answers - you could be a politician when you've finished [laugh]- never giving a straight answer to anything [laugh]. But, no, it's been interesting.

(Interview, 6.12.84)

The other adult students who were asked these questions at the end of the research responded in a similar fashion.

The notions of influence are not confined to those emanating from the researcher as equally the participants are active contributors to the relationships (see, Gans, 1982; Schwartz and Schwartz, 1955). There were occasions during the study when the researcher experienced considerable empathy with the participants, sharing in both their joys and disappointments, and when certain affective judgments were a result of emotional responses to particular individuals. However, as Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) indicate, awareness of these aspects of the inquiry can be turned to the researcher's advantage. The form of 'sympathetic identification' results in data which is both more meaningful and valid, as well as representing more effective participation, while awareness of potential deleterious effects of emotive value judgments alerts the researcher to make conscious efforts towards ensuring that these do not distort perceptions.

One further instance of effects upon the researcher concerns the issue of language. While the participant observer is 'advised' to 'learn the language' of the group (for instance, Becker, 1958; Becker and Geer, 1957), the present research contained a situation where it became necessary to 'unlearn' the language. During the first Term, it was very evident that a group of the adult students liberally interspersed their conversations with a selection of four-lettered words. On many occasions, the language of F.9, F.13, and F.15, in particular, was almost exclusively constructed of such words. This raised concerns both for the reporting of the fieldnotes and personally for the researcher. First, a decision seemed warranted as to the extent the researcher should incorporate this language in fieldnotes and, later, any reports. In part, this issue was resolved when analysis of the conversations indicated that there were two 'forms' of usage. While some people intersperse conversation with 'ums' and 'aahs', this group used four-letter words for the same purpose of 'filling in gaps' in a conversation or as they paused between phrases or topics. As all of the 'ums' and 'aahs' were not individually transcribed - as a matter of typographical expediency - it was decided that this usage would similarly be replaced by the use of a 'dash' to indicate a 'pause' or 'break' in the conversation. On the other hand, there were situations where the four-lettered words formed an integral part of the conversation, and provided the more accurate representation of the data which was being collected. As

Willis (1977) does, these were duly recorded and the decision was made that they should be incorporated in any report of such conversations. The second issue raised by this language was its effect upon the researcher. Perhaps reflecting the dominance of this group during Term One, the author found occasions where he was 'picking' up this language to some extent. In the ongoing interactions within the Commonroom - and in light of the fact that other adult students had condemned the 'overuse' of such language - the author made conscious efforts to avoid such terms. However, the researcher's family commented that he was more 'prone' to adopt such language at home and there were instances where a very deliberate effort was required not to use it in contexts outside the research situation. This would appear to be one of those situations where, as Gans (1982) recounts, those outside the field situation assume considerable importance in resolving difficulties and making the researcher more aware of influences from the field relations.

While the use of such language declined following the departure of F.9 and F.15 from school, and the increasing absences of F.13 prior to her also leaving (see Table 9), the author remained conscious of this influence throughout the fieldwork. This, however, is not to suggest that other adult students did not also resort to similar language, but rather that in their cases it did not form the predominant mode of expression. At this point, it also appears pertinent to note that this form of language was only adopted in general conversation, and no adult student used it during the face-to-face interviews with the researcher, which in turn is perhaps indicative of a 'difference' in student perception of the two contexts - the 'natural' conversation, and the 'formal' interview. On the other hand, there was some suggestion from one of F.15's teachers - and supported by comments from other students - that there were occasions where similar language was used in the classroom context. The researcher was not the only one to notice this influence. F.30 also reported that she had found herself 'picking it up' at least to the extent that she used such language 'more frequently than before'. Indeed, F.30 informed the researcher that she had often suggested to both F.13 and F.15 that they 'clean up their language' somewhat.

These examples provide some indication of the ways in which the researcher becomes influenced by those with whom he is interacting. Not surprisingly, there are numerous other ways in which the social interactions of field research exert influence. As Gans (1982) suggests, these personal aspects impinging upon the research process need to be acknowledged and reflected upon if they are not to interfere with the research or the researcher's morale. Like Gans, the present author found the support of family and colleagues invaluable in dealing with the personal aspects of the inquiry, one facet of the research process which receives scant attention in the literature. While it is perhaps difficult to generalize from one's personal experiences, this researcher considers that such 'outside support' is a vital component of the methodology, not only as a means of reflecting upon the data but also in coping with the stresses and strains of involvement in the field.

Key Informants

In Whyte's (1955) classic study of *Street Corner Society*, 'Doc' occupies a central role and may be seen as a prime determinant in the progress of the inquiry. For the present research, key informants were less central yet proved an invaluable source of information and insight both into general aspects of the investigation and those areas where the researcher did not have direct access (see, Woods, 1979). In a similar manner as reported by Ball (1984), these informants 'emerged' from the developing relationships with the adult students in the field rather than the careful selection advocated in some of the literature. They appeared to possess most of the characteristics Tremblay (1982) suggests for the 'ideal informant'. They had access to the information being sought, were willing and able to communicate this information, the researcher was generally aware of any personal characteristics which may have influenced their presentation and interpretation of information and events, and, as Woods (1979) recommends, they represented a reasonable 'cross-section', certainly of the adult student population.

From the initial stages of negotiating access, through to the final stages of the research, D.1 was a central figure due to her

position, openness of her personality and her interest in the research. It can be stated here that D.1 made a significant contribution to the study by providing information, insights, introductions to staff and adult students, and support to the researcher.

While D.1 was a key informant from the outset of the research, those from the adult student group developed along with relationships between them and the researcher. Although not diminishing the contribution made by the openness and willingness of most of the participants, certain individuals stand out as providing more information and insight. As Lacey (1976) suggests, these key informants came to be something akin to 'research assistants' by their contribution of information regarding themselves, their peers, and the situation, as well as providing insights into the experiences of becoming an adult student. The first indication of such a potential relationship between the researcher and an informant occurred early in the year (18.3.84) during an interview with M.4 in which it was readily apparent that he had both information and insights which added to the data and perceptions available to the author. Unfortunately, this interview marked M.4's departure from the school, but it certainly added impetus to the researcher's wish to develop further key informants if at all possible. As the research progressed and relationships developed, others did come to occupy this position. In particular, F.10, F.16, and F.30 developed as key informants during the course of the research, with perhaps F.30 being the main 'contributor' in this role. Certainly, it was to these individuals that the researcher would often turn when seeking elaborations and explanations of events in both the Commonroom and the classroom, as well as their providing information and insights from their own experiences.

This, then, completes the discussion of the participant observation as conducted at the school. As this final section has indicated, interviews were also conducted with the participants, and these are now subject to examination.

INTERVIEWS

During the process of participant observation, there were a number of situations in which a one-to-one discussion between participant and researcher occurred. These covered, in particular, events such as examinations and the issuing of Progress Reports by the school, as well as individual conversations of a more general nature covering various aspects of the experiences of both adult students and members of the teaching staff. As such, these ranged along a continuum from taped, single topic, sessions to informal 'chats' between participant and researcher (see, Ball, 1984). These, however, are considered as an integral part of the interactive processes of participant observation and are here distinguished from the 'semi-structured' form termed 'interviews'. These were conducted with the adult students at the end of each term and with the collection of Part 3 of the Questionnaire, and on two occasions with members of the school staff (see Table 6).

End-of-Term Interviews

Although every effort was made to complete these prior to the end of the particular term, dictates of time and availability saw some in Terms 1 and 2 carry over to the period following the vacation. In these, the intention was to obtain a summary of the experiences during the Term utilising some 'key questions' (see Appendix G) suggested by an examination of the data. However, these interviews remained 'semi-structured' in that the replies by respondents led to the generation of further questions as the researcher sought explanations and elaboration of the events (see, Burgess, 1982f, 1984a).

One of the problems to be resolved in connection with these interviews concerned the site where they might be conducted. It was felt that the participant should be allowed to determine the most suitable time and location which resulted in most selecting a time during school hours for the first two of these interviews. While the author had indicated a willingness to hold these at 'any time' and

'any place', only those with M.11 - at his home, and F.19 - at her place of work occurred outside the school context. Accordingly, it was then necessary to remove ourselves from the presence of interruptions, not the least in order to achieve a degree of 'privacy'. This resulted in a majority of these interviews taking place while sitting in the author's car in the adult car-park (see Figure 2). It was not until the final end-of-term interviews, in December (see Table 6) and subsequent meetings, that the researcher met with the adult students in their own homes, with the exception of F.19 with whom all meetings were at her place of work.

At the start of each interview, the researcher reiterated the contents of the 'Letter of Consent', noted the use of the tape recorder as a tool to aid recall of the conversation, and that all comments would be transcribed under their code number. This, then, represented part of the processes of renegotiation of access and consent and was then followed by an indication of the general purpose and 'agenda' of the interview, in much the same manner as reported by Burgess (1984a). The interview commenced with a statement along the lines of 'Now, that's out of the way, let's get started' (see, Ives, 1974). The resulting interviews ranged in time between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours, with most occupying the hour. The format varied from very free-flowing open discussions - such as those with F.30 - to the 'hesitant', question/answer, sessions with M.5, the only adult student to repeatedly report his 'unease' in the interview situation (see p.85). This 'unease' related to the formal use of the tape recorder (see, Whyte, 1982), yet M.5 reported that he did not 'notice' its use in the Commonroom. Whether it was this 'unease', or, as other evidence appeared to suggest, a characteristic of M.5, the interviews with this student tended to produce brief answers confined to the topic of the questions and allowing for little expansion and exploration. Overall, however, these interviews usually were 'open', 'wide ranging', and led to the gathering of considerable information.

Questionnaire Interview

A further form of 'semi-structured' interview occurred when Part 3 of the Questionnaire involved the discussion and elaboration of

student responses to the items. In this case, the 'structure' was provided by the questionnaire.

Staff Interviews

These were also 'semi-structured' by using a series of general questions (see Appendix G) to provide some direction to the discussion and to elicit particular information. These questions, however, provided only a basis for the interview, and staff members were informed that an 'informal chat' covering their experiences with, and of, adult students was the preferred 'mode' of the discussion rather than a 'formal, question-based' format (see, Simmons, 1981). Their cooperation in the use of the recorder was sought and they were informed of the voluntary nature of participation and of the transcription of all their comments, both in this situation and on other occasions, under a code number. Each staff member was approached individually by the researcher and a convenient time was arranged for the interview. Again, these occurred exclusively at the school, in a spare classroom, teacher workrooms attached to the Staffroom, or the office of the staff member concerned. Two such interviews were held, the first at the beginning of Term 2, the second at the end of the year, and coincided with the time when adult students were taking examinations. In general, these occupied a period of an hour each, although ranging in length from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. In addition, there were occasions when less formal conversations were held with staff members - in particular D.1 and P.1 - when the researcher and teacher encountered each other around the school environs, such as corridors or staffroom.

TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

All participants - staff and adult students - were provided with the researcher's home telephone number and informed of his availability should they wish to contact him in the evening. In addition, the telephone number of each adult student participating in the research beyond Part 1 of the questionnaire was obtained to enable

the researcher to contact them. Reflecting the development of relationships, there were few telephone contacts during Term 1 from the participants. Indeed, the first call from an adult student did not eventuate until the 17th of February, and few others were received during this Term. The majority of calls in Term 1 were initiated by the researcher and involved processes of following up on enrolments, locating those who had left school during the Term, and setting up times for meetings and interviews. This latter function was to remain one of the primary purposes of telephone contacts, although telephone conversations served functions of maintaining contact and seeking further information when initiated by the researcher. The adult students telephoned the researcher more frequently as the year progressed both to provide information and to confirm times for various meetings. The conversations held over the telephone ranged in duration from a few minutes to nearly an hour on some occasions - the longer calls involving F.30 almost exclusively.

One particular 'difficulty' did arise in a few instances with this form of contact, especially during the early stages of the research. This arose in those situations where, either, the student phoned the researcher seeking 'advice', or, the immediacy of response inherent in a telephone conversation led to the researcher supplying information or 'advice' which a more considered mode of contact might not produce. As the research progressed, the author became more 'adept' at handling such situations while, perhaps, the students became more aware of his reluctance to provide advice, particularly that which might exert some influence upon them.

In general, the use of telephone conversations proved very successful as a means of maintaining contact with the adult students, in particular with those not encountered frequently in the Commonroom. This form of contact also proved invaluable in following up on various events or eliciting information (Horton and Duncan, 1978) in those situations where circumstances had precluded the opportunity during the day. In such cases, the situation could be discussed in more depth and more privately over the telephone later in the day. On the other hand, the lack of face-to-face interactions - and the 'added information' from observation - would appear to preclude this as a

methodological strategy upon which to base much more than these 'additional' functions.

DIARIES

This methodological strategy attempted to follow the successful use of diaries as an additional source of data (for instance, Battersby, 1981; Burgess, 1981a, 1983; Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977) and was seen as something akin to the 'life history' approach of Shaw (1930). Each adult student participating beyond the initial stages was provided (see Table 6) with a small notebook and instructed to use this to record 'significant events' which occurred during each day. These 'events' were deemed to be anything from thoughts about their experiences, comments or behaviours of themselves, teachers, pupils, adult students, and events both within and outside the school. In short, they were encouraged to use this diary to produce a record of their experiences which would be discussed with the researcher at various points during the course of the year (see Appendix B). This, however, represents the researcher's intentions, the actual results from this methodological strategy were extremely variable.

Table 8 provides an indication of the participation in this aspect of the methodology. From this list the following were not issued with a Diary: M.8, M.9, F.12, F.27, F.28. Of these, M.9 and F.12 did not attend school (see Table 9), F.27 avoided committing herself to further participation in the research - simply not replying to questions as to whether she would continue or not - and only infrequently attended school, and the situations of M.8 and F.28 are reported in the following accounts.

When issued with his Diary, M.8 remarked that he 'would not have anything to put in it' and appeared very hesitant regarding this aspect of the research. At the next available opportunity (20.2.84) a discussion with M.8 saw him report again that he 'had nothing to write down' and, furthermore, what he had to say would 'not be important' as he 'doesn't notice what is going on around' him. It was becoming apparent that there was a considerable reluctance on M.8's part to use the Diary, yet he signified a willingness to participate in the

research. The suggestion was made that the Dairy could be 'put aside' and that, as his input was of importance, the material could be covered quite adequately in discussions. At this point, M.8 raised further objections to the methodology, particularly the use of the tape recorder, where he stated that "I don't like the idea of a tape recorder at all". Despite all efforts to allay his fears - noting the use of the tape as 'recall' for the researcher, to increase the 'accuracy' of the data, and that the tape would be transcribed, by the researcher, then wiped - M.8 remained adamant. Throughout, he reported that it 'didn't matter' if he was mis-quoted as his code number would 'protect' him from 'being identified', but, no matter what, he just 'didn't want tapes lying around' with his comments on them. Even the reassurance that the tapes would not be 'lying around' was to no avail. M.8 - other than these 'reasons' - provided no explanation for his concerns. The researcher then suggested that the recorder could be dispensed with and that, if he was still willing to participate, notes could be taken during our conversations. While accepting this, M.8 then stipulated that he was not to be phoned under any circumstances, again providing no explanation for this restriction. As a result of this, and as M.8 rarely appeared in the Commonroom, his participation in the research went no further. Indeed, M.8 was only sighted by the researcher on two occasions following the Easter break in April, one of which was at the end of the year. From comments made by teachers - who were under the same 'restrictions' of 'no contact' - it was determined that the basis for M.8's non-participation stemmed from his personal background and characteristics, rather than representing either a 'rejection' or 'critique' of the research (see Appendix D).

The second case where the use of the Diary was excluded involved F.28. On 17.2.84, F.28 approached the researcher and reported that she was concerned that her commitments at home and school would prevent her from maintaining a Diary and, therefore, that perhaps she should withdraw from further participation. As she was on her way to class at the time, with little opportunity to discuss the issue, the author suggested that the Diary be used to place 'reminder' notes rather than the detailed descriptions F.28 appeared to have assumed was necessary, and that we could re-examine the problem after a few days. This was agreed to at the time, but F.28 telephoned the

researcher that evening to repeat her concerns. It was then suggested that the Diary could be 'put aside' and that her participation in the research could revolve around meetings, or even telephone calls, to discuss her experiences. In reply, F.28 reported that she had enough 'problems' at home without having to concern herself with thinking about her school experiences as well, again noting her commitments at home, school, and in connection with her husband's business. At this point, the researcher suggested that participation in the study should not occupy 'too much time', and that, while withdrawal was 'quite acceptable', it was hoped that some compromise acceptable to F.28 would see her continue to participate. F.28 agreed to consider the matter during the weekend and the researcher was to telephone her the following Monday. After the call, however, the author reflected upon this and became concerned that undue pressure may have been exerted on F.28 and that full recognition may not have been given to her wishes to withdraw from the research. As a result, the researcher called F.28 back and emphasised her right to withdraw and suggested again that the Diary be dispensed with, but that there was 'no pressure' for her to continue participating. F.28 appeared satisfied with this and agreed without hesitation to continue with the research. During the end-of-year interview, the author raised again the concerns he felt that 'undue pressure' may have been exerted over the Diary incident, to which F.28 replied:

No - no - I don't feel you were pressuring me. I just felt I couldn't cope with it. I was scared - scared at the beginning - and probably didn't really understand what it all meant - and didn't think I could write everything down. I was scared about it - scared of something that has worked out to be nothing to worry about. It's been enjoyable, actually [laugh].

(Interview, 3.12.84)

In addition to those who were not issued with a Diary, the summary of participation in Table 8 illustrates that a further group of 14 made 'no entries' as they too are listed as not having 'completed' this aspect of the methodological strategies. The majority merely reported 'nothing in the diary' without further elaboration, although a few others did state that entries had been made but that the Diary was 'lost/left at home' (see Appendix D).

For those listed in Table 8 as maintaining a Diary, both the content and period of time this covered varied considerably. Indeed, only M.6, F.16, F.17, and F.24 were to make entries, even if not regularly, for the majority of the time they were at school. M.16, who was not issued with his Diary until near the end of Term Two, also made entries for the rest of the year. The remainder, generally, made infrequent entries and all had ceased to maintain the Diary by mid-year at the latest (see Appendix D).

To illustrate the variety of content, the following verbatim extracts from two of the diaries are of complete entries for a particular day:⁶

M.6

13.4.84 Test in chemistry was destrous

16.4.84 The work load in Economics is not so bad.

Because of some unknoven reason I keep forgetting to do the paer aritcles. This is the final one we are going to be given a new topic will at least of got a collection of cuttings at home.

F.16

Thursday 10 May. Feeling more and more disenchanted with school, and 'fitting in'. It seems like all through life we are rewarded for saying and doing the 'right' things. First in the home, then at school, then university &/or career. But you don't necessarily achieve what you set out to. Maybe I'm looking too far ahead. People have been saying "Just get this year over first". But I like to know where I'm going. I'm really interested in Holistic Health and have heard of a two-year course running in [town]. If I didn't get accepted I might enrol at a university where there are papers relating to such a course. I have two assignments to do over the holidays so I better get started.

On Friday, last period, English, my teacher told me off after class - for not attending several classes, for writing while she was talking, and because she felt she was wasting her time with the 6th Form.

As these extracts indicate, the details of events and experiences provided by the Diary accounts varied considerably between individuals. Overall, then, the use of this methodological strategy met with mixed success and was not the source of the continuous and

⁶ Throughout this thesis, all reporting of material written by students - Diary and Questionnaire - presents a verbatim account.

indepth account of their experiences envisaged by the researcher at the start of the investigation.

In response to this situation with the Diaries, the researcher instigated a 'Diary for a Day' with the 14 adult students remaining at school in Term 3. Here, a Tuesday - 18.9.84 - was chosen as the day most had at least some classes, and all were asked to write an account of their day's activities. All except M.5 - who responded with a 'don't think I'll bother' to the request - and F.34 who 'forgot', complied with this request. These also produced a range of detail, such as F.14's style of 'got up', 'housework', 'school', 'afternoon in town', 'tea', 'went out for evening', to the detailed breakdown of activities as provided by F.28. The majority, however, occupied something of a mid-point providing a fairly succinct chronological statement of their activities during this particular day (see Appendix D).

QUESTIONNAIRES

During the course of the fieldwork, three questionnaires were issued to the adult students (see Table 6) and these are included in Appendix F. Each was designated as a particular 'Part' of the 'Adult Student's Questionnaire' as follows.

Part 1

As Dean, Eichhorn and Dean (1969b) suggest, the researcher is 'advised' to have some routine fact-gathering exercise as an initial step in the research process. To provide this and to gather some biographical data, Part 1 of the questionnaire was given to each adult student at the time of their first contact with the researcher. Further, this part of the questionnaire served as an 'introduction' for the research and the researcher as well as establishing the point of initial contact, while allowing for the derivation of information upon which to base processes of sample selection should population size require.

Part 2

The purpose of this questionnaire was two-fold. First, to document any changes in biographical data which had occurred up to the time of issue (October, 1984), and second to establish some further biographical information not included in Part 1. Distributed to all those still attending school at the time, efforts were also made to gather this information from those who had left school. As shown in Table 8, a total of 11 'leavers' (indicated by not being interviewed in Term 3) complied with this request. Of the remainder of the initial sample [N=36], M.7, M.9, M.10, F.12, F.22, F.26, and F.27 could not be traced, F.20 declined to complete the questionnaire, while F.9 and F.11 did not respond to a number of letters sent to them or return their questionnaires. Finally, as indicated previously in the discussion of the Diaries, M.8 could not be contacted to seek his completion of the questionnaires and had been considered a 'non-participant' in the research from early in the year.

Part 3

Originally intended to be available by the end of November, this more extensive questionnaire was subject to a series of 'draft' versions delaying its issue until January 1985. A number of intentions were represented in the contents of this questionnaire and reflected concerns that some of these issues may not have been addressed by other data gathering strategies, or required further exploration. First, little by way of information had been forthcoming on the previous schooling experiences of these adult students. While often reported in the literature in terms of being 'failures' within their prior schooling experiences, there was only scant information available with which to examine this issue. Second, there was a number of areas suggested within the data which it was considered warranted further investigation and detail gathered by a different strategy (see, Woods, 1979). Such issues as their reasons for returning, their future plans, facilities available at the school, relationships with others - inside and outside school, and their

reasons for their absences were to be covered. Finally, two areas were considered worthy of some indication as to the relative importance of these factors in the experiences of the adult students. First, the Dean was the one member of staff all adult students had some contact with, she occupied a central role in the relationships between the students and the school, and was frequently mentioned by the participants - both in general conversation and interviews. Accordingly, and having sought D.1's approval of the questions, it was determined that an effort be made to indicate the characteristics of an Adult Dean most 'valued' by the students. Second, throughout the year the adult students raised a number of concerns about facets of their experiences. However, while these often appeared to occupy a prominent position in their accounts, there was little indication of the relative importance of these considered as part of the whole. This final part to the questionnaire sought to provide such an evaluation.

For distribution, the adult students were given their questionnaire and some time was spent going through the document and set of instructions (see Appendix F). While mentioning the length, generally in a jocular fashion, all agreed to complete it with most reporting spending 'about an hour' on it although this was sometimes spread over more than one session. As students completed their questionnaire, the researcher called on them and went through their responses in a 'semi-structured interview' seeking further elaboration and explanations where necessary. This process was not possible with some of those listed in Table 8 as having completed this questionnaire. Both M.4 and M.11 were residing in other districts, F.19 reported that she was 'unavailable' to discuss the questionnaire - indeed, she had not managed to complete it, and F.31 went on holiday after posting the completed form back, but did not return to her former address. Of the others also given a copy of this questionnaire, F.9 and F.11 never replied (see Part 2 above), and F.15 always 'promised' to 'get it done' but after two months of checking it was decided that completion was unlikely in her case.

DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS

While items such as the Diary and Questionnaire constitute documentary materials, this term is used here to refer to those originating from sources other than the researcher or adult students. This includes the school Prospectus, Attendance Register, Personal Timetables, Staff Manual, School Reports, School Magazine, and the contents of the Personal File for each student held by the school, all of which were made available to the researcher by school staff. Of these items, four contained information pertaining to members of the present sample of adult students, although some comment was also contained in a fifth - the School Magazine. However, the point at issue is that the students were unaware of researcher access to the other documents, whereas the Magazine was a 'public document'. The School Register was the 'official' record of student attendance, and will be elaborated upon further in a subsequent chapter. The School Reports were issued to the students following each of the school-based examinations. In this case, the researcher was provided with access to these by the Dean and, as this was prior to the student viewing them, was asked not to convey the content to the student. However, every adult student who participated in the research also provided the researcher with access to their School Report as soon as it was issued to them. While perhaps a rather 'moot point', this would appear to negate the 'covert' aspect of researcher access to this document, a situation over which the researcher held little control if intending to maintain access to the school as the site of the investigation. The Personal Timetables were also provided by the students, although their source too was from the school in the first instance. The final documents, where access was 'covert' were the Personal Files, and it is upon these that this section is focussed.

Located in the School Office was a locked cabinet containing the personal files of all pupils and adult students enrolled at the school. These were treated as completely confidential and it was necessary for the researcher to obtain the Principal's permission to have access to these files on each occasion, although he had given such access during the process of negotiation of entry to the site. During the fieldwork, P.1 was approached and then accompanied the

author to the Office where the Staff were informed of the researcher's access to these files. The researcher was required to use a nearby office to view these files and P.1 categorically stated that contents were not to be divulged under any circumstances.

As the adult students were unaware of this access by the researcher, who made no efforts to inform them either, this remained a covert activity within the present research. In the researcher's terms, however, perhaps some justification for this stems from both the content of the files and the potential for 'harm' which may have resulted from being 'open' about this access. First, the adult student files contained only brief biographical data - name, address, age, and telephone number - as supplied by the student upon enrolment - a copy of their personal timetable, and a duplicate of each School Report. These adult student files, then, contained very little information and were merely used to provide a further check on some of the data gathered by other methodological techniques. As each student conveyed all such content to the researcher, and in greater detail, there seemed little point - although it was not considered as an option - in informing them of this access to their files. Indeed, in considering the second point - the 'highly confidential' status given these files by the school - there appeared to be some potential for 'harm' in acknowledging access in this situation. Consider, for instance, the possibility that an adult student 'discovered' such access to the files and then asked the researcher to divulge the contents. Leaving aside the possibility that this could result in the researcher being 'barred' from the site by the school staff, there remains a further dilemma in this situation. All the researcher could do, without any means of substantiating the claim, would be to assure the student that the contents were 'innocuous' and nothing unknown to him or the student was included in the file.

That one student, at least, assumed that the researcher had access to various items was shown by F.10's remark that 'You've probably already seen this' when handing the author her School Report. One other incident, however, did give some cause for concern over this access to the files. This occurred when the researcher was approached by D.1 in the corridor outside the Commonroom and informed:

D.1 M.16 was worried about whether you had access to his records.

I Why?

D.1 I said there was nothing in them other than his enrolment forms and Report.

I Why was he asking, do you know?

D.1 Perhaps he thought we had some secret information about him.

(Fieldnotes, 9.8.84)

At this point we arrived in the Commonroom and conversation stopped, with D.1 apparently unconcerned about the incident. At the start of an interview the following day, M.16 was asked whether he had any concerns about the research and what it might imply to which he responded that 'none' existed. Perhaps, then, he had been satisfied with D.1's truthful comments regarding the contents of this personal file. The only indication of a possible basis for M.16's concerns was that he might have assumed that the school would have records from his previous school where, he reported, he had a 'very bad reputation'. However, M.16 later provided the researcher with access to a personal notebook, containing teacher comments on his behaviour, from this other school and was completely open about this part of his prior experiences. Accordingly, without divulging the fact that the researcher had access to such files and breaking the 'confidence' of school staff, there were no means to determine the concerns underpinning M.16's comments to the Dean. There was no further mention of this incident, either to the researcher or the Dean.

SUMMARY

The present research was undertaken with two priorities in view: to document the experiences of a sample of adult students in a secondary school; and, while so doing, elaborate upon the application of field research techniques within an educational setting. From the first priority, two broad aims were derived to form the research objectives of: establishing a profile of the adult student on the basis of a selected sample; and, deriving from an indepth and

systematic view of the everyday experiences of this sample an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student.

In accordance with the second priority, the present chapter has presented an account of the development and application of the research design and methodology adopted to meet these two broad aims.

The design chosen was that of a longitudinal investigation using an approach to data collection defined as 'field research'. The particular methodological strategies of: participant observation; interviews; telephone conversations; diaries; questionnaires; and, documentary materials, were subsequently described.

Also in this chapter, the ethical principles underpinning the conduct of the inquiry, the processes of site and sample selection - incorporating an outline of aspects of access negotiation, and some details of both the site and sample, were discussed. In this context, mention was made of the appendices which form an important reference point to the present study. This is particularly the case with Appendix D which contains a comprehensive profile of the people which form the base of the investigation.

Further, the discussion has illustrated the fact that, from an original sample of 36 adult students, only 14 were to remain at school and participating in the research at the end of the year, although some of the 'school leavers' were to complete at least the questionnaire phase of the research.

In the chapter which follows, also related to the second priority of the research, a description is provided of the development and application of analytic strategies through which the data was approached.

CHAPTER THREE

APPROACHING THE DATA

Using a field research approach, the researcher gathered data on a sample of adult students during their year at a secondary school. In accordance with the priority of documenting the conduct of the inquiry, this chapter presents an account of the development and application of analytic strategies applied to the data to elaborate and clarify the processes of becoming an adult student.

In the preceding chapter, discussion focussed on the research procedures for gathering data to meet the objectives of the present study. These objectives were:

1. To establish a profile of the adult student on the basis of a selected sample; and,
2. To derive from an indepth and systematic view of the everyday experiences of this sample an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student.

It was adjudged that the second objective required the adoption of procedures directed towards establishing exploratory and preliminary theoretical concepts which would elaborate and clarify the basic social processes (Glaser, 1978) impinging upon the experiences of the selected group of adult students. As such, both the collection and analysis of data proceeded from a perspective broadly based within 'symbolic interactionism' as explicated by Woods (1979, 1983, 1985b) and Burgess (1981c, 1982j), and drawing upon aspects of the interactionist strategy of grounding theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978).

The decision to undergird the study with a broad interpretation of the interactionist approach was guided by the implicit intentions of the second research objective. In other words, an over-arching approach of interactionism which focusses upon participants' accounts of social reality appears most commensurate with an objective which seeks to provide an examination of people's day-to-day experiences as they relate to broad processes of 'becoming' an adult student. In particular, the 'interactionist' approach was seen as providing a generalized framework within which the

...focus is on how people make sense of the world, their 'frameworks' or 'perspectives', and how they change in, or are influenced by, the various situations or 'contexts' in which interactions take place; how they relate to each other, different interests and ends, and the ways and means devised to achieve them...how groups come to form, and influence their members, develop beliefs, attitudes, ways of coping and behaving; and how individuals see the course of their lives from day to day, situation to situation, and through the institution.

(Woods, 1983, p.xi)

At the same time, the present research departs from some interactionist approaches (for instance, Blumer, 1969) by recognising the existence of links between individuals and broader social contexts. The present study is not alone in this regard. Burgess (1981c, 1983), for instance, in his study of comprehensive schooling sought to 'complement' the interactionist approach through other theoretical perspectives in order to situate the school and classroom in a broad social and historical context. Likewise, Woods (1979) adopted a somewhat 'eclectic' theoretical perspective so as to 'extend' the interactionist approach to incorporate the wider social and temporal context within which the school, and participants, are located.

In seeking to categorise the present research, then, it is seen to overlap the two 'stages' identified by Woods (1983):

We might therefore regard the interactionist research in schools to date as the first stage of a process of discovery about how schools work - the first rough mappings of the hitherto dark unknown of the 'black box' interior. Stage two work will need to take stock of these earlier studies, looking for similarities, differences,

inconsistencies, omissions, and plan accordingly. It will require attention to three major concerns: (1) further mapping of uncharted areas of school life; (2) formal theory; and, (3) macro links.

(Woods, 1983, p.180)

This categorization is premised on several characteristics of the present study. First, the research attempts a 'mapping' of an uncharted area through its focus upon adult students who, as illustrated previously, form a significant but under-researched component of the New Zealand secondary school population. Accordingly, the present study is seen to provide the preliminary and exploratory descriptive base upon which further investigations may proceed. Finally, through the adoption of the analytical strategies of grounded theory, an initial move is made towards generating theory to account for the basic social processes of 'becoming' an adult student.

Implicit in meeting the second objective of this research, and inherent within the broad perspective of symbolic interactionism adopted, is an important notion that data collection, data analysis, and theory development are intertwined. As was the case with the design and methodology reported in the preceding chapter, documenting how these processes of collection, analysis, and theory development evolved is central to meeting the other priority stated as underpinning the present thesis. This priority being:

To elaborate upon the application of field research techniques within an educational setting.

In accordance with this priority, the discussion moves to the provision of an autobiographical account of what transpired in relation to the development of analytic procedures in the present research.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The adoption of a particular set of strategies for handling the data in the present research was the result of a prolonged exploration of a number of alternatives which came to represent one of the central dilemmas for the researcher. In attempting to resolve this situation, few substantive accounts were found in the literature (see, Burgess, 1982j) as to the ways others determined and rationalised their particular way of managing data and the derivation of concepts and 'grounded theory' from this data - the exceptions being Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (1978), and Denzin (1970). Often the impression is given that concepts and theory simply 'emerge' from data in 'full blown' form and many of the contributors to autobiographical accounts (for instance, Bell and Newby, 1977; Bell and Encel, 1978) provide little indication of the processes and skills, let alone 'difficulties', involved in analysis.

On the other hand, autobiographical accounts provided by Battersby (1981), Bloor (1978), and others, illustrate that this 'emergence' is typically far from an accurate representation of the research process. Rather, the development of 'theory' from the data requires rigorous processes of analysis which, it is argued, need to be the subject of elaboration in their own right. In short, as Burgess (1984b) states:

...consideration needs to be given to the ways in which techniques, theories and processes are developed by the researcher in relation to the experience of collecting, analyzing and reporting data.

(Burgess, 1984b, p.2)

In general terms, such considerations in the literature, although sparse, have developed along the lines of providing autobiographical accounts similar to that adopted as a further priority of the present thesis. However, it is pertinent to report that the majority of such accounts have appeared in *post hoc* form often separated in time from the original research. While Ball (1984), Delamont (1984), Hammersley (1984) and others can be applauded for providing insights into the problems and difficulties they experienced with data analysis and

theory generation they can, nevertheless, be criticised for not including these accounts in the original reports of the investigation, assuming that this is the case. Perhaps the 'explanation' lies in the fact that these authors, like the present researcher, were concerned that the provision of such accounts may be taken as an 'admission' of 'incompetence' had they included them with the original, Doctoral, research report. The suggestion being made here is that such accounts need to be taken as an integral component of any report if the methodology and analytic strategies are to develop, without the apparent requirement that each researcher must 'discover anew' the 'pitfalls' and 'problems' of the application of field research to, in this case, educational settings.

In the present study, the view was taken that there can be little justification for disguising concerns which inevitably arise during the efforts at developing and implementing data analysis procedures. Following the priority requiring that an account be provided of the application of field research methods in an educational setting, issues which arose concerning analytic strategies are documented below. Figure 4 provides a diagrammatic representation of the overall shape of the research, including the stages in the development of analytical strategies.

STAGE 1: PRECONCEIVED THEORY

In the period just prior to the start of the fieldwork in 1984, attention was directed initially to the work of Willis (1977) as an example of guidelines for the analysis of qualitative data. At the time, Willis' work was widely publicised and acclaimed in the Sociology of Education, even though his theory was not within the interactionist perspective adopted for the present research. However, as an exemplar, Willis' work was viewed with a marked concern, particularly with his linkage of 'ethnography' and 'theory'. As Turner (1979) and Woods (1978) argue, this 'linkage' is 'loose' and somewhat 'weak' providing little indication of the processes of analysis which allowed Willis to move from 'ethnographic data' to the 'theory'. While the work of Willis has certainly made a considerable contribution within the Sociology of Education (see, Gordon, 1984),

the lack of detail concerning the analytical procedures diminished its direct application in the case of the present research. Moreover, the early field experiences of this author illustrated the impracticability of 'imposing' a highly structured theoretical framework on the data which emerged, for it could not adequately elaborate the information being gathered. In other words, it was apparent that the researcher required greater flexibility of explanation than was accorded Willis in developing explanations and relationships appropriate to the data. In recognising this, the claim by Hargreaves (1978) appears to have substantial merit:

Good quality ethnography is always a potential source of correction to macro theories, which frequently oversimplify, underestimate or ignore the complexity of the detailed operation of relevant factors in actual social settings.

(D. Hargreaves, 1978, p.20)

At the same time, it was also apparent that the endeavours of Willis and others were somewhat 'overambitious':

One cannot infer the structure and operation of the education system of a society from a case study of a single school or a few classrooms or pupils in it. Yet this is what Sharp and Green and Willis tend to do. The attempt to extend the focus of the research in this way may also, if only for reasons of time, reduce the depth and quality of the case-study work.

(Hammersley, 1980b, p.202)

It was in light of these considerations that attempts to impose a highly structured, predetermined framework upon the data were abandoned. This decision, as shown by the transition in Figure 4, was taken in the early stages of the fieldwork year of 1984.

THE INTERVENING PERIOD: TOWARDS THE 'EMERGENT' APPROACH

There followed, although not without some overlapping between stages, a period during which concerns over 'analysis', in a structured sense, and 'theory' development were overtaken by the task of data gathering. This is not to suggest that collection and

analysis of data proceeded without direction, but rather that there was a different pattern developing which was in its initial stages. The data gathered in itself provided both a focus and a direction for further observation within the field, and this process began to exert a dominant influence on procedures for handling and analyzing the data. This development provides the topic for the following discussion.

With the difficulties experienced in locating a neat, ready packaged procedure for data analysis, highlighted by the abandonment of the predetermined theoretical perspective from Stage 1, the researcher gave some serious contemplation to withdrawing from the investigation. To some extent these considerations and concerns were assuaged by Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp.46-47) who affirm that "potential theoretical sensitivity is lost" when researchers commit themselves to only one way of 'seeing' their data through the 'spectacles' of a preconceived theory. Moreover, Glaser and Strauss note that the 'irrelevance' of the preconceived theory to the data is likely to result in it being "...dropped or forgotten" as it is found to be unable to provide an explanation or elaboration of the emergent information gathered in the field. It was during the period of March and April (see Figure 4), that the dependency of the project's continuance upon 'preconceived theory' came increasingly into question. At this time, the view was taken that "...the fieldworker needs only a minimum theoretical orientation before he begins his observations..." (Rock, 1969, p.214), and that this had already been achieved through adopting the broad principles of the interactionist perspective. By following the methodological strategies outlined by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), there appeared to be extensive potential at this stage for developing analytic strategies commensurate with the present research and its objectives, if the problems arising from the attempts at imposing a preconceived theoretical framework could be 'put aside'. This process was made considerably more straightforward by the knowledge that others had experienced similar concerns over the direction, progress, and analysis during the conduct of field research, and that these aspects were part of the likely 'stresses' inherent within the particular methodology (see, Gans, 1982; Zigarmi and Zigarmi, 1978). Later, some personal satisfaction was gained when it was discovered that

Hammersley (1984), for instance, had also seriously contemplated the abandonment of his project, and for much the same reasons as encountered by the present researcher:

...changes in my theoretical and methodological views created further serious problems for my research. I now regarded the data I had available to me as seriously inadequate... . I considered abandoning the whole project and starting again. I decided though that such an impulse stemmed from a misguided pursuit of perfection. On that basis no research would ever get done. My conclusion was that I must simply make the most of the data I had and be honest about its deficiencies.

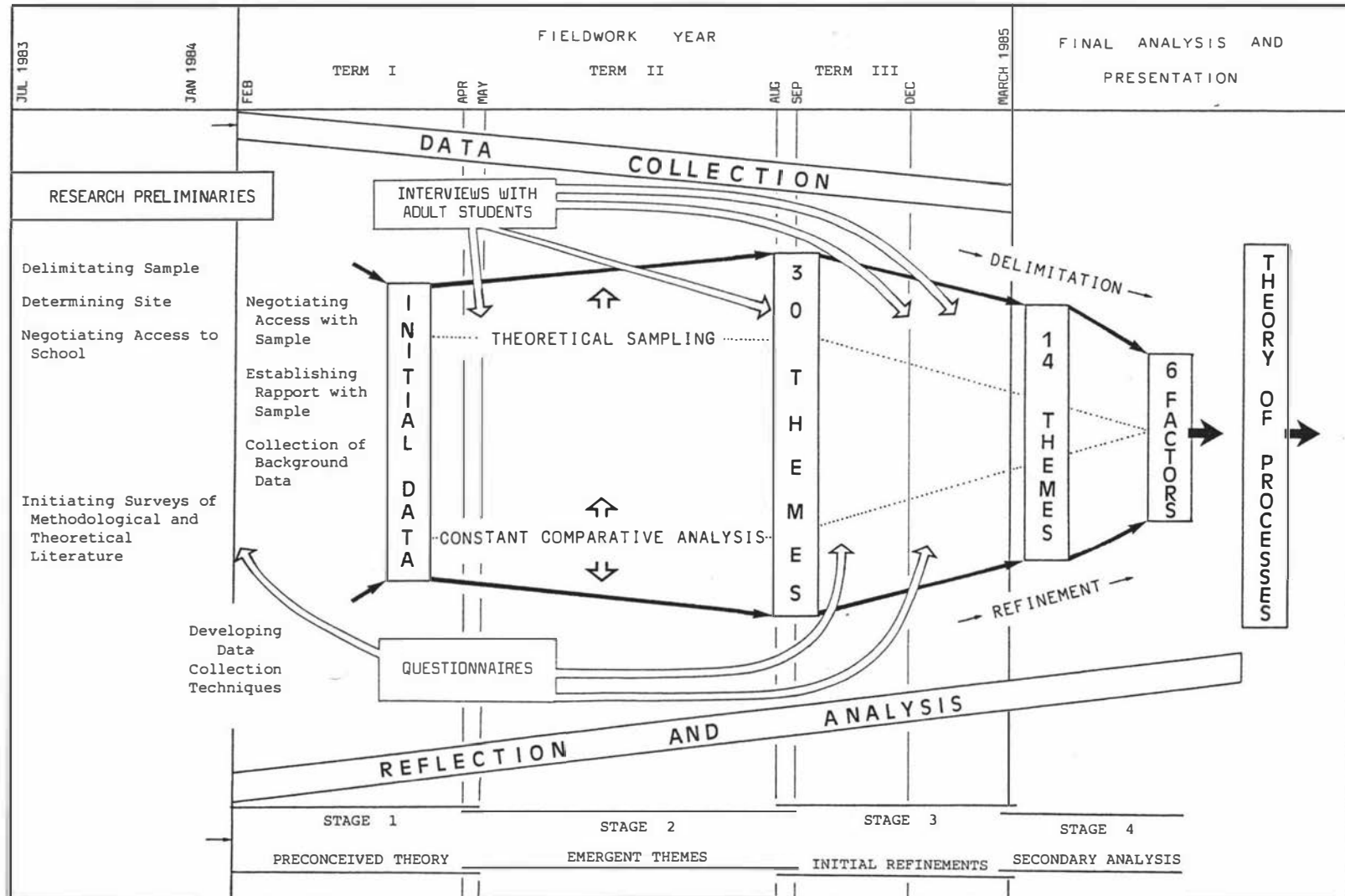
(Hammersley, 1984, p.60)

Recognition of these points, led to one of the principles which began to guide the research: use the data to determine direction for gathering further data. It was this process, then, which marked the 'transition' to Stage 2 of the analytic strategies (see Figure 4).

STAGE 2: 'EMERGENT THEMES'

This stage, developing during the period of April-May, saw the 'focus' shift to an 'ongoing' analysis of data generated by the researcher's involvement, both in the field relationships and through note transcription. At this point, it appears pertinent to outline briefly the procedures of transcription which underpinned this approach to analysis. As indicated in the preceding chapter, the researcher typically spent the morning in the field and utilised the afternoon and evening to transcribe the data gathered. This involved the researcher transcribing the tape recorded conversations and fieldnotes. Any supplementary notes and after-thoughts that had been gathered were attached to each transcript which was then typed. Copies were taken of this typed transcript, one of which was bound into a chronological catalogue of the research data, a record which included all interview and fieldnotes gathered during the present research. Diary accounts were also typed and copied, one of which was bound together to form a complete record of this data. In addition, a bound copy was made of student 'profiles' which incorporated

FIGURE 4
The Overall Shape of the Research Processes



biographical data and School Reports for each individual. A personal folio for each adult student was also developed. Included in this were copies of their Diary, biographical data, School Reports, and those sections of fieldnote and interview transcripts relating to the individual student. A final copy of all the transcribed data was held over for the purposes of the ongoing analysis to allow for a 'cut and paste' and 'grouping' of data relating to particular 'themes'. During this transcription and organisation, and as an activity undertaken at weekends, statutory holidays, and term vacations, there was a continuous process of reflection and analysis throughout the research. As an integral component of this, the author placed 'interpretive comments' using pencil alongside the transcribed data (see Figure 5). These comments were themselves subjected to ongoing analysis and 'development' as the year progressed and data emerged. In adopting these strategies, the author was acting upon the suggestion by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that:

If he [the researcher] does not take respites for reflection and analysis, he cannot avoid collecting a large mass of data of dubious theoretical relevance.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.72)

This, in turn, led to the situation where the researcher became extremely *au fait* with the data, so much so, that there developed an acute 'theoretical sensitivity' for the data which then directed subsequent data collection. It was in the application of these processes that analysis reflected the notions of 'theoretical sampling' and 'constant comparative analysis' (Figure 4) advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). By 'theoretical sampling', the author refers to the process of data collection being guided by an analysis of that data which was collected previously. The strategy of 'constant comparative analysis' involved the ongoing, systematic classification and organisation of the data into various 'themes', and the constant comparison of data within and between themes (see, Battersby, 1981a).

It was the process of reflection and analysis during the April/May period, particularly that during the Easter holiday, which resulted in the transition from 'Stage 1' to 'Stage 2' analysis - the abandonment of the preconceived theory approach and its replacement by

the 'ongoing' form of analysis. These various stages of the development of analytic strategies are diagrammatically summarised in Figure 4 in their relationship to the overall research processes.

The analysis of the data during this transition period, and refined over the Easter holiday, involved a close examination of the information in the chronological catalogue of research data. At this point, it became evident that certain loose 'themes' within the data were emerging, and these are listed in Table 10.

These loose themes were merely broad categories of data determined and grouped together according to their ability to subsume information relating to a particular facet of the adult students' experiences. For example, Reasons for Return, the first theme listed in Table 10, referred to interview data, fieldnote transcripts, diary accounts, questionnaire responses, and documentary materials which made reference to the student's reasons and justifications, as well as changes and developments within these, given for their return to school. Likewise, Getting Started subsumed all data which made reference to the processes of enrolment and those experiences of the first few days at school.

As these themes 'emerged' during the ongoing analysis of the data they directed further data collection by providing 'direction' and 'focus' for the elicitation of information. A title was determined for each emergent theme as it was derived from analysis to reflect the general content of the subsumed data. In those situations where the data related to two or more themes, it was filed under each category. For instance, the information below was contained in F.10's Diary:

p.m. I have spent 30 minutes helping my daughter with her work and 1.5hrs on my geography homework with about 2 hrs more to do.

(F.10, Diary, 15.2.84)

This data was subsequently filed under the themes of Family Life, Life Outside School, and Commitments to Study/Homework.

While each emergent theme directed and focussed further data collection, the researcher maintained an 'openness' to information

TABLE 10
Emergent Themes and Supporting Data

EMERGENT THEME	SUPPORTING DATA PERTAINING TO:
<i>Reasons for Return</i>	Their reasons and justifications for returning to secondary school.
<i>Getting Started</i>	The processes of enrolment, and experiences of the first days at school, and subsequent references to these aspects.
<i>Goals for year/future</i>	Personal goals, or expectations, the student held for the present year, and/or in terms of their future.
<i>Subject Choices</i>	The selection of particular subject options, and the influences upon this process.
<i>Adult Students</i>	Biographical information, relationships, attitudes, and behaviours, of adult students, and that addressing the adult students from the perspective of the school staff.
<i>The School</i>	School structure and policy in general, and that relating specifically to adult students.
<i>Dean</i>	The Dean made by adult students and teachers, and the Dean's comments regarding the school, staff, and adult students.
<i>Teachers</i>	Aspects of personality, teaching style, behaviours, and relationships between adult students and school staff.
<i>Commonroom</i>	The structural conditions and provision of this facility.
<i>The Pupils</i>	The school-aged pupils, their behaviours, attitudes, and relationships towards and with adult students.
<i>Dropping Subjects</i>	Any consideration or decision relating to a change or withdrawal for a particular subject.
<i>Dropping Out</i>	Any consideration or decision to leave school, and processes involved.
<i>Life Outside School</i>	Those references to social activities, work/job commitments, and private life, as sources of influence upon the student and/or their return to school.
<i>Family Life</i>	The influences of parents/spouse/partner/children upon the student and/or their return to school.
<i>Commitments to Schooling</i>	Attendance, adult student 'reasons' for absences, and the relative importance assigned to their return to school.
<i>Commitments to Study/Homework</i>	The relative importance assigned to study/homework, as well as the 'skills' and requirements involved.
<i>Priorities</i>	The ranking of goals and commitments, within both school and personal life.
<i>Comparisons with Prior Schooling</i>	Comparisons between experiences as an adult student and those of prior experiences as a school-aged pupil.
<i>Anxieties</i>	The problems and difficulties arising during the year.
<i>Financial Problems</i>	The effects of monetary concerns upon life and return to school.
<i>Subject Content</i>	References to relevance, difficulty, or interest in a given subject.
<i>Role of 'adult student'</i>	The way in which a particular 'role' of 'adult student' is perceived and acted upon by students, staff, and pupils.
<i>Position in School</i>	The way in which adult students were perceived - by themselves, staff, and pupils - to occupy a particular 'role' or 'status' at school.
<i>Self-image</i>	The perception of their 'self', changes, and the ways in which others perceived them.
<i>Success/failure</i>	The manner in which students reported the return to school, and their experiences, in terms of being 'successful' or not.
<i>Classroom Activities</i>	Activities, behaviours, attitudes, and relationships within classroom.
<i>Guidance/Counselling</i>	Situations where a 'need' for these was perceived - by students or staff, or where such assistance was provided.
<i>Study Skills</i>	Student perception and development of study methods, and other's views of student abilities in this area and assistance provided.
<i>Exams</i>	Anxieties, skills, experiences, and 'outcomes' associated with the examinations.
<i>Achievements</i>	All reporting of 'achievements' made during the return to school - whether as a result of schooling or external circumstances.

such that 'closure' of a theme was not viewed as of paramount importance nor were efforts made to stop data collection where data did not readily fall within a theme which had already been ascertained and defined. This was certainly the case with themes such as Exams, Study Skills, and Guidance/Counselling, for instance, which did not 'emerge' with any significant amounts of data until the second Term of the fieldwork year. Moreover, this 'openness' within and between themes was necessary in order to expedite the processes of 'verification' and 'depth', reflecting those of 'maximising' and 'minimising' differences as advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Battersby (1981). Thus, if data on a theme stemmed primarily from a particular adult student, data from others was examined in order to 'verify' the theme in a process of 'minimising' differences of sources. Then, to 'maximise' differences, and provide 'depth' and 'integration', data was gathered through the variety of methodological strategies and from sources such as the Dean, Principal, and teachers, as well as the adult students.

The strategy adopted during this stage of analysis was to examine the data and note in the margins of the chronological record the theme/s which subsumed this information. This pattern was the dominant form of analysis throughout Stage 2 (see Figure 4) of the analytic strategies. As the end of the fieldwork year approached, it was determined to embark upon a complete re-examination of the data and themes to provide a check while access to participants was still available. This point represents the development of the period of initial refinement designated as Stage 3 (see Figure 4) of analysis.

STAGE 3: INITIAL REFINEMENTS

During Stage 3, commencing in September (Figure 4), procedures for analysis were firmed up by re-examining the data previously gathered. This re-examination involved, first, a re-reading of the data collected, then, second, sorting through the information relating to each separate theme. This latter process was accomplished by gathering together a copy of all the data pertaining to each theme in

a separate file. As a result of this, four points emerged which are the subject of the following discussion.

This re-examination had a two-fold purpose, establishing: whether other themes were evident within the data and; the strength of data within each theme. At this point, no further categories of data were determined although it was found that some themes were somewhat 'thin' in terms of depth of data. As a result, subsequent data collection and analysis was directed, though not exclusively, towards an indication of the extent to which further data relating to these 'weak' themes might be derived. For instance, the theme of Comparisons with Prior Schooling was found to lack information in respect to such areas as their perception of this former experience and the location and type of previous school attended, data which seemed crucial in relation to their experiences as school-age pupils. Accordingly, Part 3 of the questionnaire (see Appendix F) and follow-up interview sought further information relevant to this theme. Likewise, the theme of Anxieties which subsumed data pertaining to 'problems and difficulties' encountered during the year was 'strong' in terms of frequency of mention and amount of data, yet there was little indication given of the relative importance of these compared to the overall experience of being an adult student. Again, Part 3 of the questionnaire and follow-up interview sought to gather perceptions on the 'importance' of these problems and difficulties. In this way, then, the re-examination served to direct and focus the final stages of data collection, while at the same time providing for an evaluation of the 'strength' of the themes.

The third issue arising from this re-examination of the data during Stage 3 was that within many of these themes 'developmental processes', characterising the experiences of these adult students, were evident. For instance, Figure 5, on the following page, presents extracts from F.16's Diary which relate to the emergent theme of Exams. From this, it can be seen that F.16 progressed through various stages of a developmental process in relation to her experiences subsumed within the theme of Exams. On the basis of such instances, accounting for the processes of becoming an adult student was perceived as requiring recognition that the students themselves are active, developing, changing, and idiosyncratic participants in

FIGURE 5
An Example of Analytical Strategies:
Extracts from F.16's Diary

DATE	DIARY ENTRY	INTERPRETIVE COMMENT
7.3.84	<i>Feel terrible about Hist. test. Don't think I did at all well.</i>	Initial concerns about test results initiate motivation to 'try harder', yet the following sequence of events indicate a continuation of the difficulty.
20.5.84	<i>I'm going to try and bring my marks back up this term (they fell over the last few tests) because I do want to get my U.E.</i>	Thus, first stages of the developmental sequence are:
31.5.84	<i>Starting to worry about exams - haven't started swotting yet.</i>	'perceived failure' → greater effort → not achieved → continued failure.
18.6.84	<i>My marks have been borderline for the others [exams] and if I want to be in the running for accrediting I'll have to improve my term mark and get good marks in the third exam.</i>	
31.7.84	<i>I'm a bit worried about my chances for accrediting. My marks have dropped over the last month.</i>	
12.8.84	<i>I'm thinking of leaving school. ... Linger in the back of my mind is the thought that I may be wanting to leave because I'm afraid of failing.</i>	Seeking to resolve the problem, F.16 considers leaving school and examines her rationalisation for this.
11.9.84	<i>Decided to stay... . I'm going to try and put all my effort into it over the next three weeks so I do well in the exams.</i>	Deciding to stay, the 'drive for success' is initiated and the sequence is completed: 'failure' → greater effort not achieved → 'dropping out' considered, then rejected → determination to succeed. The apparent sequence was then 'completed' by F.16's accrediting and her achievement of this goal.

the process. Such an 'interactive' perspective, as Olesen and Whittaker (1968) indicate, is required to account for the 'actual' experiences of 'becoming' as distinct from a focus on the transition, in linear progression, from 'raw recruit' to 'finished adult student' confined entirely within the institution of the school. In the present context, it is shown by such accounts as that from F.16's Diary that 'becoming' is a process spread over time, stages, and developmental sequence, all of which require inclusion within the presentation.

Finally, the re-examination of the data indicated that there were various interrelationships among a number of themes. For instance, the theme of Dropping Out included data that was also incorporated within: Goals for year/future; Subject Choices; Dean; Teachers; Life Outside School; Family Life; Commitments to Schooling;

Commitments to Study/Homework; Anxieties; Financial Problems; Success/failure; and, Achievements. In considering these overlaps and interrelationships between and within themes, it was apparent that the process of 'becoming' an adult student was multidimensional and derived from influences stemming from the school, the student, and from outside the school. Accounting for the process of 'becoming' an adult student would seem to require the illustration and integration of these multivariate and interrelated dimensions.

By the end of the period encompassed within Stage 3, the processes of data collection and analysis had provided:

- transcripts of interviews
- diary accounts
- fieldnotes
- documentary materials
- questionnaire data
- emergent themes
- indications of interrelationships among themes
- indications of processes of change and development

At this point, then, it appears appropriate to provide a summation of the strategies of analysis which characterised the present research up to the completion of Stage 3. Indeed, even prior to this stage, the strategies of data analysis allied themselves closely with Glaser and Strauss' (1967) guidelines which came to provide the overall 'direction' to analysis in the present study. For instance, the close relationship of the researcher to data throughout the duration of the project resulted in an acute 'theoretical sensitivity' for the data, which in turn came to direct further data collection. As a result of this 'sensitivity' and relationship to the data, the 'emergent themes' were derived from the data by processes akin to those of 'constant comparative analysis'. In the present study, this involved the 'systematic organization and classification of data' and comparisons of data between and within themes so as to establish characteristics of the basic social process of 'becoming' an adult student. It was these facets of the analytical strategies as already conducted which then provided the background for Stage 4, to which discussion now turns.

STAGE 4: SECONDARY ANALYSIS

In developing Stage 4 of the analytical procedures, the researcher adopted the grounded theory process referred to as 'secondary analysis' (Glaser, 1978), where:

The grounded theorist simply theoretically samples the data that has been obtained, by "appreciating what he has, not what the project did not collect".

(Glaser, 1978, p.54)

For the present study, the theoretical sampling of data referred to by Glaser (1978) involved the re-application of the constant comparative method so as to refine and eventually delimit the categories of data. An added ingredient which influenced this final analytical stage, was that the focus was directed much more acutely on the notion of 'basic social processes' as explicated by Glaser (1978):

A process is something which occurs over time and involves change over time. These changes over time ordinarily have discernable breaking points - discernable to the extent that stages can be perceived.

(Glaser, 1978, p.97)

The rationale for this was that the second research objective of the study was directed towards indicating processes involved in 'becoming' an adult student. As indicated in the preceding section, early analysis suggested the existence of processes of change and development within many of the themes, therefore a more precise focus upon these processes appeared both commensurate with the research objective and with the intentions of this final stage of analysis. Certainly, the adoption of the notion of 'basic social process' clearly provided a means of integrating themes and data. As Glaser (1978) demonstrates, a process such as 'becoming' allows for the explanation not only of why the adult students embarked upon this return to school but such other features of the experience as their interactions in the social context. In short, the explanation of 'basic social process' provided by Glaser (1978) succinctly provided the means of integrating the interrelationships between themes which had already emerged from the ongoing analysis of the data.

These, then, were the strategies adopted during Stage 4 of the data analysis process. Consideration is now given to the application of these strategies in the present research context, through an examination of each of the three phases.

PHASE 1: 'SOURCES OF INFLUENCE'

In seeking to apply these strategies, the researcher was guided in the first instance by certain characteristics and perspectives developed as the result of data collection and analysis. From these, it was apparent that the individual 'becoming' an adult student was influenced by interactive and ongoing processes emanating from a variety of sources. Accordingly, the initial examination of the emergent themes during this final analysis involved grouping them together as 'sources of influence' upon the 'becoming' adult student. In this way, it was reasoned, the processes of analysis leading to delimitation and refinement would be expedited as comparisons would be more apparent through the 'proximity' of the themes and their interrelationships. As a result, themes were grouped as to whether their predominant 'source of influence' accrued from the student, their life outside school, or the school. When these groupings were formulated, it became apparent that there were a number of themes which did not readily fit into these categories. For instance, a theme such as Dropping Subjects included data reflecting the influence of factors from each of the three sources - the student, life outside school, and the school. In light of this situation, a further category of 'Other Influences' was adopted at this stage to subsume such themes. Then, under each perceived 'source of influence', each emergent theme was grouped as indicated in Table 11 over the page.

At the same time, it was necessary to keep in mind that such a separation into 'sources of origin' could not be allowed to mask the interrelationships which existed between these themes, and indeed these broader categories. The view of the process of 'becoming' as interactive and multidimensional acted as a reminder that the present separation was a 'convenience' of analysis rather than a representation of reality.

TABLE 11
Emergent Themes Grouped According to
'Source' of Influence

SOURCE OF INFLUENCE	EMERGENT THEME
Adult Student	<i>Adult Students</i> <i>Reasons for Return</i> <i>Getting Started</i> <i>Goals for year/future</i> <i>Achievements</i> <i>Success/Failure</i> <i>Commitments to Schooling</i> <i>Anxieties</i> <i>Self-image</i>
Life Outside School	<i>Life Outside School</i> <i>Family Life</i> <i>Priorities</i> <i>Financial Problems</i> <i>Commitments to Study/Homework</i>
School	<i>The School</i> <i>Commonroom</i> <i>Dean</i> <i>Teachers</i> <i>The Pupils</i> <i>Subject Content</i> <i>Classroom Activities</i> <i>Exams</i> <i>Guidance/Counselling</i> <i>Comparisons with Prior Schooling</i>
Others	<i>Dropping Subjects</i> <i>Dropping Out</i> <i>Subject Choices</i> <i>Position in School</i> <i>Study Skills</i> <i>Role of 'adult student'</i>

As a further outcome of the comparisons during this initial phase of Stage 4 analysis, processes of delimitation and refinement pointed to the extensive overlap and duplication of data in relation to some themes. For instance, data referring to a particular problem or difficulty in relationships with family members was filed under both *Anxieties* and *Family Life*. It appeared appropriate to avoid such duplication by a process which sought parsimony of categories by subsuming information wherever possible under the title which most explicitly reflected its 'source of influence' upon the processes of becoming an adult student. This resulted in the data from the theme of *Anxieties* being subsumed under the various other categories from which the problem or difficulty emanated, and the theme was then deleted. Similarly, information referring to a relationship between *Teachers* and *Adult Students* was duplicated under each of these

separate themes. Indeed, it was determined that all data within the theme of Adult Students was duplicated, and more appropriately subsumed, under other categories so it too was deleted. The biographical data contained within the category of Adult Students related more to their 'background' and 'personal influences' upon the return to school, whereas the data on relationships appeared to fit more appropriately with other information such as 'family relationships' or 'student/teacher relationships', and was subsumed accordingly. A final example is provided by the theme Subject Choice. In this situation, data derived from the adult students themselves was relatively infrequent, and the predominant information source was the Dean. Accordingly, it was considered that the data from this theme could be subsumed under the Dean's role. This process also resulted in the deletion of the following themes as the data contained within them was subsumed within other, more appropriate, locations:

Success/failure, Priorities, Commitments to
 Study/Homework, Life Outside School, Self-image,
 Guidance/counselling, Role of 'adult student', Getting
 Started, Position in School, Classroom Activities.

At this point, then, the themes had been 'grouped' according to their 'source of influence' upon the processes of 'becoming' an adult student, and a start had been made upon delimiting categories by examining the 'appropriateness' of duplicated information and subsuming data under fewer categories wherever possible. The original 30 themes had been reduced to 17, while the data contained remained constant.

PHASE 2: 'STRENGTH' OF DATA

The second phase of this Stage 4 analysis then took each grouping as an entity and examined each of the subsumed themes, and their supporting data, with a view towards further delimitation and refinement. This phase of the analysis was embarked upon with a view to indicating the relative 'importance' of particular themes in the processes of 'becoming' an adult student. With the strategies associated with the notion of 'saturation' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)

as a guideline, the data within each theme was evaluated on the basis of three, interrelated, criteria:

- (a) Frequency of mention - an indication of the extent to which a particular theme assumed importance through 'dominating' the perceptions of the participants;
- (b) Spread of mention - an indication of the number of participants from whom the data was derived; and,
- (c) Source of mention - whether the data was derived predominantly from participants' accounts, and through a variety of methodological strategies, or as a result primarily of researcher-initiated questioning.

On this basis, it was argued, it was then possible to ascertain the relative 'strength' of the data within each theme and thereby derive a generalized indication of the extent to which it formed a component in the processes of 'becoming' an adult student. As a result of this analysis, shown in Table 12, it was apparent that certain themes were 'stronger' on the basis of these three criteria than were others. As such, 'strong' themes were mentioned more 'frequently' in the data, were derived from the majority of adult students, and were not predominantly dependent upon researcher-initiated questioning as the source of the information.

TABLE 12
Emergent Themes Grouped According to
'Strength' of Data

STRENGTH	EMERGENT THEMES
'strong'	<i>Reasons for Return; The School; Teachers; Dean; Commonroom; Commitments to Schooling; Exams; Financial Problems; Goals for year/future; Achievements</i>
'moderate'	<i>The Pupils; Dropping Out; Dropping Subjects</i>
'weak'	<i>Study Skills; Comparisons with Prior Schooling; Subject Content</i>

In determining this classification, the theme Subject Content, for instance, was deemed 'weak' in that there was little available data, it was from only a few sources, and could be adequately subsumed within other categories. As a result of this further process of delimitation, it was possible to subsume the data from each of these 'weak' forms within other, more appropriate, themes.

On the other hand, there were those themes it was possible to label 'strong' (Table 12) on the basis of these three criteria of frequency, spread, and source of mention. For instance, information relating to Financial Problems was related in Diary accounts, interviews, and fieldnotes, receiving mention by adult students, teachers, and the Dean. Accordingly, it was possible to adjudge certain themes as being 'strong' and, as expanded upon in the following chapter, these form the 'primary' components of the processes of becoming an adult student.

It was also apparent that there existed a further group of themes which could best be categorised as 'moderate' in strength. The data on the theme of Dropping Subjects provides a case in point. As only 10 of the original sample of 36 adult students dropped subjects during the course of the year, this theme is seen to apply to 'some', rather than 'most' or 'all', and held to be of 'moderate' influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student. On the other hand, some explanation appears warranted as to the classification of Dropping Out as being 'moderate'. While a 'majority' of the original sample - 21 of the 36 - did leave school, with one other (M.8) declining to participate in the research, only 11 of these were to provide some information relating to this decision. Due to this situation, the theme of Dropping Out is designated as 'moderate' in reflection of the difficulties encountered with the group who left school rather than of its relation to the processes of becoming an adult student. The categorization of 'moderate', then, was used to differentiate those themes where the data was less 'frequent' and with which caution needed to be exercised in suggesting 'generalizability' to the overall processes of becoming an adult student.

By this stage, then, the analytical strategies employed to expedite the processes of delimitation and refinement had resulted in

16 of the original 30 themes being subsumed, with an indication of 'grouping' according to 'source of influence' and relative 'strength' being determined. Four such 'sources' had been identified (see Table 11), each of which was examined, redefined, and allocated the themes which reflected that particular influence. The outcome of this saw the four 'sources' delimited to three and new titles being determined to more accurately reflect the nature of the influence upon the processes of 'becoming' an adult student - Table 13.

TABLE 13
Becoming An Adult Student: Sources of Influence

SOURCE OF INFLUENCE	DATA THEMES
Personal Goals and Achievements	<i>Reasons for Return; Commitments to Schooling; Goals for year/future; Achievements; Dropping Subjects; Dropping Out</i>
Personal-outside Influences	<i>Family Life; Financial Problems</i>
Situational Influences	<i>The School; Dean; Teachers; Pupils; Commonroom; Exams</i>

PHASE 3: FOCUS ON PROCESSES

The third, and final, phase of Stage 4 analysis was then undertaken. This involved a re-examination of both data and these 'sources of influence' with a specific focus upon the notion of 'basic social processes' as explicated by Glaser (1978) and Olesen and Whittaker (1968). It will be recalled from prior discussion that such 'processes' are characterised by occurrence and change over time as the result of interplay and interactions between and within what have here been categorised as 'sources of influence'. At the same time, careful consideration was given to the content subsumed within each of the themes, to examine its 'relevance' to the notion of 'processes of becoming an adult student', as well as the outcomes of prior analysis such as the 'strength' of the various themes. In order to accomplish

this final analysis, the data was 'presented' according to the topics indicated in Table 13 and re-examined.

There were two central outcomes of this, rather time-consuming, final phase of the analysis. First, it was determined that there remained an extensive 'overlap' of data within this 'presentation' resulting in the frequent repetition of information, along with the point that some data - while adding to the 'descriptive detail' - was unrelated to the processes of becoming an adult student. For instance, data relating to a particular conflict situation between F.15 and various staff members was 'duplicated' under the themes of Teachers, Dean, Dropping Subjects, and Dropping Out. In such situations, the data was re-examined in an effort to remove the duplication and determine a more succinct presentation. With this example, it was determined that a new 'theme' could more adequately subsume the data which resulted in the formation of Student/teacher Conflict as a subcategory reflecting one aspect of a category concerning student/teacher relationships. The cases where data was unrelated to the processes of becoming predominantly involved the situation where considerable depth had been given to description of a particular individual student. The re-examination of the data under the notion of 'process' resulted in the deletion of the detail which was 'superfluous' to the description of the processes of becoming an adult student.

The second outcome resulted from the focus upon the notion of 'process'. From the re-examination of the data, it was clearly evident that the students underwent two separate, but interrelated, 'processes' as they 'became' adult students. Across the emergent themes, it was confirmed that certain aspects of the experiences related to processes which served to 'induct' the student as a 'member' of the overall school culture, whereas others emphasised the 'differences' between the adult student and school-aged pupil. In short, at one and the same time, they were integrated into the school culture and differentiated as members of an adult student subculture. Accordingly, analysis required that the presentation of data recognised these as 'overarching themes' within the process of becoming an adult student. As this 'emerged' from the re-examination of the data, it was determined that these would provide a basis for

the reorganization of the available information, not the least of which was the fact that the existing 'sources of influence' did not reflect the notion of 'process' nor these overarching themes in the most parsimonious manner. At this point, the term 'factor of influence' was derived, not merely as a 'substitute' for the former 'sources' but as more accurately conveying the notion of processes. For instance, it was determined that the 'factor' of 'returning to school' could more adequately subsume data such as Reasons for Return and reflect the process than could the former 'source' of 'Personal Goals'. This resulted in a total of six 'factors' of influence being adopted to convey, in basic terms, the notions of: who returns and why, and initial entry experiences; school context in general, including the 'key actors' of Dean and Principal; school-based experiences; classroom-based experiences; decision/tension points, and; goal achievements.

Then, when further consideration was given to the relative 'strengths' of some of the subsumed themes, it was evident that these were inappropriately grouped, and this provided further substantiation to the focus upon 'factors' of influence and notions of processes. For instance, the theme of Achievements represented an 'outcome' of the processes of becoming an adult student, rather than its original position alongside such initial influences as Reasons for Return. Similarly, the processes of Dropping Subjects and Dropping Out were aspects of the adult student subculture in action and more 'appropriate' there than grouped with 'personal goals and achievements' (see Table 13). In addition, the examination of the relative 'strength' of certain themes led to the outcome that some were more appropriately 'factors of influence' in their own right, rather than being subsumed under another category of influence. The data pertaining to theme Achievements again provides a case in point. The re-examination of the data within this theme and its relative strength indicated that this sense of 'outcome' was a central component within the processes of becoming an adult student and that it exerted a marked influence. Accordingly, Goal Achievement was taken as a 'factor of influence' and the data subsumed within the original theme was used to generate new categories and subcategories which represented this aspect of the processes of becoming an adult student. On the other hand, reflecting upon the notion of strength

and relationships to the notion of process saw some themes 'downgraded'. The theme of 'commonroom' had been adjudged as being 'strong' on the basis that it was frequently mentioned, derived from a variety of sources, and reported upon by the majority of students. However, the 'function' of the commonroom when subjected to this re-examination was shown to be primarily one of providing a site for the differentiating aspects of 'being' an adult student. Indeed, the original 'strength' of data subsumed within the theme of 'commonroom' was shown to be more a result of it being the site of researcher/student interaction than as a 'very significant' component of the processes of becoming an adult student. Similarly, the theme of 'exams' was initially regarded as being 'strong' yet this re-examination indicated that much of the content subsumed there was covered by other themes representing the processes of becoming an adult student. In short, the data within the 'exams' theme was but one aspect of 'goal achievement' and it was subsumed accordingly.

The result of this final phase of analysis, then, was the emergence of the overarching themes of 'integration' and 'differentiation' and the reorganization of the data accordingly. This led to a more explicit focus on the notion of 'process', as well as providing for the greater 'parsimony' of data. The final product of the overall processes of analysis was the derivation of six 'factors of influence' each of which subsumed a number of 'categories' and 'subcategories' of data, all of which were generated from the original 'emergent themes'. At this time, the 'factors of influence' and the categories and subcategories were, in many instances, renamed to reflect more accurately both the data they contained and their relationship to the processes of becoming an adult student. These are listed in Table 14. It is these six 'factors of influence' which provide the organizational headings under which the data is to be presented in the following chapter, the categories and subcategories providing the headings within each part of the presentation.

The overall analytical processes can perhaps be most adequately summarised as follows:

The sociologist acts first as a roving microphone, then as a book-keeper and filing clerk. By presenting a sample from his file he can give a tidy, descriptive account

organized round certain features which will have a value in its own right. These member typifications are then subjected to social scientific analysis. They are two distinct processes and ideally should not be confused. The 'rhetoric of interaction' should not be coloured by analysis and should be available for alternative analysis.

(Woods, 1979, p.267)

TABLE 14
Factors of Influence, Categories and Subcategories of Data

<i>Factors of Influence</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Subcategories</i>
Returning to School	Reasons for Return	Credential-based Goals Personal Goals Selecting Secondary Level
	Personal Circumstances	Home Situation Financial Situation and Work Commitments Social Activities
	Entering School	Subject Choice Class Level Teacher Selection
School Policy, Adult Status and the Role of the Dean	School Policy	Who Decided?
	Attaining Adult Status	
	The Role of the Dean	The Person, her Perspectives and Position Administrative Functions Counselling/Interactive Functions
In The School	Integrating Influences	School 'Environment' Dress Codes Status Within the School
	Differentiating Influences	Status Within the School Relationships with Pupils Information Dissemination The Timetable Situation The Adult Student Commonroom
In The Classroom	Integrating Effects	Forms of Address Classroom Relationships Discipline School Reports
	Differentiating Effects	Expectations Attendance Out-of-class Interaction Teacher/Student Conflict
Decision Points	To Drop A Subject?	
	To Attend School?	The Attendance Records Attendance: The Student Perspective The 'Absentee': A Negative Referent
	To Become An Adult Student?	Reasons for Withdrawal The 'Dropout': A Negative Referent
Goal Achievement	Personal Goals	An Initial Goal Personal Goals of School Leavers Personal Goals of Adult Students
	Credential-based Goals	The Exams Goals and Outcomes School Awards

In the presentation of data which is to follow, the criteria of selection of 'content', as was the case in the derivation of the categories and subcategories, proceeded under the broad principles of ".validity, typicality, relevance and clarity" (Woods, 1979, p.267) and seeks to allow the 'subjects' to do the 'talking'.

SUMMARY

This chapter, in accordance with the priority of detailing the processes of the research, has outlined the development and implementation of the analytical strategies adopted in the present study. As an outcome of this analysis, six factors of influence upon the 'becoming' adult students were identified, and utilised to subsume the data gathered during the fieldwork phase of the investigation. Furthermore, two 'overarching themes' of integration and differentiation were established from the data. These outcomes of the analysis provide the organizational headings for the presentation of the data directed towards the research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

In this chapter, a summary of the supporting data on each of the six major factors of influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student is presented and discussed. This presentation provides an indepth and systematic view of the day-to-day experiences of the sample of adult students. It also documents the influences contributing to the dual processes of integration into the school culture and differentiation of the adult student subculture which formed overarching themes within the processes of becoming an adult student.

The discussion of the research methodologies and analytical procedures, presented in the two preceding chapters, indicated the development and application of the particular strategies adopted to meet the objectives of the present study. These two objectives were:

1. To establish a profile of the adult student on the basis of a selected sample; and,
2. To derive from an indepth and systematic view of the everyday experiences of this sample an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student.

In short, the investigation seeks to indicate not only 'who' becomes an adult student but also 'how' such a process occurs and 'what' it entails. Impinging upon these interrelated research objectives, the researcher took the view that becoming an adult student was an ongoing process, complex and dynamic, occurring within

the everyday world of students, and involving the interplay of biographical, contextual, and interpersonal interaction factors. It was further considered that the outcome of such a process was the creation of the potential for personal, and situational change.

With such a dynamic, fluid, and multi-dimensional process, the inherent difficulty lies in its presentation. The necessity to present the data pertaining to this process under specific headings, where the reality is of an integrated, interactive, ongoing process, comprising non-discrete units, creates something of a dilemma for the researcher. One resolution of such a difficulty is to develop an emergent set of categories within which the data may be subsumed (see Chapter Three). Two overarching features emerged from the data and provided the central organising themes representing the processes of becoming an adult student: at one and the same time, the adult student was both integrated into the school culture and was differentiated as a member of a separate subculture. The presentation of the data, then, is concerned with illustrating both the profile of the adult student and the variety of integrating and differentiating influences on the process of becoming an adult student.

Accordingly, the discussion approach recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is used to provide fairly extensive samples of the data concerning student everyday experiences as they relate to these processes of becoming an adult student. Further data is located within the appendices which provide a necessary reference for the present chapter.⁷

In summary, the format adopted for presenting and discussing the data is as follows: there are six sections to this chapter, each relating to one of the major factors of influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student; within each section, the various categories and subcategories are examined; and, to conclude each section, there is a discussion of the contribution particular categories made to the overall processes of becoming an adult student. It is with the process of becoming an adult student that the

⁷ Data pertaining to student profiles is located in Appendix D, while Appendix E provides further case study and general data illustrating the processes of becoming an adult student.

discussion is concerned, while also recognizing the idiosyncratic and individualistic nature of both the influences and their outcomes.

Part One

Returning To School

While becoming an adult student is characterised by interactions among many influences, there appears to be a certain logic in opening the account with an examination of the generalised question as to 'why' these students returned to school. The discussion will focus, first, upon the consideration of the 'Reasons for Return' - both credential-based and personal goals - and their selection of secondary school as the site for their return. In addition, reference will be made to student profiles, located in Appendix D and previously summarised in Chapter Two, in order to indicate appropriate background information.

The second part will indicate the background for the effects upon the processes of becoming an adult student which derived from their 'Personal Circumstances' located outside the school. Information will be presented concerning *Home Life*, *Work Commitments* and general *Social Activities*.

The final section will focus upon 'Entering the School', and provide a discussion of *Subject Choice*, *Class Level*, and *Teacher Selection*.

1.1 REASONS FOR RETURN

The data indicated three facets of the students' experiences in relation to their 'reasons for returning' to secondary school. First, there were credential-based goals for deciding to return to school. Second, were a variety of personal goals through which the students expressed personal or deep-seated outcomes or purposes underpinning their decisions and experiences of returning to school. Finally, the adult students were involved in a process of selection which saw them opt for day-time secondary classes as the site of their return. It is these three aspects which provide the focus of discussion in the present section.

1.1.1 CREDENTIAL-BASED GOALS

From the outset of the investigation, it was apparent that the majority of adult students presented themselves for enrolment with a 'goal' for the year expressed in terms of the attainment of some form of credential. These credentials were most frequently linked to specific subject areas and, in turn, allied with various long term objectives relating either to occupation or further study. Initial statements from adult students reflected these pre-determined 'goals', subjects to be taken in their pursuit, and long-term objectives towards which the return was directed. These general statements made during enrolment were expressed in such terms as: 'I want to pass University Entrance for...', 'I want to go on to...', or, 'I want to do...'. The following extracts from fieldnotes pertaining to this enrolment period provide an illustration of this point:

F.22 was unsure of what [subjects] she required but wanted something which was 'interesting' and related to her desire to do horticulture in the future [eventually 'deciding', with assistance from D.1, to do 'interest' areas of Art and Ceramic Studies as school had 'nothing new' in her field of horticulture]. F.17 wanted to take a full-time U.E course [directed towards] future kindergarten teacher training. M.5 wants to do a full U.E course with Art as his main subject [towards a course in Interior Design]. F.10 wants a full U.E course and indicates both subjects and preferred teachers [on the

basis of last year's S.C enrolment] and states her continuing intention of enrolling in nursing training. F.15 wants to come back to 'have a proper go this time' [for U.E, and indicates an interest in a degree in Social Work].

(Fieldnotes, 26.1.84)

In turn, these observations were supported by data derived from the responses to Questionnaire Part One (see Appendix F) which explicitly requested that students indicate the purpose of return in terms of a particular examination or, alternatively, as 'not for examination'. While this data is provided in more detail within the student profiles in Appendix D, it appears appropriate at this point to provide some general indications of these student goals, prior educational record, and the class level and subjects taken during the present return to school.

From Table 15, it is evident that the majority of students stated their initial goals for the year in terms of obtaining particular credentials. Of the 36 adult students who enrolled at the school during the research year, only four did not report an examination-based goal as a purpose for their return. These four exceptions appear to warrant some further comment. M.9 reported that his return was solely in terms of further developing his personal interests in art, while F.18 stated that the typing course was a means of assessing the viability of this as a future 'occupational' skill. In the cases of M.17 and F.34, the year was seen primarily in terms of 'preparation' for the following year - as a form of 'trial run'. For F.34, this related to her intention of subsequently enrolling in pursuit of credentials in English and Mathematics, the present year being to 'see what it is like'. Already possessing the requisite entry qualifications for university, M.17 sought to use his year at school as a means for developing 'study habits' in a

...trial-run and just to get a basic idea of the first year at university. Just a bit of understanding because it's so hard that I want a leg-in then I'll really go for it next year.

(M.17, Interview, 13.8.84)

TABLE 15

Summary Profile of Educational Background,
Present Enrolment and Initial Goals of Sample

Code No.	Age	Prior Record *	Level of Entry **	Subjects Taken ***	Goals for Year ****
M.4	19	16/6/SC 4 subs// Trade Cert Sheep Farming	6	Eng, Maths, Chem, Phys, Bio, Applied Maths	U.E
M.5	23	17/6/SC 2 subs, SFC 3 subs	6	Art, Art Hist, Eng, Geo, T.Draw	U.E
M.6	19	19/6/SC 4 subs, SFC 3 subs, 1 U.E sub	6	Maths[5th], Chem, Bio, Eng, Econ	U.E
M.7	18	16/6/SC 2 subs	6	Eng, Geo, Bio, Econ	U.E
M.8	19	16/4	7	Eng[6th], Art, Art Hist	U.B
M.9	18	17/7/SC 5 subs, U.E 6 subs	7	Art	Interest
M.10	17	16/5/SC 1 sub	6	T.Draw[5th], Eng	S.C
M.11	20	17/6/SC 2 subs// Trade Cert Draughting	6	Maths	NZCO
M.13	21	15/5/SC 2 subs// Trade Cert Fitter & Turner	6	Maths, Eng, Bio, Chem, Phys, Applied Maths[7th]	U.E
M.15	20	16/6/SC 5 subs	6	Eng, Bio, Phys, Econ	U.E
M.16	16	15/5	5	Bio, Sci, Eng, Econ	S.C
M.17	18	17/7/SC 5 subs, U.E 5 subs	7	Maths, Phys, Bio, Chem	Prepare for University
F.9	17	17/6/SC 2 subs, SFC 4 subs, U.E 1 sub	6	Geo, Econ, Bio	U.E
F.10	31	15/4// SC 2 subs as adult student	6	Eng, Bio, Hist, Geo	U.E
F.11	22	14/4	5	Eng, Sci, Maths, Bio, Art	S.C
F.12	24	15/5	5	Maths, Woodwork	S.C
F.13	18	16/6/SC 2 subs	6	Eng, Geo, Hist, Art Hist, Econ	U.E
F.14	39	15/4	5	Eng, Bio	S.C
F.15	19	16/6/SC 3 subs	6	Maths[5th], Eng, Geo, Bio, Econ	U.E
F.16	22	18/6/SC 4 subs// U.E 1 sub at night-school	6	Eng, Hist, Maths, Bio, Art Hist	U.E
F.17	19	17/6/Regional Maths Certificate	6	Maths[5th], Eng, Bio, Geo, Econ	U.E
F.18	37	15/5/SC 2 subs	5	Typing	Not for examination
F.19	38	16/5// SC 1 sub at night-school, NZCS 1 sub at Tech Institute	6	Bio, Maths	NZCS
F.20	48	16/5	6	Accountancy	U.E
F.22	24	17/6/SC 3 subs// 5 papers Dip Hort.	6	Art, Ceramic Studies	U.E/SFC
F.23	17	16/5	6	Eng, Maths, Bio, Hist, Art Hist	U.E
F.24	42	16/5// SC 1 sub at night-school, SC 1 sub as adult student	6	Eng, Hist	U.E
F.26	17	15/4	5	Geo, Maths, Eng, Typ, Home Ec	S.C
F.27	17	16/5	6	Eng, Hist, Typ, Geo, Econ	U.E
F.28	31	16/5// SC 1 sub Correspondence Sch Playcentre Supervisor Course	5	Bio, Alternate Maths	S.C
F.29	24	17/6/SC 6 subs, U.E 5 subs// NZRN, B.Arts	6	Maths, Phys, Bio, Chem, Eng	U.E
F.30	32	16/4	6	Eng, Hist	U.E
F.31	17	15/5	5	Eng, Sci, Alternate Maths, Cloth, Typ	S.C
F.32	30	17/6/SC 5 subs, U.E 5 subs// U.E 3 subs at night-school	7	Eng, Maths, Bio, Chem	U.B
F.33	29	17/7/SC 5 subs, U.E 5 subs// NZRN	6	Maths[5th], Phys, Chem	U.E
F.34	24	15/3	5	Typ, Alternate Maths	Not for examination

* Provides: School Leaving Age/Form Level at Leaving/School Qualifications [SC = School Certificate; SFC = Sixth Form Certificate; U.E = University Entrance], and // Post-school Qualifications [Trade Certificate, NZCS = New Zealand Certificate of Science, NZRN = New Zealand Registered Nurse.

** Denotes class level in which enrolled.

*** Subjects enrolled in at start of year: ENGLISH, CHEMISTRY, BIOLOGY, ART HISTORY, HISTORY, TECHNICAL DRAWING, PHYSICS, TYPING, HOME ECONOMICS, CLOTHING, SCIENCE, GEOGRAPHY, ECONOMICS. Figure in brackets denotes situation where subject at different level than student 'level of entry'.

**** The goal expressed at enrolment - see * for codes, + U.B = University Bursaries, New Zealand Certificate of Draughting - NZCD.

Accordingly, among these four students who stated their initial goals in terms other than attaining credentials from their present enrolment, there were two - M.17 and F.34 - for whom examinations and further study remained long-term goals.

As Table 15 indicates, the remaining 32 students within the present sample all reported in their responses to Questionnaire Part One credential-based goals as their initial reason for returning to school.

At the time of enrolment, then, the majority of the adult students reported the attainment of various credentials as their reason for returning to school. Furthermore, as elaborated in the student profiles (Appendix D), of the 30 adult students who indicated long-term goals beyond the return to school, all but three saw their enrolment as leading to changes in occupational status, with 22 of these envisaging further study, predominantly at tertiary level.

On the other hand, it was also evident that such credential-based goals formed only one aspect of the reasons given for returning to school. Indeed, with statements of credential goals confined to times such as enrolment and in response to questionnaire items, it appeared that these could be categorised as the 'official goals', whereas there were other 'outcomes' or 'benefits' receiving mention throughout the year during various conversations. These further reasons have been broadly categorised as 'personal goals' in order to distinguish them from those directly related to the attainment of examination qualifications.

1.1.2 PERSONAL GOALS

As well as these overt credential and occupational goals, a number of other 'outcomes' and 'benefits' were seen by participants to accrue from their experiences during their year as an adult student. As such, these formed a further justification for returning to school and, indeed, were seen by a majority to be of at least equal importance to the attainment of the credential-based goals. The

present section, then, will provide an illustration of this category of the 'reasons for returning' to secondary school.

From the responses [N=24] to Questionnaire Part Three (see Appendix F), it is possible to provide a generalised indication of the distribution of reasons given for returning to school. As illustrated by the data in Table 16, it is evident that adult students indicated a variety of factors as providing the basis for their return.

TABLE 16
Student Reasons for Returning to Secondary School

Reasons for Return	Student Rankings *		
	Major	Minor	Not
To go on to further study	13	6	5
To train for a particular occupation	13	-	11
To retrain for an occupation after a break		1	23
To obtain qualifications for a particular occupation	14	2	8
To add to qualifications for present occupation	1	1	22
To get better qualified to go back to work (no special occupation)	8	6	10
To study something for interest or satisfaction	4	7	13
To increase self-confidence	9	3	12
To get stimulation	5	7	12
To get away from domestic routine	3	4	17
In order to be better able to help own children with schoolwork	3	3	18
Other reasons	3	1	20

* Derived from responses to Questionnaire Part Three (N = 24), which required student to rate each of the stated Reasons for Return as being a: Minor, Major, or Not A Reason, underpinning their return to school. Whereas most respondents indicated both 'credential-based' (Items 1-6) and 'personal' goals (Items 7-12) as forming their 'reasons for return', M.16, M.17, F.16, F.17, and F.32 listed solely credential factors and reported as 'not a reason' all of those Items 7-12. However, all of these individuals were to report 'personal outcomes' as of 'equal prominence' during the year. Accordingly, their questionnaire responses somewhat 'inflate' the figures providing an apparent, but unsupported, dominance to credential influences underpinning the return of adult students. In short, both credential and personal goals were of equal influence upon the adult students in the present research.

While these results indicate credential and occupational reasons, it is apparent that 'personal factors' were also given prominence as reasons for returning to school. In addition to credential-based

factors, all adult students were to cite various other 'outcomes' or 'benefits' as providing other 'reasons' for their return.

For instance, M.16 gave the sole 'reason' for his return on this questionnaire as being to obtain School Certificate in order to enter broadcasting. Yet, emerging during the year was further information which indicated that the issue was more complex than this and, indeed, that a number of factors influenced, and formed 'reasons', for his return:

I left [school] June last year...because I had this job offered me by friends on a farm. I was doing that-milking cows and that - for about 5 or 6 months. I left in January. I just couldn't face being on a farm for the rest of my life - just getting up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. I mean, it's just a labouring-type job and I didn't want that type of job. I wanted so much to be in radio - I want to be known - I like to be in the lime-light. So, I left the farm to come back to get School C 'cause it's needed even in Private Radio.

(M.16, Interview, 10.8.84)

Thus, underpinning the credential-based goal of obtaining his School Certificate, M.16 also sought to 'open up' his occupational options in a direction which he found personally satisfying. Moreover, on other occasions, M.16 also attributed the 'changes' in his 'attitudes' and 'being more mature' as an 'outcome' or 'benefit' accruing from his return through the social interaction with other adult students.

Similarly, F.16, who also responded in Questionnaire Part Three in purely credential-based terms, reported further underlying reasons behind her return to secondary school:

[the year has] been quite good 'cause I needed to think about what I was going to do [in the long term]. I don't think U.E was the main issue - I'm not sure - I think the most important thing this year was deciding what I wanted to do.

(F.16, Interview, 6.12.84)

It is evident that a variety of personal reasons was behind the return to secondary school by these adult students. At least for F.18, these personal reasons were cited as the 'main purpose' in returning to school as it enabled her to

...get away from the [home] situation - all the problems with the separation and divorce and things associated with that. So, it was more an escape from that, rather than the domestic routine as such.

(F.18, Fieldnotes, 6.2.85)

Other reasons mentioned by the students included: changing/improving self-image and self-confidence; changing interpersonal relationships; mental stimulation; increasing/changing personal skills, such as study and reading skills; increasing knowledge; personal interest and satisfaction; and, in a few instances, being more able to help children with their schooling.

Such was the prominence given to these personal goals by some students that they came to see these as the major 'benefit' of their return, relegating credential-based goals to a secondary position:

[the return] got me away from the 'suburban neuroses' thing. It's been really, really good as far as the family is concerned...now, they've got that bit of independence and I don't tend to fuss over them...and, I think it's been good for them. So, I think it was good in that respect - put a bit of distance between us. I'm more self-assured. I'm definitely more aware of world affairs and things around me. Um - I feel I can go out and get a job - you know - I feel - I know I'm capable of doing something if I want to do it. So, it's given me confidence. Yeah - it's been good - even if I didn't get U.E, it's been really worthwhile. [And] it's had a fantastic effect on my Mother's attitude towards me. For years, I have been an 'inferior being'...now, suddenly, I'm way up there on a pedestal...my Mother actually speaks highly of me and is very encouraging, interested...so, yeah, that was great too.

(F.30, Interview, 6.12.84)

Besides these reasons and goals which provide one aspect illustrating 'why' these adult students returned to school, the selection of secondary school as the site for their attendance is worthy of comment.

1.1.3 SELECTING SECONDARY LEVEL

With the processes of selecting their goals and the institutional level to pursue these within occurring prior to enrolment, data pertaining to these aspects of student experiences could only be obtained as they reflected upon these earlier events. It appeared that these considerations were spread over a number of years, particularly in the cases of those with some time between this and their prior schooling experiences:

I thought about it for a number of years, but seriously only this year. Then, it was only about two weeks before I did [enrol][laugh]. There was a fear of coming back - I don't know quite why, but there was.

(F.34, Interview, 21.9.84)

On the other hand, for many of the younger students the return to school was but a continuation of prior schooling with, in some cases, the two experiences being contiguous.

In general, it can be stated that the adult students selected secondary school as the site of their return on the basis of their goals and background experiences. Other than F.33, none of the students reported having given any consideration to enrolling at tertiary level except in terms of it being a long-term goal. In F.33's case, she had spent the first few weeks of the year enrolled at university before deciding that secondary school was more appropriate for obtaining the educational experiences and knowledge she required. F.29, on the other hand, was somewhat different in that she had both a degree and nursing qualifications, but - similar to F.33 - reported that her prior education had not provided her with the background in science subjects to enable her to successfully compete for entry to Medical School. As such, F.29 returned to secondary school in order to acquire this knowledge as the initial step in her planned 'change' of occupational status.

For the group of students in the present study, the alternatives to day-time classes were Evening School and Correspondence School. While only a few students had prior experience of Evening School, and

only F.23 had considered this an option for the research year, all adult students reported reasons for ruling this out as an option. First, it was held to be 'inconvenient' in that it occurred at times students preferred to spend with family or friends, as well as being a time when various part-time jobs were available. Further, the lack of available transport in order to attend classes was considered to be a disadvantage of Evening School compared with the day-time situation. Other reasons which were cited include: less time was spent on a subject - one hour per week at night, compared to four in day-classes; less contact and interaction with both teachers and other students; the difficulty of working all day, then attending school at night, and; fewer subjects could be taken requiring a longer time to obtain a particular qualification. Many of these reasons were also given for rejecting the Correspondence School alternative, while the perceived 'discipline' in having to attend day class was cited as preferable to being 'left to their own devices'.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The previous discussion has focussed on Reasons for Return, as the first category of influences upon the processes of becoming an adult student.

It has been shown that the majority of adult students returned to school seeking various credential-based goals; these represented the statement of 'official goals' and, as such, formed but part of the overall rationale and justification for the students returning to school. At least equal importance was attached to a variety of personal and deep-seated reasons for returning to school. These reasons were often cited as 'outcomes' or 'benefits' which could justify the return to school even if credentials were not attained and included: exploring and opening up options; changing self-image and self-confidence; developing interpersonal relationships; mental 'stimulation'; increasing/changing personal skills and knowledge; interest and satisfaction, and; being able to assist children with homework.

These Reasons for Return also suggest certain predispositions towards the experiences of becoming an adult student. As the adult students had selected particular credential-based goals as part of the rationale for their return to school, they would be required to undergo processes of assessment and work requirements necessary to attain such goals. By selecting day-time classes, they would be subject to mixing with school-aged pupils, sitting together in a classroom, and thereby being part of a particular group and form of relationship. This was generally expressed in terms of an 'expectancy' that it would be 'much the same' as prior schooling experiences. At this point, then, it appears possible to suggest that the adult students were predisposed towards the attainment of credential-based goals, and had certain expectations of the nature and requirements of schooling.

These goals and expectations were not the only influences upon the processes of becoming an adult student which derived from the individual. In order to elaborate further, discussion will now focus on how 'Personal Circumstances' impacted on these processes.

1.2 PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Throughout the period covered by the present investigation, various aspects of the personal circumstances of the adult students, particularly outside the school environment, featured prominently. Marital status, personal relationships, place of residence, financial situation, and other general social activities, were frequently cited - by teachers and adult students alike - as exerting influence upon the adult student and consequently upon the becoming processes. Data relating to these factors is presented under the headings of: *Home Situation*; *Financial Situation and Work Commitments*; and, *Social Activities*.

1.2.1 HOME SITUATION

At the beginning of the year, all adult students provided an indication of their home circumstances in response to the items in Questionnaire Part One (see Appendix F). Then, as the year progressed further data collection substantiated and expanded on this information. A summation of marital status, dependent children, and place of residence is provided in Table 17.

From this data it is possible to note certain tentative generalizations regarding the personal circumstances of the sample of adult students. The males in the sample - with the exception of M.5 - were single, with a majority (66%) residing with parents or other relatives, while the remainder lived in flats. Furthermore, it can be seen that just over half of the females were at present single, and the remainder had been or were married or were in defacto relationships. The females in the study provided the majority of those in the 'older' (21 or above) age group, with the exceptions of M.5 and M.13.

In terms of residence, approximately equal numbers of female students were living with their parents or other relatives as were in their own homes, while only a few resided in rental accommodation such as flats. Half of the women students, and none of the males, had children living at home with them.

While these home situations, as will be evident as discussion proceeds, were to exert an influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student, financial circumstances also impinged upon the adult students.

1.2.2 FINANCIAL SITUATION AND WORK COMMITMENTS

During the course of the present investigation, work commitments to either part-time or full-time jobs, and the financial situations associated with this, were of considerable influence upon many of the

TABLE 17
Home Situation

Code No.	Age	Marital Status	Children at Home (Ages)	Residence
M.4 ①	19	Single	-	Boarding with relatives
M.5	23	De Facto	-	Flatting
M.6 ①	19	Single	-	With parents
M.7 ①	18	Single	-	With parent (Mother)
M.8	19	Single	-	Boarding with relative (Grandmother)
M.9 ①	18	Single	-	Flatting
M.10 ①	17	Single	-	Flatting
M.11 ①	20	Single	-	With parents
¹ M.13 ①	21	Single	-	With parents
M.15	20	Single	-	Flatting
M.16	16	Single	-	With parents
M.17	18	Single	-	With parents
² F.9 ①	17	Single	-	With parents
F.10	31	Married	9, 11, 13	Own home
³ F.11 ①	22	Married	3, 10, 12	Own home
F.12 ①	24	Divorced	1 under 2	Flat with child
⁴ F.13 ①	18	Single	-	With parent (Father)
F.14	39	Divorced	10, 14, 18	State Unit (Rental)
F.15 ①	19	De Facto	-	Flatting
⁵ F.16	22	Single	-	With parent (Mother)
F.17	19	Single	-	With parent (Mother)
F.18 ①	37	Separated	12, 16, 18	Own home
F.19	38	Single	11	Own home
F.20 ①	48	De Facto	-	Own home
F.22 ①	24	Separated	-	Flatting
⁶ F.23 ①	17	Single	-	With parent (Mother, or Father)
F.24	42	Married	7, 10	Own home
F.26 ①	17	Single	-	Boarding with relatives
F.27 ①	17	Single	1 under 2	With parents
F.28	31	Married	8, 10, 13	Own home
F.29 ①	24	Single	-	Flatting
F.30	32	Single	9, 10, 13	Own home unit
F.31 ①	17	Single	-	Boarding with relatives
F.32	30	Married	3, 4	Own home
⁷ F.33 ①	29	Divorced	-	With parents
F.34	24	Married	6, 7	Own home

① Denotes those who left school during the course of the year.

¹ Shortly after leaving school in April, M.13 went flatting. He married in January 1985.

² In March, following an argument with her parents, F.9 left home, leaving school shortly afterwards.

³ Reporting marital difficulties from the outset, F.11 left her husband (married in 1983) in Term 2 taking her own child (the youngest) with her. By the end of Term 2, F.11 was only infrequently attending school, and in Term 3 only appeared on one occasion but did not attend class. Sometime after this, F.11 moved to another district where she had a position as 'live in' housekeeper.

⁴ Mid-year, F.13's father remarried and she continued to live at home with her family.

⁵ Early in Term 3, F.16 went flatting.

⁶ F.23 alternated between homes - her mother's and her father's (and stepmother). In November, she moved to a flat.

⁷ F.33's dissatisfaction over living with her parents, saw her leave school, obtain a job, and go flatting.

A number of those who left school also changed address afterwards, generally resulting in the researcher not being able to maintain contact. M.4 returned to the family farm in another district, although he was later contacted; M.7 and M.10 moved flats with no forwarding address; M.11 moved to another district, although he too was later contacted; both F.9 and F.11 moved residences, and neither responded to efforts to contact them; F.12 left for another district as did F.26 and neither left contact addresses; F.31 was available at the end of the research, but left the district before being interviewed over Questionnaire Part 3 responses.

adult students.

Table 18 provides a summary profile of student income, the sources from which it was derived, and the work commitments of these adult students. On the basis of this data, it is evident that a majority of adult students were in a 'lower income' bracket. Table 18 also indicates that at least half of the initial sample, and approximately two-thirds of those remaining for the entire year, were holding down jobs as well as their commitments to attending school.

Those adult students seeking financial assistance for their return to school (termed 'Emergency Benefit' in Table 18) were required to meet certain criteria and were divided into two categories on the basis of age. For those aged 18-20 years, an Emergency Family Benefit of \$6 per week could be obtained if the student was:

over 18 years of age and not entitled to Family Benefit;

enrolled as a full-time student (16 hours or more per week) studying towards a recognised objective such as School Certificate, Sixth Form Certificate, University Entrance, Trade Certification Board qualifications, or similar;

earning less than \$31 a week; and,

in possession of assets under \$800 in value.

For those over the age of 20, the following conditions determined eligibility for the payment of an Emergency Unemployment Benefit:

attending secondary school beyond the year in which they attained the age of 20;

were not eligible for any other form of social security (such as D.P.B) or financial assistance;

were full-time students studying for a recognised objective;

in receipt of an income at a level which would qualify them for a grant of the unemployment benefit; and,

in possession of assets under \$1200 if single or \$2000 if married.

Those who qualified under these criteria could, if single, receive an Emergency Benefit of \$27 a week - increased to \$47 if 'hardship'

TABLE 18
Student Income and Employment

Code No.	Age	Income Bracket (\$) *	Sources **	Employment ***
M.4	⊙ 19	1000 - 2500	Income + Savings	Farmwork, 8hrs/wk
¹ M.5	23	2500 - 5000	Income + Benefit	Waiter, 12hrs/wk
M.6	⊙ 19	under 500	Parents + E.B	-
² M.7	⊙ 18	N/I	Parent	-
M.8	19	1000 - 2500	Parent + E.B + Trust Fund	-
M.9	⊙ 18	2500 - 5000	U.B + Insurance	-
M.10	⊙ 17	1000 - 2500	U.B	-
M.11	⊙ 20	7500 - 10 000	Full-time job	Architectural Draughtsman
³ M.13	⊙ 21	1000 - 2500	E.B	-
⁴ M.15	20	under 500	Savings	-
M.16	16	500 - 1000	Income + Parents + E.B	Fish 'n' Chip shop, P.Time
M.17	18	N/I	Savings + Parents + Income	Farmwork, 12hrs/wk
F.9	⊙ 17	under 500	Savings + Parents + Income	Fish 'n' Chip Shop, P.Time
F.10	31	17 500 - 20 000	Family Income	Nurse Aid, 21hrs/fortnight
F.11	⊙ 22	over 30 000	Family Income	-
F.12	⊙ 24	N/I	O.P.B	-
⁵ F.13	⊙ 18	under 500	E.B	-
F.14	39	5000 - 7500	O.P.B	-
F.15	⊙ 19	20 000 - 25 000	Partner's & Own Income + E.B	Baker's labourer, 20hrs/wk
F.16	22	1000 - 2500	Savings + E.B	-
⁶ F.17	19	500 - 1000	Income + Savings + Parent	Cleaner, 10hrs/wk
F.18	⊙ 37	5000 - 7500	O.P.B	-
F.19	38	10 000 - 15 000	Full-time job	Laboratory Technician
F.20	⊙ 48	15 000 - 17 500	Partner's & Own Income	Secretary, 24hrs/wk
F.22	⊙ 24	under 500	Income	Horticulturist, P.Time
F.23	⊙ 17	1000 - 2500	Parent + Income	Waitress, 10-15hrs/wk
F.24	42	25 000 - 30 000	Family Income	-
⁷ F.26	⊙ 17	under 500	U.B	-
F.27	⊙ 17	5000 - 7500	O.P.B	-
F.28	31	20 000 - 25 000	Family Income	-
F.29	⊙ 24	15 000 - 17 500	Full-time job	Staff Nurse, Night Outy
F.30	32	5000 - 7500	O.P.B + Income	Domestic cleaner, 8hrs/wk
⁸ F.31	⊙ 17	N/I	N/I	-
F.32	30	5000 - 7500	Family Income	Telephonist, 10hrs/wk, + Market Interviewer, 10hrs/wk
⁹ F.33	⊙ 29	N/I	Savings	-
F.34	24	20 000 - 25 000	Family Income	Waitress, 8-12hrs/wk

* Student estimate at start of year of their annual income range. N/I = Not indicated (see Notes below).

** Where: E.B = Emergency Benefit [\$6/wk under 20yrs, \$28/wk over 20]; U.B = Unemployment Benefit [Note: it was not legally possible for a student to remain at school and receive this benefit]; O.P.B = Domestic Purposes Benefit.

*** Student occupation, and hours worked where this was provided, indicated at start of year.

⊙ Denotes those who left school during the year.

¹ M.5 did not indicate the nature of this Benefit, although did report receiving some \$150/wk from this source.

² M.7 later reported receiving the Emergency Benefit while at school.

³ M.13 obtained a part-time job shortly after starting school, which soon became full-time causing him to 'drop out'.

⁴ M.15 reported savings as \$3000 for his return to school. Term 2 he obtained a part-time job selling newspapers.

⁵ F.13 later reported a part-time cleaning job paying \$16/wk in addition to this Emergency Benefit.

⁶ When she turned 20 in June, F.17 gave up the cleaning job and relied upon the now \$28/wk of the E.B.

⁷ From other student's figures, this is apparently 'low' but F.26 left school before income could be verified.

⁸ F.31 would not indicate either income or source, variously reporting receiving the Emergency Benefit or as deriving income of \$64/wk from farmwork. The Dean considered F.31 to be receiving the Unemployment Benefit.

⁹ F.33, on entry to school, reported 'no idea' as to likely cost, so left income blank until such time as she obtained her intended part-time job. However, she was to obtain a full-time position and leave school.

conditions were deemed by Social Welfare to be applicable - or up to a maximum of \$93 a week for a married student. Although well below the provision available for Unemployment payments, this particular Benefit was the equivalent of the amount available under the Standard Tertiary Bursary. However, the tertiary student was not required to satisfy any age criteria, and with accommodation allowances and hardship provisions could receive \$60 a week for an unmarried person.

For those participating in the present research and requiring financial assistance, these amounts available to them usually resulted in a dependence upon family support and residence at home, certainly for those aged under 20. The fact that such students could not remain on the Unemployment Benefit - or receive a higher level of financial support - was a point frequently mentioned:

Why can't adult students be on the dole? I think it's stink that we are supposed to live on \$6 a week! Hell, that doesn't even pay for my smokes! My cousin-he's on the P.E.T [Pre-Employment Training] thing - he comes to school and gets the dole as well - which is really the same as we're doing, isn't it?! Yet we have to survive on \$6 just because we enrol as an adult student. If we got the dole I wouldn't have to work every day to get enough money to survive and then I could spend more time on my school stuff. Wouldn't that be a lot better-you'd think they'd see that it was!

(F.31, Fieldnotes, 10.4.84)

For most students the return to school required a considerable financial commitment, often accompanied by a marked decrease in income. A case in point is that M.15 was to report having saved some \$3000 towards financing his return to school, yet he still found it necessary to obtain a part-time job in order to supplement his income. M.15 subsequently reported that this job detracted from the amount of time he was able to devote to his studies. This appeared to be the dilemma for these students - the need to work, as well as attend school and complete study requirements, created a number of difficulties, often resolved at the expense of school commitments.

The other area of concern that was identified involved the issue of dependency upon others for financial support. A number of those who were to leave the school cited this as a major factor in their decision (see Appendix K).

To sum up: the financial circumstances of these adult students exerted a variety of influences affecting their return to school. For a number, it meant that they were dependent for financial support upon others - parents, family, or a defacto partner - which had consequences both personally and in terms of their relationships with those they were reliant upon. Also, many found it necessary to undertake, or continue with part-time employment in order to finance their return to school. In turn, this brought about a decrease in the time they had available to devote to their studies or such other activities as social and family relationships.

To complete the account of the personal circumstances of these adult students, brief mention will be made of general '*Social Activities*'.

1.2.3 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

As might be expected within any other comparable group, the adult students in the present research reported on a variety of social activities in which they engaged. These included sporting and cultural pursuits, watching television, going to films, relationships, and a number of other similar activities. These were seen as both affecting the return to school and, in turn, being affected by school commitments. For instance, F.10 reported that her sporting activities had been 'put aside' due to her school work, while F.17 indicated that her contact with friends had 'decreased' as she was 'too busy with school' to maintain the relationships. Conversely, F.13 and M.16 both reported frequent occasions where they had stayed away from school in order to watch particular television 'Soaps'.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of the data subsumed within the category of Personal Circumstances, several observations are warranted. First, it is apparent that the sample exhibit a number of differences in background characteristics, both on an individual basis and between the male and

female sub-groups. The males were, in general, younger than the females. For males, the age range was 16-23 years, with an average of 19 years. The female age range was from 17 to 48 with the average being about 26 years. The female students were likely to be, or have been, either married or in some other relationship, whereas the males, with one exception, were all single. While a majority of male students were residing with parents or other relatives, women students were equally distributed in residential status between parents/relatives or in their own home. In both male and female groups, a small proportion resided in rental accommodation. Finally, only female students had children at home.

If consideration is then given to the point that 21 of the original sample left school without completing the year, these differences become even more marked. In short, the average age for males among those remaining for the year was 19 years, whereas for females it was 30, with all except F.17 being over 21 years of age. Further, about two-thirds of women students resided in their own homes - no males did - while about the same number had children still at home.

Invariably, the adult students tended to be dependent upon others for financial support, and most had occupational commitments.

While it must remain conjectural, perhaps it is the combination of these factors which produces the 'differences' on the basis of gender. It might be possible to suggest that the male within a patriarchal society which persists in allocating the 'responsibility' for the economic support of the family to him as the 'breadwinner' will ensure that he is economically, if not otherwise, constrained from undertaking a return to school as an adult student. Certainly, whatever the causal factors, there were no males in the present sample who had family responsibilities, whereas - and placing a further 'task' upon them - a majority of the women did.

To this point, then, discussion has focussed upon the reasons for their return as well as aspects of their out-of-school situations and biographical details establishing a profile of the adult students involved in the present investigation. The discussion has also

indicated the importance of Appendix D which provides a necessary reference for the present chapter. In addition, it has been indicated that from the initial 36 students, 15 (5 males, 10 females) remained enrolled at school for the duration of the school year, of whom only M.8 was not to participate beyond the initial stages of the research (see Appendix D).

With these aspects of student background established, consideration is now given to the manner in which these contributed to the processes the student underwent while 'Entering the School'.

1.3 ENTERING THE SCHOOL

At their enrolment, each incoming adult student was asked to provide details of goals, prior education, and preferred subject options. On the basis of this information they were then allocated to particular courses, class levels, and placed with certain teachers, in the majority of cases, by the Dean of Adult Students. In this section, discussion will focus upon the actions of the Dean as she exerted influence upon the students as they entered the school, through an illustration of: *Subject Choice*; *Class Level*; and, *Teacher Selection*.

1.3.1 SUBJECT CHOICE

Although the majority of adult students arrived to enrol at school with subject choices already made, there remained an extent to which the Dean influenced the final decision. In the first instance, the Dean held discussions with some students prior to their enrolment and reported having 'assisted' in their subject choices. Then, during the actual enrolment process, the Dean offered suggestions for subject options which resulted in some students making changes to their initial choices.

In providing these suggestions, it was evident that the Dean based her advice upon such aspects as the stated goals of the students, their prior experiences and background, as well as her interpretation of various subject content. For instance, F.10 came to enrol with a stated goal of gaining University Entrance for entry to nurse training, having sat School Certificate as an adult student the previous year. In selecting her course, F.10 expressed her wish to take both Chemistry and Biology at Sixth Form level. Responding to this, the Dean advised her that Chemistry was 'difficult' and perhaps 'beyond' F.10's abilities in view of the fact that she had not passed School Certificate Science. At this point, the Dean suggested Sixth Form History as an 'easier option' and more likely to see F.10 'succeed' at University Entrance level. The basis for the view that History was an 'easier' option than Chemistry appeared to derive from the point that the former was less reliant upon a progression through background levels than was the case in science and mathematics. The notion of the relative 'difficulty' of the various options saw many students being advised to take Humanities rather than Mathematics or Science. As such, this may be seen as reflecting a general perception of these various options, as well as the issue of pre-requisite understandings appropriate to any subject. This is not to suggest that the Dean alone operated within this perspective. The Principal and other teachers also noted that Sixth Form level English, History, Economics, and Geography were all considered suitable alternatives for those returning to school in that they were not as dependent on prior 'understandings' as were Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry. The only situations where Sciences and Mathematics were 'accepted' by the Dean as 'viable options' were where the student had recent educational experiences or was able to be enrolled at Fifth Form level. Certainly, for the research sample (see Table 19), English and History were taken by the majority of students while Biology was 'recommended' as the 'easiest' science.

In some instances, the advice of the Dean as to subject choice did not meet with the approval of either the student or some subject teachers. Again, F.10 provides an example. While she was able to state that she had found History 'difficult enough', and would perhaps not have been Accredited had she taken Chemistry as intended, F.10 reported that at least the experience in this science would have been

TABLE 19
Student: Class Level, Teachers, and Subjects

<i>Class Level</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Adult Students</i> ₁
7	English	TF.5	F.32*
	Mathematics	TM.4	M.17*, F.32*
	Physics	TM.6	M.17
	Chemistry	TM.8	M.6, M.17*, F.32*
	Biology	TM.15	M.6, M.17*, F.32*
6	English	TF.1	M.15*, F.29
		TF.5	M.4, F.10*, F.13, F.15, F.17*, F.23, F.24*, F.30*,
		TF.11	M.5*, M.6, F.16*
	Mathematics	TM.4	F.16*, [F.19*], F.23
		TM.14	M.11, F.29
	Physics	TM.6	M.15*, F.33
	Biology	TF.7	M.4, M.6, M.7, M.15*, F.9
		TF.9	F.10*, F.15, F.17*, F.19*, F.23
		TM.15	M.7, M.13, F.16*, F.29
	History	TM.19	F.10*, F.13, F.16*, F.23, F.24*, F.30*
	Geography	TF.10	F.10*, F.15, F.17*
		TM.12	M.5*, F.13
	² Economics	TF.3	M.6, M.7, M.15*, F.9, F.13, F.15, F.17*, [F.24*]
	Technical Drawing	TM.2	[M.5*]
	Art	TF.13	M.5*
	Art History	TF.17	M.5*, F.13, F.16*, F.23
5	English	TF.1	F.11
		TF.11	M.16*, F.31
		TM.16	F.14*
	Mathematics	TM.4	M.6, F.11, F.15, [F.17*]
	³	TM.14	[M.16*]
	Science	TF.7	F.31
		TM.8	M.16*
		TF.9	F.11
	Biology	DP.1	F.11, F.14*, F.28*
		TM.18	M.16*
	Economics	TM.12	M.16*
	Art	TF.13	F.11
	⁴ Alternate Mathematics		F.28*, F.34*
	⁴ Typing		F.18, F.34*
<p>¹ Incorporating only those who participated beyond Part 1 of Questionnaire N = 30.</p> <p>² There were two separate Sixth Form Economics classes, both taught by TF.3 and both with adult students. M.6, M.15, F.9, in one; M.7, F.13, F.15, F.17, F.24 in the other.</p> <p>³ M.16 withdrew from Mathematics at the same time as he 'changed' to adult student status.</p> <p>⁴ Neither teacher was interviewed, although the Alternate Mathematics teacher was casually spoken to regarding these two students.</p> <p>* Denotes those students who remained at school until the end of the year.</p> <p>[] Indicates a subject this student dropped during the course of the year, only shown for those who remained at school until the end of the year.</p>			

an 'advantage' in her tertiary level nurse training. This point was also raised by F.10's Biology teacher:

They [adults] were completely unsure of what the requirements were as far as the future was concerned. It appeared that they were just doing various subjects which often had little relevance for their future career. Take F.10 for instance - there she was wanting to do nursing and taking only the one science. She should have been at least doing Chemistry as well and not bothering with things like History and Geography.

(TF.9, Interview, 30.11.84)

Similarly, both M.6 and F.15 were to suggest that the advice they had received from the Dean regarding subject choices had seen them doing courses they felt were 'unsuitable' either in personal terms or for particular career options. M.6 reported having been advised to do English, despite having informed the Dean of his difficulties with written expression (see, for instance, p.99), and F.15 was told that she needed two subjects for entry to university when, in fact, being under 21 years of age, she needed four (see Appendix E).

Overall, there was a general consensus among the adult students in the present research that their subject choices were often based on only limited information being available to them, particularly in terms of content or applicability to a stated career direction.

1.3.2 CLASS LEVEL

As with subject choice, the determination of class level was a matter of the student acting upon the advice of the Dean. Here again, the goals, educational background, and preferences of the student appeared to be the determining influences, although the allocation to a particular level was on the basis of the subjects selected. For instance, F.11 wished to work towards entry to tertiary study within science and had prior schooling to Form Four level. The Dean recommended entry at Form Five as F.11 would 'need the background' in science and mathematics at this level prior to a subsequent year in the Sixth Form.

The other influence upon class level decisions appeared to be based on the generalized perception of the adult student as 'more mature and enthusiastic' thereby making the senior classes more 'appropriate'. Generally, the Dean sought to place adult students in the Sixth Form wherever possible. An example was F.30 with no preferred subjects, prior schooling to Form Four level, and a goal of entry to teacher training, who was advised to take History and English at Sixth Form level. At least in part, this advice from the Dean was based on the view that the Sixth Form pupils were more 'mature and enthusiastic' than those in the Fifth Form, and less likely to require as much in the way of 'discipline' from the teacher. Such a view was supported by the subject teachers as the following comments illustrate:

I know in the Fifth Form - I could see it and I could sympathise with it - poor old F.11 would come in, she was ready to start, she was ready to go, soon as the bell went, and it would take me...10 or 15 minutes to get the kids settled. I think that must have been intensely frustrating for F.11. Particularly for someone in F.11's situation - intelligent, motivated, able to work, able to use textbooks - a large proportion of my lesson had to be dictating notes, putting notes on the board, for them to copy down and the kids would yahoo around taking 20 minutes for something they could have done in five. I think from that point of view that it must be very frustrating being in the Fifth Form as an adult student.

(TF.9, Interview, 30.11.84)

Those adult students in Fifth Form classes frequently noted these 'frustrations', while those who had recent experience at both levels, such as F.10, reported the 'vast improvement' between Fifth and Sixth Form pupils:

I've found the kids good this year. I've found that they're a lot more mature than last year. ...the kids just seem to have grown up from the Fifth to the Sixth Form. You can really see the change.

(F.10, Interview, 30.4.84)

On the other hand, there were some concerns expressed about the allocation of students to particular class levels. While most teachers saw adult students as 'lacking' in study skills, teachers of science and mathematics were particularly concerned with their

perceived 'deficiencies' in background knowledge. This is reflected in the following comments by a Biology teacher:

The...thing I'm battling, I suppose particularly in Biology and Science, is that many of the things that I do require quite a good background in Science and, for those who have never really cottoned on to atoms and molecules and the like...I'm assuming all those basic things that the adults don't have. It's that sort of thing-background knowledge - which may, in fact, just prevent them making any sense of it at all, no matter how hard they try. That must be very frustrating for them... .

(TF.9, Interview, 8.6.84)

A similar situation was seen to exist in mathematics:

I see quite a few who come in with an unrealistic idea of what exactly they are going to achieve. I think, often, they haven't really had a look to see what sort of level the class is at that they are going in to. They come to the Fifth Form whereas, in reality, they are only at about Third or Fourth Form level. I think it is more [of a problem] with Maths. Because the time away from a subject like Maths hasn't helped them. The extra maturity, if they haven't had the background, isn't going to help. I've got one there this year who's really gone in at a level where she's out of her depth. F.23. She should really have gone into the Fifth Form. She just doesn't understand the basic concepts at all.

(TM.4, Interview, 7.6.84)

Recognition of such difficulties underpinned the suggestion by some of the teachers that a more indepth assessment should be undertaken of student background prior to allocation of class levels. Furthermore, while noting that many teachers made considerable efforts to compensate in class for these differences in background knowledge, the adult students considered that the school might provide some form of 'catch up' course to compensate. At the same time, the students also acknowledged that this option had inherent difficulties in terms of both time and resources. Finally, the students frequently reported, as a further difference between themselves and the pupils, that they lacked 'study skills', in particular those associated with writing, revision, and examination techniques. Yet, for the two Saturday courses, towards the end of Term Two, the school provided in this area, only two adult students - M.6 and F.14 - attended. Others (for instance, M.5, F.17, F.30) did report that they would have gone

to such courses, had they been held earlier in the year and at a more convenient time than a weekend.

As a consequence of this process of class level allocation, the adult students were placed in senior classes within the school which, in turn, determined the groups with whom they would possibly interact, as well as influencing the particular goals they could work towards.

A further influence upon possible interactions, and also premised on the notions of adult student 'characteristics', occurred during this allocation to classes and involved an apparent 'selection' by the Dean of particular teachers.

1.3.3 TEACHER SELECTION

During the enrolment period, the researcher noted that the Dean remarked to some adult students that they would be placed with particular teachers. Such comments were more common in relation to one English teacher and took the general form of 'I'll put you with TF.5 as she's really good with adults', although some other staff members were similarly selected. This process, according to the Dean, proceeded on the basis of a number of criteria:

I suppose [selection] depends on the teacher. Some of the teachers don't like adults. They are not sure how to treat them. You can't, sort of, dish detentions out if they're late or whatever because, sometimes, [student and teacher] they're in the same age group. I think, sometimes, it threatens some teachers who aren't as competent as others. Some teachers say to me "How many adults am I going to get this year?". TF.5 is like that. She wants a good group - not just one or two. Other teachers will then say to me "She's got all the adults - have you got any for me?". I'll give it to them when I can. If I know some teacher's having a hard time in the classroom no way am I going to put an adult in there unless I really have to because it's the only way the timetable fits. See, TF.5 is married with kids. She knows a lot of the pressures that my women students go through. So, it's more than just talking about Sixth Form English - ...but I think she acts as a back-up for me in that if people are having problems, and they relate well to her, they go up [to her]. So, some people will ask for them - the adult students. I think the most important thing is not putting adults...in with teachers

who I know are having a hard time coping or it's the first Term they've taught that subject. Because, adults are demanding and if you're teaching a subject for the first time and you're young then you get faced with this adult saying "You didn't explain that properly. Can you do it to me again?" - you know - it's enough to knock the teacher off at the knees. So, you've got to be a bit protective to the staff. Then, you slowly get feedback from people "I had a great time having adults" and you know next year to give them some, at least three or four. I think if I can keep them in groups I think it helps the adults. [The selection is] very informal. It's more an 'ear to the ground' sort of thing.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

Although the exigencies of timetabling and subject choice resulted in a distribution of adult students across a range of teachers, there was certainly a larger group in TF.5's English, and TM.19's History, class than with other teachers (see Table 19). The teachers, however, were unaware of any 'selection', commenting that timetabling and subject choice were the factors in determining the allocation of adult students. Of the teachers, only TF.5 reported specifically requesting 'a group of adult students', while TM.19 considered that there might be some 'selection' involved:

I have no control over [selection]. I have a suspicion that D.1 might have been selecting, but I'm not sure. I have nothing to do with timetabling of any kids or adult students in to my classes. But I notice this year I have quite a few adults. D.1 would be the one to know if there's any selection going on. I'm not going to object if I'm the one selected [laugh].

(TM.19, Interview, 21.11.84)

The second criterion of selection reported by the Dean concerned the view that beginning teachers, for instance, should not be expected to have adult students in their classes. The Dean was supported on this issue by other senior teachers, as the remarks from the Head of Science indicate:

I think some of the first-year teachers can find them [adults] a bit off-putting. They also have a lot of difficulty, they find, in adapting to the different style for adults. If you get one in the Fifth Form, it's always a bit harder with the discipline that you've got to - you've got to go to the adult and say "Look, when I'm doing a 'class haranguing' they're not directed at you.

*You can just sit there and let it go past you" [laugh].
For a beginning teacher that's a bit tricky.*

(TM.15, Interview, 18.6.84)

Again, such a selection depended upon timetabling and subject choice factors as the present research saw two first year teachers-TF.7 and TM.8 - with adult students, while a further three - TF.2, TF.3, TM.12 - reported having had adult students throughout their teaching careers, including the first year (see Appendix D).

With the influences upon the returning to school which derived from the actions of the Dean illustrated, it is appropriate to summarise the discussion at this point.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The adult students returned to school already possessing a number of personal attributes and characteristics, including: prior educational background and experiences; specific goals towards which their return was directed; certain predispositions and expectations regarding the nature of schooling; and, a set of personal circumstances reflecting their lives outside school. At the time of enrolment, these factors interacted together to contribute towards the processes they underwent as they entered school. Here, the Dean, acting upon a consideration of student background and preferences, and within a framework of perspectives originating in the institution of the school, influenced subject choice, allocated class level, and sought to place groups of adult students with particular teachers. These actions, in turn, had effects upon: access to areas of knowledge; goals that could be achieved; and, interactions and relationships within the social context.

As an outcome of entering school, the adult student was: directed towards certain areas of knowledge - particularly the Humanities; allocated to senior class levels, as pupils were deemed to be more 'akin' to the adult student at this level; and, grouped together with certain teachers. All of these, in turn, reflected perceptions held by school staff regarding both the nature of

knowledge and the generalised 'characteristics' of the 'adult student'.

To this point, then, discussion has focussed upon establishing a profile of the returning student, and providing an indication of the processes at enrolment which placed the student in a particular position in terms of potential interactions and relationships. As such, there is the extent to which these formed the 'prerequisite' conditions from which the processes of becoming an adult student were to proceed.

With these aspects of student background and enrolment processes indicated, consideration is now given to a second aspect of influences upon the processes of becoming an adult student, namely 'School Policy, Adult Status and the Role of the Dean'.

Part Two

School Policy, Adult Status and The Role of the Dean

The admission policies, expectations and practices of the school staff were of direct influence not only in defining 'who' was to become an adult student but also upon the subsequent interactions within the school context. Furthermore, by admitting the student as a member of the school population, the first steps were taken towards integrating the individual into the school culture. At the same time, the attribution of adult status to these students provided the initial actions in the processes of differentiating the adult student subculture within the school.

It is appropriate to commence this discussion of the actual processes of becoming an adult student with an examination of the policies governing enrolment and those under which adult status was attained. As it was the Dean who had the main responsibility for the implementation of school policy, with her functions during enrolment discussed in the preceding section, the focus here is upon her ongoing influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student.

The data gathered under this title, is presented under three category headings: 'School Policy', 'Attaining Adult Status', and 'The Role of the Dean'.

2.1 SCHOOL POLICY

Although there appears to be a general consensus in the New Zealand literature (see, Bradley, 1984a; Kohia Teachers Centre, 1979), that an adult student is 'a person aged 18 or over, and/or having left school for at least one full year prior to enrolment', it is apparent that this is flexibly interpreted in many schools.

Certainly, in the present research context, it was evident that a number of those admitted as adult students did not meet these criteria, while others only satisfied the minimum conditions. M.10, M.16, F.9, F.23, and F.31 were all aged below 18 years and had not been outside formal schooling for a full year. Similarly, F.26 and F.27 were aged 17, although they did have one year between prior schooling and their return as adult students. M.6, although aged 19, was continuing at school, having the year previously been enrolled at another school as a full-time pupil. M.7, M.9, M.17, F.13, and F.17 were all in the position of satisfying the minimum criteria in terms of both age and out-of-school experience.

It is therefore pertinent to consider who was responsible for the setting of the school policy which provided for the admission of students to adult status and, in particular, provided entry for those not meeting these general criteria of age and/or out-of-school

experience.

2.1.1 SCHOOL POLICY: WHO DECIDED?

Throughout the present investigation, reference was made to the 'open door' policy of the school:

The Boss [Principal] has a general guideline - I think it might be an Education Department one - I'm not sure - that they should've been out of school for a year. Okay. This is a very flexible thing. He likes to make the decision. So, sometimes he makes the decision against my wishes and against the teachers. For example, there's M.16 who was an ordinary student and who was changed to being an adult, F.31 was another one. If they've changed schools, sometimes he will let them. If they've had trouble at school about uniform, wearing jewellery, smoking, chewing - all these little things that schools don't like. If they come as an adult, they can do certain things in the Adult Commonroom and they can still fit in, okay, and take the subjects.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

It was the adoption of this 'open door' policy by the Principal which allowed for the enrolment of the younger students, in particular those who did not meet the age and out-of-school experience criteria. Adult student status was also seen at the school as a means of providing the opportunity for some participants to continue with education without being subjected to the codes of behaviour applied to the pupils. However, this policy did not always meet with the approval of teachers. In this context, some teachers criticised the admission of M.16 and F.31 to adult student status because these two, as will be further elaborated in the following section, differed in that not only did they fail to meet the age and experience criteria but both were originally enrolled as full-time pupils at the school. The comments of TF.11 regarding these two provide an illustration of teacher concern:

I complained [to D.1] about it because I didn't feel that - to me they were just like second-year Fifth Formers. [D.1] told me that the Boss had decided to change their status. ...I don't think she's very happy about it. The reaction I got certainly gave me that impression. I've known her for quite a long time so I feel that her

explanation was the easiest way in which she could express her feelings without saying anything against the Boss.

(TF.11, Interview, 8.6.84)

The Principal, then, was responsible for the 'open door' policy which saw a range of participants being admitted as adult students. From discussions with the Principal, it was also evident that the availability of places in a particular subject was one of the main criteria adopted in determining admissions. During the conduct of the present research, there were no instances of any potential student being refused entry to the school, although the Principal did indicate that, as well as 'space' in a subject, there would be one possible factor which would preclude admission:

I've not said "No! There's no vacancy for you". But, there are some people who have had [criminal] records in certain cases. They may have had, say, something to do with drugs. I'm not very interested in those people being in the school. I'm not very happy. I can't remember, in five years, saying "No you can't come" and they haven't come. A lot of them have come on trial and left because it doesn't work out for them.

(P.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

The discussion so far has indicated the general school policy which provided for the admission of adult students to the school. This policy served not only to bring the student into the school, and so initiate processes of integrating them into the school culture, but provided them with a status which differentiated them from the school-aged pupils. However, the consideration of the processes of attaining adult student status indicates that the issue was rather more complex than the mere attribution and allocation to the particular position within the school.

2.2 ATTAINING ADULT STATUS

As the previous discussion indicated, a number of students were admitted to adult student status under the flexible 'open door' policy adopted by the Principal. In particular, there were those who did not

meet the 'guidelines' which regarded an adult student as 'over 18 years of age, and/or at least one year outside school'. It is from this group, and those who just met these criteria, that perhaps the clearest indication of the processes through which they attained, or did not attain, adult student status can be derived. The discussion below will illustrate this through a consideration of the case of M.16, with additional data from some other members of the 'younger' age group (for example, F.23, F.31, M.6).

2.2.1 M.16: CASE STUDY

Both M.16 and F.31 were under the age of 18, with M.16 the youngest adult student at 16. Neither had spent a year outside formal schooling. Perhaps the more significant fact in terms of influence upon subsequent events was that both were initially enrolled as full-time pupils prior to 'conversion' to adult student status. At this point, perhaps it is pertinent to note that M.16 remained at school, saw himself as an adult student, and appeared to undergo the processes of becoming an adult student evident among the others who saw the year to completion. Throughout the present study, he remained conscious of his relative 'youth' which saw him often refer to 'age' as a topic of conversation. M.16 frequently 'inflated' his own age to 'about 18' when talking to other adult students. F.31, in contrast, prior to leaving school early in Term Two, maintained close contact with the pupils and only infrequently associated with the other adult students. In this sense, F.31 did not 'become' an adult student in that she mixed primarily with the school-aged pupils, saw herself as a 'pupil' and did not associate with other adult students, and left school by mid-year.

In ascertaining the events which lead to M.16 and F.31 being granted adult student status, it appeared that both approached the Principal seeking this change on the basis that they had been in the workforce for a short period prior to their return to school. On a personal basis, both reported that their wish to become adult students was due to the greater 'freedoms' from school regulations governing such things as attendance at class, assemblies, and group meetings, as well as the fact that they could then smoke in the Adult Commonroom.

This latter 'benefit' was cited by M.16 as his 'main reason' for changing status, and also suggested by some of his teachers as the motivating force behind his decision, although he was to report other outcomes:

I mix more with adults now and I don't go out at Interval or lunchtime and mix with my age kids like I used to. It's changed me quite a bit. I've improved a lot on what I had last year. I was only getting marks between 30 and 50 whereas it's 40 to 60 now. So, I've improved somewhat. I think, too, it's being with the adult students that's improved that. If you don't mix with the other age people that are my age you don't get dragged in as much. You stick to yourself and be very independent in class so you're listening to the teacher all the time and not chatting to people. I suppose I've grown up a bit more because I mix with the adult students.

(M.16, Interview, 10.8.84)

This change in status for M.16 and F.31 had consequences for their interactions with the other adult students and teachers. During Term One there were a number of occasions where F.31 brought some pupils into the Commonroom for a smoke, an event which drew considerable verbal censure from other adult students - including, particularly, M.16 - and, after a few such episodes, saw the Dean checking the room as a deterrent to this activity. It was at this time that F.31 stopped coming to the Commonroom, possibly as a result of the censure but reported as due to her wish to remain with her school-aged friends. Similarly, M.16's smoking elicited a number of negative comments from other adult students, particularly concerning his stated consumption of '40 a day' and his habit of flicking ash and stubbing out cigarettes on the arms of the sofa.

A number of M.16's other behaviours were initially the subject of considerable comment by other adult students, some directed towards him but most frequently during conversations when he was not present. Of particular concern to the others were a number of occasions where M.16 stored, and actually rode, his motorbike in the Commonroom. This was reported by the other students as clearly representing his 'juvenile' age and behaviour. It culminated in an incident where F.17, M.6, and M.15 put the motorbike in a toilet cubicle, the back wheel resting on the bowl, and draped toilet tissues over it. Then,

as others arrived in the Commonroom they were taken in to 'admire' the handiwork, a process which saw five of the adult students express general 'approval' for the incident, with F.14 remarking that 'it couldn't happen to a better person'. All those present on the particular day appeared supportive of the 'laugh' at M.16's expense. The instigating group, while pleased with the 'joke', were somewhat concerned about M.16's possible reactions commenting at the time 'Wonder what he'll do?', 'Hope he's got a sense of humour', and 'He'll go crazy' and deciding to present a united front when M.16 arrived in the Commonroom. When he did so, the 'giggling' of F.13 and F.17 alerted M.16 to the fact that something had occurred and that he was involved:

M.16 *Okay? What's going on? What trick have you played on me this time!?*

F.13 *[laugh] Poor, persecuted M.16! 'Everybody picks on me! Nobody loves me!'*

M.16 *There's some practical joke behind the issue.*

F.17 *Not really [laugh].*

M.16 *If anyone's sabotaged my machinery there'll be trouble!*

F.13 *Oh dear! [laugh].*

M.15 *Nobody would do that!*

M.16 *[checking on where the bike had been parked in the Commonroom] But! Somebody has! Who put it out!? Where's it gone! I'll go to the Principal! [with mounting anger].*

F.13 *This man came in and repossessed it.*

M.16 *I'm sure he did but I want it returned shortly or I'll go and see P.1! I bet it's in there [indicating toilets]. [laughter from the rest of the group as he goes in] Bloody hell! How many of you did it take to put it up here? Give me a hand to get it down. Christ, if it's damaged there's going to be trouble! If it breaks the fucking toilet it's not my fault!*

(Fieldnotes, 25.5.84)

The group then assisted M.16 in removing the bike, and some of his anger - certainly his threats of 'going to the Principal' ceased-dissipated as he realised that no damage had been done. M.16 then started the bike up and rode it out of the Commonroom, not returning, for what was to prove the last time. In this way, the group, by selecting the motorbike over which M.16 was extremely 'protective'- in that his rationale for keeping it in the Commonroom was so it would

remain out of the weather and away from possible damage by the pupils - had conveyed their feelings of dissatisfaction with his behaviour of both parking and riding it inside. At the same time, of course, they 'had a laugh' at M.16's expense.

While socialisatory incidents were to occur with other adult students, the situation pertaining to M.16 had a further dimension in that a majority of the adult students were firmly of the opinion that his relative youth should have precluded him from adult student status. The comments M.15 made regarding M.16 illustrate this:

I find it rather annoying in some ways that he's here as an adult student. I think we've earned the right-possibly we get on better with the staff because we've been out at work for a couple of years - we can understand, perhaps, more of what they're going through. We're more mature and that sort of thing. Whereas M.16 hasn't been out [of school] for long enough. He just hasn't had our, if you like, experience of life and yet he still expects to be treated the same as the rest of us and he doesn't treat the teachers the same. ...he's a pain in the butt!

(M.15, Interview, 4.5.84)

In this way, then, the schools conferment of adult student status on M.16 had a marked effect upon his interactions with his fellow students. While many were to acknowledge the point that M.16 had 'improved' during the year, and came to at least 'tolerate' his presence, the general opinion remained that a definite age limit of 18 should be adhered to, as well as adopting the criterion of some 'outside school' or 'work experience' in determining eligibility for adult student status.

Many of the teachers also expressed considerable reservations about M.16 and F.31 being admitted to adult student status. As their English teacher remarked:

I get a bit annoyed with the younger adult students who I don't feel should be classed as adults. I'm not satisfied with their attitude, their attendance. M.16 is very immature. I don't know why he's tolerated, quite frankly. I suppose they [Principal] might have hoped for the effect that if M.16 mixed with older people his attitude would improve but I don't see it. I've laid it on the line with both of them. Especially with M.16- that I'll throw him out. I'm not having him in class.

He's settled down [since then]. His attendance isn't 100 percent, therefore he's missing out on a lot of work.if they are classed as normal students [pupils], I think, to a certain extent, we can control their attendance and their behaviour because there are a lot of sanctions we can use that you can't with adult students. M.16 and F.31 both need that.

(TF.11, Interview, 11.6.84)

Even by the end of the year, while his teachers were remarking that M.16 had matured, most still considered that he would have made greater progress academically had he remained as a full-time pupil. Again, TF.11 comments on this point:

His [M.16's] [was] ... an absenteeism problem. He would be here one day then he'd go 'off' for a couple of days - and he never knew where we were up to and he hadn't done the work. He matured during the year - most definitely. He stopped being a silly little boy. Mind you, with F.31 leaving - that was a big help. I'd like, frankly...to see this term 'adult student' redefined. Um - well, set some guidelines - because - I don't really think M.16 was an adult student at the beginning of the year - he was just too young. I think he should have come back as a second-year Fifth Former - so that we could have controlled his attendance a lot better - got the school Deans to work on him - because he was a rather 'aimless' young chap - he just didn't know where he was going or why he was back at school.

(TF.11, Interview, 21.11.84)

A majority of teachers also considered that a definite age limit should be set for adult student status, and those teaching M.16 continued to categorise him as a 'different' case than the 'other adult students'.

Whether this perception of his status by others was a causal factor in M.16's constant reference to his being an 'adult student' remains open to conjecture. What is apparent is that M.16 saw himself as an adult student while appearing to experience a greater 'need' than any other student to demonstrate this status within the classroom situation. Both M.16 and his teachers were to report a number of instances where he 'confirmed' his status through actions or remarks. While other adult students were to report personal frustration over lesson content, M.16 was the only one to actually walk out of lessons he considered 'irrelevant' voicing the 'excuse' as he left that 'as an

adult student, I don't have to attend'. Despite, or perhaps because of, the perceptions others had regarding his status, M.16 continued to associate and identify with the other adult students and, particularly in the initial stages, make frequent reference to the point that he was enrolled as an adult student and that this conferred certain 'privileges' such as attendance and the 'right' to associate and act as he liked in the Commonroom. As the year progressed, there were evident changes in his attitudes and behaviours within the Commonroom, which his teachers also reported within the classroom, which he attributed to his 'mixing' with the other adult students.

By undergoing the processes and identifying himself as a member of the group, it is suggested that M.16 'became' an adult student during the course of the present investigation. On this basis, the point can be advanced that M.16 more completely associated himself with adult student status than did some of the others who had enrolled, and were perceived by staff and students, as adult students. F.23, for instance, perceived herself as being:

I really am one of them [pupils] - I am in their age-group. I know how they think. I know - I'm still of that age-group. More so than with the adult age-group.

(F.23, Interview, 11.9.84)

Similarly, F.17 reported her perceptions of herself as being 'still a pupil' while M.6 increasingly associated with the Seventh Formers in their Commonroom as he 'felt more at home' there than with the other adult students. Although the school policies and practices directly impinged upon the processes of 'becoming' there also remains the extent to which self-perception also influenced the outcomes. While M.16 was not completely accepted by all his peers and the staff as an 'adult student', and M.6 was, it is argued here that it was the former who 'became' an adult student with M.6 'remaining/continuing' a 'pupil'.

To this point, discussion has illustrated the school's policy on adult student admissions and the processes by which the status was attributed and 'identified with'. Before proceeding to examine the role of the Dean, it is appropriate to review these aspects of the processes of becoming an adult student.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

From the foregoing discussion of the data subsumed within the categories of School Policy and Attaining Adult Status, it is evident that policies and practices of admission enacted through the school were of considerable influence upon the processes and experiences of becoming an adult student. This was particularly the case with those students who either did not meet the criteria of age and experience or only did so at a minimum level. Two points appear pertinent in this context. First, as discussion has indicated, a number of those within this group came to identify themselves more closely with the status of 'pupil' than that of adult student. Certainly, M.6 did so while students such as M.17 and F.17 frequently reported ambivalent feelings regarding their status and often a closer 'identification' with the pupils than the other adult students. The second point is that it was this younger age group who were to have the highest drop-out rate among the present sample. Of the original 13, only M.16, M.17, and F.17, remained at school to complete the year.

The significant difference between the case study example of M.16 (and F.31) and the remainder is that all the others were enrolled as adult students from the start of the year. Moreover, they were seen as 'adult students' by both staff and peers while M.16 and F.31 were not. Both were categorised as 'separate cases' from 'true' adult students. This difference was particularly evident in cases such as that of M.6 who, while associating mainly with the Seventh Formers, and reporting himself as 'more a pupil than an adult student', was consistently referred to by staff and peers as being an adult student. On the other hand, M.16 associated only with the adult students, saw himself as occupying this status, yet the majority of his peers and all of his teachers continued to refer to him as in a 'different category' from the 'usual' adult student'.

It therefore becomes apparent that while the school staff and peers may 'attribute' an individual with adult student status, there remains that rather idiosyncratic component of 'becoming' which also needs to be taken into account. Certainly, it was apparent that M.16 was not 'attributed' adult student status yet saw himself as occupying

this position while, M.6 was 'attributed' by both teachers and peers but saw himself as a 'pupil'. In this way, then, the processes of becoming an adult student required the participants to see themselves as occupying this status, a component which could override the attributions of others within the social context.

This section has illustrated certain aspects pertaining to the processes of becoming an adult student which were influenced by policies and practices enacted within the school. With the enrolment as well, this saw the adult student admitted to the overall school culture - a process termed integration - while attaining adult status saw the student 'distinguished' from the school-aged pupils - a process termed differentiation. However, these represent the initiating contexts as such processes are both ongoing and complex and the outcome of the interplay of a variety of sources of influence as the individual becomes an adult student. While the Principal determined school policy, and admitted M.16 and F.31 to adult status, it was the Dean of Adult Students who had the main responsibility for its implementation and interpretation into practice. The focus now turns to a discussion of the role of the Dean as a source of influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student.

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

At the beginning of the school year it was the Dean who interviewed the majority of potential students and so was directly responsible for deciding which individuals would be admitted to adult student status. Following admission, the Dean had overall administrative responsibility for the adult students, advising on subject choices, determining class level, and sometimes the teachers the adult student would have, during the processes of enrolment. Then, throughout the year, the Dean continued to provide both administrative and a variety of 'counselling' and 'advisory' functions for the students. The Dean also acted as an 'intermediary' between Principal, teachers, and adult students, performing such functions as

the communication of information, handling issues of dispute or contention and interpreting and implementing school policies.

Throughout the duration of this project, the Dean played a central role for the students in the processes of them becoming adult students. This central role stemmed in part from her unique position of responsibility at all levels of the school's hierarchy. Her influence on the adult students is dealt with in the following discussion under these headings: *The Person, her Perspectives and Position; Administrative Functions; and, Counselling/Interactive Functions.* In embarking upon this discussion, it is pertinent to note that in accounting for the influence of the Dean, it is also necessary to consider data derived from school staff as well as the adult students.

2.3.1 THE PERSON, HER PERSPECTIVES AND POSITION

During the present research, the author frequently encountered situations where many of the Dean's actions and activities appeared to result from her personality and the manner in which she interpreted her role. Therefore, before discussing the tasks and functions the Dean performed, it is appropriate to provide some indication of the background, perspectives, and position occupied by the Dean.

In seeking to describe the Dean, the researcher found considerable agreement with her own comments that:

See, some people are accusing me of being too much of a 'mother' - you know, how a mother's supposed to chase after the kids and do too much for them? - that's the accusation I get. I mean, well, there may be an essence of truth in it.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

While not necessarily accepting the analogy, the author found support during the investigation for the view that the Dean was both 'caring' and 'involved' with the adult students. From such casual events as the 'cuddles' she gave to some of the students, to the time spent advising and counselling particular individuals, and the efforts she made towards assisting in the achievement of goals, an overall

impression is gained of a person concerned for the individual adult student.

Further indications of the personality, background, and perspectives of the Dean are contained in the comments she made when reporting her decision to relinquish her position, after a four year tenure, at the end of the research year. This decision was taken on the basis of two considerations. First, the Dean was concerned that an increasing number of other obligations had resulted in less time being available for her duties with the adult students. She reported that her school responsibilities included: a full teaching load; school and regional soccer; Head of Integrated Studies Department; Work Experience programmes, and; supervising the annual school Arts Festival. To these the Dean added her outside school responsibilities of: home and family; Chairman [her term] of a Credit Union; member of a school Board of Governors, and; Parish Management Committee. It should not be surprising, then, that throughout the course of the present investigation, there were a number of occasions when the Dean was unavailable to the adult students. These commitments and responsibilities provided the main reason for her unavailability and why she felt that:

...I'm not doing the job the way I should do it, and that I find very hard to cope with. So, you know, I feel as though I haven't got the time to do it.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

The second consideration underlying the Dean's decision to relinquish her position reflected her personal concerns regarding the research sample:

I asked [to step down] because it was getting far from the point where it's a challenge any more. It's just getting to be a nuisance. I've run out of patience with [adult students] - 'cause it's been a very, very bad year. We had one student [F.15] who went and told P.1 where to get off. And, the absenteeism's the worst I've ever seen. It's the emotional thing as well - like, M.5 popped in yesterday - wanted his Sixth Form Certificate - a copy of it - we've got no copies. He was given the original. I said to him "Why do you want a copy?" and he said "I screwed it up in anger" - at the marks he'd got. Now

we've got to go through all that - and he's an adult! It's all those little things that just wear you down.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

Throughout the research, it was apparent that these issues were of considerable personal concern to the Dean. They warrant discussion at this point as possible effects upon the Dean's perception both of her functions and the present research sample. On a number of occasions, the Dean conveyed a fairly negative impression of the sample as a group, comparing them unfavourably to previous adult students:

I feel for you [author] because I thought this [research] was going to be really neat and then you've had a bunch of rat-bags to put up with. I think "This is not a typical year as adults go" - I wish you'd been here last year, or the first year I was here.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

The majority of other staff members did not perceive the present group as being in any way 'atypical'. Rather, they reported that the pattern of attendance - the central issue in the Dean's perception - was 'expected' of adult students and they certainly were not very different from previous groups.

Despite these perceptions of the present group, throughout the year the Dean devoted considerable time and effort to the adult students. In performing her functions, it was apparent the Dean provided her own 'interpretations' of her role compared with the Deans responsible for the various groups, or class levels, of pupils:

The [other] Deans, as such, have a job-description in the Staff Manual but mine is just so very different. In a sense, you're isolated because you're the only one whereas the other class levels have got two Deans. Or, also, in the sense that the Seventh Form Dean talks to the Sixth Form Dean and they know each other and the kids they are both responsible for. My lot are separate. They have a separate identity. That way, you feel isolated because you can't talk about it to anybody because they don't understand.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

From comments made by the Dean, it appeared that the main criteria for appointment to the position were a 'willingness' to undertake the duties and an 'availability' in terms of other responsibilities. Furthermore, as the present Dean had not taught adult students at any stage of her career it can be noted that such 'teaching experience' was not a factor in determining appointment in this situation. While the Dean reported that the Principal had seen as 'desirable features' her own recent studies as an adult student towards a degree, and the point that she had family responsibilities at this time, neither these nor any other experiences or qualifications were deemed as 'necessary' in her appointment to the position. However, the Dean did attach some significance to the manner in which her recent study experiences did provide insight into the problems and concerns of the adult students. It was these, in the absence of any 'guidelines', which underpinned the interpretation and implementation of the role of Dean of Adult Students making it then the responsibility of the individual occupying the position.

While these aspects of the Dean's role, her perspectives, and the nature of the position, affected the manner in which the various tasks were performed, the issue remains that the Dean was required to fulfil certain tasks and duties for the adult students enrolled at the school. It is to these, and the particular manner in which the incumbent Dean carried them out, that the focus now turns. As this discussion proceeds, then, it must be recalled that while certain aspects might vary according to the individuals concerned, the basic processes of becoming an adult student are the central issue.

2.3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

The Dean's administrative functions commenced when she enrolled the adult students at the school. This initiated processes of integration. The Dean also attributed adult status to the students thereby differentiating them as a 'separate group'. Exerting influence through offering advice upon subject choices and by allocating students to particular class levels, and even teachers, were yet further examples of how the Dean's administrative functions influenced the students and the experiences and processes of becoming

an adult student. While these aspects were confined to the enrolment period, the Dean also performed administrative tasks which were ongoing throughout the year. Among these, for instance, were the process where she disseminated information regarding timetables, and changes to them, meetings, and other school events. However, in terms of her own perception of her role, the 'central' administrative task the Dean performed was that of dealing with attendance. It is upon this that the following discussion will focus.

Attendance

At the start of the school year, along with providing a general 'Information Sheet' (see Appendix C), the Dean informed the adult students that they were required to fulfil the same schoolwork commitments as the pupils and to adopt 'appropriate' standards of behaviour in the classroom and school grounds. The students were also told that assignments were to be done, and on time, and that smoking and swearing were not to occur at school except in the confines of the Adult Commonroom. During this general discussion, the Dean placed particular emphasis on certain differences between the adult students and pupils in terms of attendance requirements. The students were informed that they were not required to attend school Assembly, although welcome to do so if they wished, nor any form of class level group meeting - with the exception of those specifically concerned with matters pertaining to examination entry which would be duly notified. Also, the Dean stated that absences were 'expected' among the adult students in view of their commitments outside the school and that, in the 'interests of politeness', the student should inform the teacher of the reason and attempt to make up for work missed. As they were adults, they were not required to 'bring a note from home' if absent. Moreover, she informed the students that 'no sanctions' would, or could, be applied by the school regarding absences. The Dean did note that examination entry was dependent upon a minimum attendance and that 'personal penalties' would accrue through the additional effort required to 'catch up' if classes were not attended. At this time, then, the Dean emphasised the point that the adult students were not subject to the same requirements of attendance as

the pupils, owing to their adult status, outside commitments, and the 'expectation' that they were now 'responsible' for their own actions.

As the year progressed, lack of attendance was to emerge as a central issue for the Dean. The absences among the research sample was the major criterion cited by the Dean as distinguishing the present group as 'atypical' and 'problematic' in comparison with previous groups of adult students. In addition, it was accounting for the absences which the Dean considered the 'most onerous' of all her functions:

...the attendance thing! That drives me bananas! Sometimes I lose students - they've left, they're the part-timers, and it might be a couple of weeks before I suddenly realise "Where are they?". You ring up trying to get their books back and they've moved flats, they've gone away, or something! I feel responsible for them all. So, things like that - you know - I feel as though I've let the teacher down, I suppose. The big thing is the absence thing and I'm responsible for it. Any complaints, they come to me. I just seem to get flak all year, all year long. I get little notes like "Haven't seen so-and-so?" - "Haven't seen F.27 for a week, can I have her books back?". So it's something you've got to do something about. You can't do it during the day so it means that so much is done at the weekend and at night. That's the only time I can get hold of people if they've got a job during the day - and many of them have. It takes an awful lot of time. So, there's that side of the job and I don't think anybody out there [in the school] realises that aspect of the job.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

As well as seeing the absenteeism of the research sample as the 'worst ever', the Dean considered that this reflected other characteristics of the adult students:

...with the absence problem comes a whole list of values that go along with it. That people say they are keen to come back and get qualified, and are never here. It's not rational, it's not logical, to me. To say that you want to get qualified and then bugger off for so long. People like F.23 who wanted to come back. F.13 - remember all the trouble we had with her? All the ringing up, chasing her around, sorting out her problems at home - I spent a lot of time over her trying to make sure she kept at it - passing on all the encouragement I could - bolstering her up. I don't understand people like that - I suppose they are not sure in themselves exactly what they want to do.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

From such statements, it is evident the Dean held a view of the adult student involving regular attendance at school. Yet, the Dean also differentiated the adult students from the pupils in terms of attendance requirements. Accordingly, there appeared to be an inherent contradiction both in the Dean's 'definitions' of 'adult student' and in her approach to the issue of attendance. This becomes more evident when consideration is given to the tactics the Dean adopted in order to maintain attendance at school by the adult students. Three broad strategies were identified.

The General Approach:

This approach involved strategies directed to the group rather than specific individuals. Initially, this took the form of the Dean entering the Commonroom and addressing general comments to the students present, such as 'The bell has gone' or 'Who has a class now?'. These appeared to be 'gentle reminders' that classes required the presence of adult students. This tactic was most frequently used during Term One and just prior to examinations.

A second strategy within this general approach involved the Dean placing notices on the board in the Adult Student Commonroom. One such notice read:

*Standards are slipping with some adult students.
Remember, please be:
PUNCTUAL,
POLITE,
ATTEND ALL CLASSES*

(Fieldnotes, 21.3.84)

Just before the first school examinations D.1 wrote another message on the board about continued absences among the group. At the time, the Dean told the researcher that:

A lot of the adult students aren't going to class. Some are a lot worse than others. Take F.13 and F.15 for example. Both of them are missing a lot of classes. Just the other day, TF.5 said to me how well F.13's doing, but that she could do a lot better if she came to class more often. While it's good to get the compliments and be able to pass them on, I don't like having to chase them up to attend class. I'm expected to chase them up yet it

is often the class teacher who has the best idea of when they're absent!

(D.1, Fieldnotes, 25.5.84)

The Dean's general approach strategies did not result in any significant changes to the patterns of absences evident among the adult students. Certainly, those who were not attending regularly were unlikely to see such notices or hear the reminders the Dean addressed to those present in the Commonroom. The only outcome of this approach was to indicate to those present that the Dean regarded attendance as an 'important' aspect of being an adult student.

The Personal Approach:

The second approach involved the Dean either telephoning or personally interviewing individual students, including: M.5, M.6, M.16, F.11, F.13, F.15, F.23, and F.31. As with the general approach, the outcomes in terms of improving attendance appeared to be minimal. The Dean, however, was more concerned with the effects this strategy had upon interpersonal relationships:

All you end up is ringing them up "Where the heck have you been? Come on, come back to school" and "Blah, blah, blah" - it makes me be a teacher to them. I don't want to be a teacher to them - I wanted the relationship to be more horizontal - not a vertical one - but it ended up being vertical with those people I never saw. Hate being that way to people that age! Sort of the archetype of the teacher that's going to tell you off even though you are twenty or thirty - no way! But, some of them, you have to.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

This role of 'teacher' was also evident in the Dean's final strategy.

The 'Official' Approach:

This strategy involved the Dean placing a record of absences on the School Report of each student (see Appendix D) when these were issued following the mid- and end-of-year examinations. This provided

a written record of absences on the official Report and was seen by the Dean to be

...my only weapon. They say "I haven't been away that much!". I know that's what F.31's going to say to me. I just take them all through the roll-book and show them.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

Similar to the personal approach, the Dean adopted a strategy which clearly placed her in the role of the 'authoritarian teacher' as she 'admonished' the student for their lack of attendance.

These, then, were the three forms of strategy adopted by the Dean in her efforts at maintaining the attendance of the adult students in the present research context.

Overall, the Dean's efforts to improve attendance appeared to involve an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, she informed the students that adult status carried with it a differentiated set of attendance requirements distinguishing them from the pupils. Indeed, both staff and students defined adult student status as implying a relative 'freedom' from strict attendance regulations. As such, this was seen as giving recognition not only to the differential status of the pupil and adult student groups, but also to the fact that such flexibility was a requirement considering the out-of-school commitments characteristic of adult students. In short, this 'freedom' from attendance obligation can be seen as a central component in the differentiation of adult student from pupil. For some, such as F.10, F.32, and M.17, this 'flexibility' resulted in almost continuous attendance, while others (for example, M.5 and F.16) were able to achieve their goals despite frequent absences. Part of the processes of becoming an adult student, then, involved the individual deriving a 'self compromise' regarding attendance where they were able to meet both school and external commitments, retaining eligibility for credential-based goals, and undergo the necessary experiences. The contradiction related to the fact that, despite the Dean acknowledging this differentiation of adult student from pupil, she was to resort to a variety of, unsuccessful, strategies directed towards ensuring that the students attended not only regularly but adopted a pattern very similar to the pupils.

So far, the discussion has examined those aspects of the Dean's role broadly subsumed under the title of *Administrative Functions*. Attention will now turn to the second group, namely, those pertaining to *Counselling/interactive Functions*.

2.3.3 COUNSELLING/INTERACTIVE FUNCTIONS

Interaction with the adult students and counselling them were functions also carried out by the Dean. In describing her overall role, the Dean clearly differentiated between 'administration' and 'counselling', the latter of which was:

To me...far more rewarding and less of a hassle. It's the side where I'm offering support to them. The counselling side of it. Keeping them going. You've got to keep supporting them all the time. On the phone at night, whenever. If you meet them in town, it's just 'keep them going'. Once you get them to Term Three they're on the home stretch and it makes me feel a lot better.

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

It is with this 'support' side of her role that the present section is concerned. The data has been subsumed according to the 'function' this support contributed to in terms of the overall processes and experiences of becoming an adult student, namely: *Interaction and Integration; Interaction and Differentiation, and; Interaction and Problem Intervention.*

Interaction And Integration

During the present investigation, there were numerous occasions where the Dean offered support which contributed to the integration of the adult student into the school culture. In general terms, this involved the Dean in providing 'encouragement' to the students emphasising the 'successful' aspects of their return to school. A case in point occurred where the Dean entered the Adult Commonroom and the following conversation ensued:

D.1 *The teachers are all pleased with your work - they say you're doing really well. Also, they seem to think you'll do really well in School C this year and you should pass without much trouble at all.*

F.11 *Really - that's neat! I didn't think I was doing that well. Makes me feel a whole lot better. Although I suppose now I can hardly fail - I'll just have to pass so as not to let them down! But, I have felt fairly confident with the work and I am really enjoying being back at school. It's really great and then to get praise like that really makes your day!*

F.33 *That's a nice surprise for you!*

F.11 *It sure was - I feel a lot better now.*

(Fieldnotes, 4.4.84)

The effectiveness of such encouragement and support is clearly shown in F.11's responses. Contributing to this outcome was the situation where, immediately prior to the Dean entering the Commonroom, F.11 had been recounting some of her personal difficulties in a conversation with F.33 and the researcher:

I'd like to move into a small flat too. I'm having a lot of problems at home...with my husband. I've been thinking about a divorce or moving out... Part of the cause of the problem is my study - my husband is not very pleased that I came back to school and he derides all my efforts. It's been getting worse lately and I may just have to leave home.

(F.11, Fieldnotes, 4.4.84)

While the Dean had not known of this prior incident, it was evident from F.11's comments that she 'felt better now' that this encouragement had been rather 'well timed' in this particular instance. The short-term outcomes of the Dean's 'support' are clearly evident in this particular situation.

It was noted that by giving such 'praise' and 'encouragement' the Dean made a contribution towards increasing the self-esteem of the adult students. This also served to integrate the students further into the school culture.

Although this provision of general 'encouragement' by the Dean occurred at various points throughout the year, it attained particular prominence at examination times. On these occasions the Dean adopted

a general policy of encouragement directed towards keeping the students at school until after the first exams because:

They forget the exam skills, if they ever had any at school. See, a lot of them are 'school failures', drop-outs, or whatever word you want to put there. Doing exams is a skill in itself. So, doing tests and things like that are important. Some of them don't realise that. You know - "It's only a test I missed" - especially at the Fifth Form level - but those skills of reading a question, understanding what the examiner wants, and putting it down on paper are important. I've seen people fail exams at mid-year and then in the second lot in Term Three they've come right. It's twiggled - you can see it - it's like "Daylight!"

(D.1, Interview, 28.5.84)

The Dean provided the encouragement to persist beyond the first examinations through placing particular emphasis upon 'achievements made' in her comments on School Reports (see Appendix D), during her discussions with students following examinations and the issue of Reports, and through such general statements as 'keep going, it gets easier'. The Dean did, however, comment that she would suggest that a student should leave school if consistently low marks in tests and examinations were being achieved.

Interaction And Differentiation

At various times throughout the year, the Dean went into the Adult Commonroom and engaged in 'general conversation' with the adult students. Covering a wide range of topics - including politics, world and local affairs, sporting events, and family matters - the important feature of these conversations was that such interaction was on an adult to adult basis, in terms both of the interrelationships evident and the language used. There was also a number of times where the Dean and students would discuss various school-based issues, such as particular teachers, school policies, practices and events, in which the same adult to adult relationship was evident. Such conversations were clearly different from those likely to occur between a teacher and pupil.

A further illustration of the manner in which certain interactions between the Dean and adult students contributed to processes of differentiating between the adult and pupil subcultures involved the provision of 'privileged information'. One such case occurred in a conversation where the Dean reported that the adult students could obtain their School Reports before the pupils could access theirs:

The thing is not to flash it [Report] amongst the other kids because they haven't got theirs and that really gets them upset - "Why do the adult students get theirs?" - you know.

(D.1, Fieldnotes, 29.6.84)

The access to 'privileged' information, and special treatment accruing from adult status, was also apparent in other situations during the course of the year. For instance, the Dean entered the Commonroom on one occasion and the following conversation occurred:

D.1 I'm in a very embarrassing predicament this morning. It's a situation where I cop it in the neck if I don't tell you something, but, even if I do, I could still cop it. Tomorrow Period Five will be Period Three Friday-right?

F.10 That's what it says there [blackboard].

D.1 Right - but it won't be. The Seniors will be dismissed at 2.30 tomorrow - at the end of Period Four. You must keep that quiet though - don't tell any of the pupils about it because if it gets back to the Boss I'll really cop it.

F.32 Why the secrecy?

D.1 The Staff have been told about it but the pupils are not to find out until tomorrow. Perhaps the Boss thinks they'll all take off at lunchtime if they find out they will only be back for one class in the afternoon. So, there's no point in coming tomorrow afternoon for that Period.

F.32 So, if we had a class and came for it tomorrow afternoon we'd get here just to be told to go home again?

....

D.1 Yes. That's why I'm telling you this now. You can let the other adult students know about it - please do-but, for goodness sake, don't let the pupils hear about it.

(Fieldnotes, 25.10.84)

In this case, the adult student group was provided with access to information denied to the pupils.

Interaction And 'Problem' Intervention

Certain events, involving either individual students or teachers and students, transpired during the year which involved the Dean in general counselling and interaction in situations where problems or difficulties had been encountered. As such, these situations appeared to have their origins in either of two sources, 'external factors' outside the school or 'internal factors'.

External Factors:

On a few occasions during the present investigation, the Dean intervened in order to assist particular individuals faced with problem situations where the source was located outside the school. One such case resulted from F.9's announcement to the Dean that:

F.9 I've got a problem! I have to quit school! I've left home and I've got no choice in the matter.

D.1 Why did you leave home?

F.9 I just couldn't take it any longer! It was driving me crazy and I just had to escape! Now, though, I've got nowhere to live and no money to live on! I'm really in the shits!

....

D.1 Okay. Your first priority is a job. Have you been to the Labour Department yet?

F.9 Going as soon as they open.

D.1 I'm going to town now so I'll take you with me [gives F.9 a 'cuddle']. But, if you want a job you'll have to do something about your appearance. You'll have to tidy yourself up if you want a job. Any chance of sorting out the problem at home?

F.9 No way! I'm not going back even if they beg me! I'm just sick and tired of always being picked on and always being in trouble no matter what I do. I have to do everything as well as come to school! Things like the dishes, windows, spuds and so on. Even when I come home from school and have to go almost straight out to work I still have to do my 'housework' first! Nor do I get any praise for being here at school.

....

D.1 *I'll take you down to the Labour Department now and then you can go to Social Welfare and try and get fixed up there.*

(Fieldnotes, 26.3.84)

Two aspects of the Dean's role in such incidents are apparent in the above account. First, the Dean provided 'support' for the student, in this case not only by the 'cuddle' but also in showing her concern. Second, the Dean offered advice by suggesting a means of resolving the situation. Shortly after this conversation, the Dean did take F.9 to the Labour Department. F.9 subsequently approached the Social Welfare Department seeking financial and accommodation assistance as was recommended by the Dean. While unsuccessful in obtaining either a job or any form of assistance, F.9 had acted upon the Dean's advice. The final outcome of the incident was that F.9 left school, and within a short period of time she returned home and obtained a part-time job, although by the end of the year it appeared that she had moved to a flat.

Counselling, however, more typically involved the Dean in a series of interactions with certain individuals over a period of time. The situation of M.6 provides an illustration of this:

I spent a lot of time with M.6, for example, this year - and so did a lot of other people in the school. In the end, I put him on to [Sixth Form Dean] and [Guidance Counsellor] to have a go with him. See, you may spend a lot of time with one person, like M.6, trying to help. He'd often come in - I'd be going to do something at lunch-time and we'd end up talking for an hour in here [room]. I probably got on better with M.6 than the rest of them because I felt he needed me. That might say something about myself [laugh]. I really cared for that kid because I really felt for the family he was in - all this pressure, pressure in him all the time. Trying to get him to come to terms with himself - realise that he had reached his level and that he couldn't handle the work at the higher level. He had so much to learn. He was so naive when he came here. We used to have these big long chats about things - about his mother, independence, growing up - all those things. I like to think we helped him - it's not just me, it's the other people who put all the time in with him too.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

In turn, M.6 confirmed D.1's influence upon him:

I think I look on D.1 as a very motherly figure - to help me sort out some of my problems.

(M.6, Interview, 9.8.84)

During the time he was at school, M.6 consulted the Dean, his classroom teachers, Form Deans, and the school Guidance Counsellors a number of times concerning his various 'problems'. As well as being the only adult student to seek assistance from sources other than the Dean, it was apparent that these various staff members devoted considerable time to advising M.6. These consultations covered a range of issues of concern to M.6, including: his academic performance; difficulties with written expression; his perception of his 'lack of maturity and independence', and; his family relationships. Of these, it was the relationship with his mother which M.6 reported as perhaps his 'greatest' concern, at least in the sense that it was her actions which led to many of his other difficulties. M.6 reported that it was his mother who had enrolled him as an adult student and that she applied considerable 'pressure' on him to 'succeed in examinations'. As an outcome of the counselling he received, M.6 noted that he had been able to discuss the situation with his parents and to 'convince' them that he was unlikely to pass the end-of-year examinations. Further, both M.6 and the Dean considered that his return to school, and in part the counselling he had received, had also resulted in the development of 'greater maturity and independence'. After two terms at school, M.6 felt that he could assert himself to the extent where he could leave school and obtain a job.

As with F.9, the contribution of the Dean appeared to lie in the provision of an opportunity for M.6 to examine alternatives to his return to school in light of his experiences and situation. It was this 'consideration of options' which the Dean saw as an important part of the experience for some adult students, reporting that in each of the ten cases - M.4, M.6, M.7, F.9, F.11, F.15, F.23, F.26, F.27, F.31 - where such counselling occurred this resulted in a decision to leave school.

These case studies of F.9 and M.6 provided the initial indications of a further aspect of the processes of becoming an adult student. On the basis of such evidence, it was considered that the processes involved an 'assessment' or self-evaluation where the adult students considered options in light of their personal circumstances and experiences. As the research progressed, data was gathered which indicated that all students had, at some time or another, evaluated their return in terms of 'likely outcomes or benefits' contrasted with 'costs' such as the effects upon finances, relationships, and other aspects of their personal lives. The differences, then, were that only those cases outlined in the present section consulted the Dean during this process, although some others did receive 'input' from her, and that not all decided to leave as an outcome of this self-evaluation.

Internal Factors:

The following section focusses on the Dean's intervention in situations which originated in factors within the school. In order to illustrate this aspect of the Dean's influence, two incidents are reported here. The first involves student criticism of a particular teacher; the second examines a situation where the Dean's intervention contributed towards a student remaining at school. Full details of both incidents are provided as case studies in Appendix E.

Teacher Support

On a number of occasions, adult students made critical comments about particular teachers. The majority of these cases were confined to general conversation within the Commonroom or reported directly to the researcher during discussions or interviews. Although these criticisms were directed to the Dean infrequently, one did result in her intervention.

During the First Term, the majority of adult students in TF.3's Economics class had reported to their peers and to the researcher their perception that this teacher lacked 'control' in the classroom. This general impression was not conveyed to the Dean until the beginning of Term Two. At this time, a group of students voiced their concerns regarding various teachers, but gave particular emphasis to

TF.3 and the situation in her classroom. The incident might have rested there, but as part of a more widespread criticism (see, also, Appendix E) of school policies, practices, and teachers, F.15 reported the matter to the Principal. In turn, the Principal had decided to act upon this 'student complaint' by confronting TF.3 with the issue, but first discussed it with the Dean. At this point, the Dean intervened recommending that the Principal not approach the teacher. This advice was duly followed.

In this situation, the Dean intervened to provide support for the teacher, and contributed to the closure - from the point of view of staff - of the incident. As no change in the situation resulted - complaints regarding TF.3's class persisting throughout the year - the adult students interpreted this incident by inferring that those 'in authority' would 'back up' the staff as the first priority in conflict situations. This feeling was reinforced as they sought to effect other changes within the school - such as requesting heating in the Commonroom, asking that the Commonroom be refurbished, or for 'consideration' over changes to the timetable. The adult students appeared to group these situations together as an illustration of their 'relative powerlessness' when no change resulted. This gives rise to the suggestion that becoming an adult student involved some recognition and acceptance of the distribution of power within the social context and, along with this, the occupancy of a particular position in the overall hierarchy of relationships. The majority of the adult students considered that they occupied a relatively low position in the hierarchy, often reporting this in terms of 'below the pupils' certainly when it came to them being 'considered' by the school organisation in provision of facilities and changes to such items as the timetable.

Student Support

There were also those situations where problems arose from within the school context and the Dean intervened to support a student. One such incident, detailed further in Appendix E, involved F.16.

F.16 frequently reported her 'shyness' as a cause of some personal concern, particularly when required to participate in classroom discussions. It was this concern which then directly

contributed to F.16 deciding to leave school rather than present a seminar to her History class. The basis of F.16's anxiety was that some pupils in the class were likely to 'ridicule' her efforts, given that they had subjected her to some 'teasing' already. F.16 went ahead and completed the 'signing-out' documents at the School Office and was on her way out of school when she met the Dean. In tears, F.16 informed the Dean that she had decided to leave rather than face the 'teasing' of certain pupils in her History class. In this conversation between F.16 and the Dean, no mention was made of the actual seminar, although this had been reported to the researcher as the 'main reason' for her decision to leave. Having been informed of the situation, and that F.16 was in the process of leaving, the Dean intervened and spent some time 'convincing' F.16 that she should not leave with only a few weeks remaining in the school year. As a 'solution', the Dean suggested that F.16 approach the History teacher and seek his assistance in rectifying the situation. F.16 did this, informing TM.19 of both her concerns over the seminar presentation and her 'problems' with the pupils. The teacher was 'unaware' of the events F.16 reported and they quickly came to a 'compromise' which saw F.16 reverse her decision to leave school.

This intervention by the Dean provides a further illustration of how self-evaluation of their return to school is part of the processes of becoming an adult student. F.16 had 'assessed' her situation and decided that the 'best option' was to leave rather than subject herself to the potential 'embarrassment' of the seminar presentation. Then, the Dean's intervention contributed to a further evaluation of the situation by F.16 and resulted in her decision to remain at school.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

As the preceding discussion of the data subsumed within the category of The Role of The Dean illustrated, the *Administrative* and *Counselling/Interactive Functions* interpreted and performed by the Dean were an important aspect of the influences upon the processes and experiences of becoming an adult student.

The Dean's administrative functions included those tasks during enrolment where she influenced subject choice, allocated students to a particular class level, 'selected' particular teachers, and attributed adult student status, in accordance with school policies and practices. In turn, enrolment initiated processes of integration by admitting the students into the overall school culture, whereas conferring adult status served as a prior condition to their differentiation from the pupil group.

However, and perhaps indicative of the point that these enrolment procedures involved an element of 'counselling', the Dean interpreted her 'administrative role' as primarily concerning the issues of attendance. The discussion indicated that an inherent contradiction existed between the relative freedom from attendance obligations granted to the adult student and the Dean's attempts to ensure a similar pattern of attendance within the adult student and pupil groups. These strategies were unsuccessful, and part of the processes of becoming an adult student continued to see individuals determine their own 'compromise' between school and external commitments.

It was via her 'counselling and interaction' role, and in particular through placing emphasis upon 'achievements made', and in providing 'praise and encouragement', that the Dean provided support to the participants in their processes of becoming an adult student, and in turn contributed to their integration into the school culture.

In other aspects of her interactions with the adult students it was demonstrated that the Dean exerted some influence on the processes of differentiation between them and the pupil group (for example, providing the adult students with access to 'privileged information' denied to the pupils). This process of differentiation appeared to reinforce the point that the adult students were not the same as the pupils, thereby contributing to the establishment of 'boundaries' between the pupil and student subcultures.

The Dean also intervened in 'problem' situations confronted by students. It was suggested that such situations could be distinguished on the basis of whether their 'source of origin' was in factors 'external' or 'internal' to the school. In terms of the

processes of becoming an adult student, the central point to emerge was the important role that self-evaluation played in determining whether or not a student would remain at school. This, self-evaluation was a central component in the processes of becoming an adult student.

As an outcome of the processes of enrolment, the implementation of school policies and practices, and the ongoing influences of the Dean illustrated to this point, the adult student was located in a particular context of institutional organisation and forms of interactions and relationships. Continuing the focus upon the themes of 'integration' and 'differentiation', the following section considers the adult student In The School.

Part Three

In The School

The admission and enrolment of adult students brought the individuals into the school and located them within the situational context. As such, this initiated processes of integration where the individual is 'inducted' as 'part' of the overall school culture. At the same time, they were attributed with the particular status of 'adult student', thereby initiating processes of differentiation. These two processes, commenced by the implementation of school policies and practices, were contributed to further by the Dean as she acted upon the various functions defined within her overall role. On the other hand, the previous discussion clearly indicated that the mere attribution of the particular status was not a sufficient condition to ensure that an individual 'became' an adult student. In a very real way, then, becoming an adult student is not a status gained by definition as the individual enters school. Rather, it is

an outcome of an ongoing, active, and complex process, at once interpretive, constructive, and participatory on the part of the adult students involved.

Certain aspects of the processes of becoming an adult student derived from the situation of the individual being 'In the School', and the accompanying context, relationships, and interactions. For instance, there were features related to the school 'environment', the student 'status' within the school, relationships with pupils, the processes of dissemination of information, the timetable situation, and the Adult Student Commonroom, all of which impinged upon the experiences and processes the adult students were undergoing. Prior to a more specific focus on the classroom context, the present section will discuss these aspects under the categories of: 'Integrating Influences' and 'Differentiating Influences'.

3.1 INTEGRATING INFLUENCES

3.1.1 SCHOOL 'ENVIRONMENT'

A number of factors contributed to the adult students perceiving themselves as members of the overall school culture. One such factor was that, as adult students, they were already 'familiar' with the institution because of their prior experiences within formal schooling:

It's - school never changes - it's always the same. I roughly knew what to expect, so, physically, it's not a lot different, really.

(M.17, Interview, 13.8.84)

The adult students reported that the physical surroundings, the furniture, and even the basic decor, resurrected 'memories' of their earlier schooling. The daily 'routine' of bells, class times, and 'breaks', as well as the crowds of pupils in the corridors, classroom seating arrangements, and even the 'constant noise', were all cited by adult students as reinforcing the feeling of being 'back at school'.

This similarity of environmental context was reported by the adult students as contributing to the promotion of a 'sense of belonging'. With some of the younger adult students, this familiarity led to reflective comment:

Far out! Somethings hack me off. Like being 20 and still living at home. All I ever done is gone to school. Other kids are doing things with their lives and what have I done. Nothing and I'm still at school. I can tell this is going to be another one of those BLOODY DAYS.

(F.17, Diary, 27.4.84)

The school environment, then, represented a situation the adult student was already 'knowledgeable' about, and, to this extent, the student arrived in the school already partially 'integrated' by prior experience.

3.1.2 DRESS CODES

The adult students and senior pupils at the school were not required to wear school uniform and this enabled the adult student to 'fit in' and feel 'more at ease' in the school situation. Some teachers noted that much of the First Term had passed before they realised that certain of the younger individuals were in fact adult students. Even some pupils were reported as being 'uncertain' as to the status of some of the adult students, at least initially. For the older adult students, cases of 'mistaken identity', by both teachers and pupils, resulted in the individual being seen as a 'visitor' or 'new teacher'. On a number of occasions, the adult students reported that the lack of differentiation in terms of 'appearance' between them and the senior pupils led to a feeling of being 'part' of the group.

3.1.3 STATUS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

While adult student status served to differentiate, integration processes brought the student in as 'part' of the school. In other words, the adult students occupied somewhat of a 'dual status' within the school. As subsequent discussion will elaborate, they were

perceived by staff and themselves as being the 'same, but different' from the pupils in terms of status, particularly within the classroom context. Prior schooling experiences also seemed to be influential here. For instance, F.19 remarked that she 'expected' to have the same 'inhibitions', causing her to be 'scared of the teachers' and 'scared to open her mouth', as she had been the case during her prior schooling, and that the present year was

...just like being back at school. [pause] It's improved a bit as time goes on. But, I still have the same inhibitions.

(F.19, Interview, 13.8.84)

The majority of adult students conveyed a generalised impression that their prior schooling experiences somewhat predisposed them towards occupying a similar status and role position as they formerly held when pupils themselves. For some this was seen as being what might be termed 'regressive socialisation' where the adult students came to occupy a role they had left previously:

I don't really like being an adult student for the fact that I always felt it was sort of like a step backwards. But, then, I suppose to go forward you've got to go backwards.

(M.17, Interview, 13.8.84)

Although M.17 was the only adult student to express the process in such explicit terms, most did report a close 'identification' with the role and status of 'pupil' and note the 'familiarity' of their situation, particularly in terms of classroom relationships. There was also some suggestion that adult students were willing to adopt various strategies in order to 'emphasise' this similarity of role relationships:

...for instance, in Economics, it's far easier for me to get along with everybody [teacher and pupils] by acting more as a [pupil] - more as a kid, than as an adult. I just act like they do.

(M.15, Interview, 16.8.84)

On a number of occasions, however, various adult students

expressed dissatisfaction with being equated with the pupils by their classroom teachers. One such student was F.24 who stated:

We are adult students - we are not teenage students - and I think the teachers forgot that. I had that feeling [being treated as a pupil]. It frustrated me once or twice. We are adult students.

(F.24, Interview, 29.11.84)

Others reported 'resentment' at being grouped together with the pupils under the generic term of 'kids' or 'children'. F.14's comments illustrate this:

Last period I got really annoyed with the teacher, the English teacher. He treats us like kids and always speaks down to us. He does that with all the adult students. Crikey, most of us left school a long time ago and we shouldn't have to put up with that now. Yet our Biology teacher is the exact opposite. In Biology the teacher treats us as equals and seems to really understand us and our needs. That is what a teacher taking adult students should be like. It is really important that they understand that we are mature and that we have many responsibilities outside the school.

(F.14, Fieldnotes, 21.2.84)

This view was substantiated when F.30 entered this conversation to provide her opinion:

The benefits of age and experience are important. I think we have a number of advantages over the school pupils, and even the younger adult students, which the teacher should respect and make use of. But they're not going to get much from us if they are going to treat us like children all the time.

(F.30, Fieldnotes, 21.2.84)

Being treated like 'children' remained a cause of concern for some students throughout the year (see Appendix E). F.16 spoke of considerable resentment over the treatment M.5 and herself received when they were 'admonished' by the teacher in a similar manner to the school-aged pupils:

Also, she [TF.11] treated us like kids - me and M.5. She was worse with M.5 - she sort of told him off, just to get a laugh from the class. She would sort of tell him off then look at the class for their approval. Some of the class would sort of snigger - most of them,

though, didn't pay it any attention. But, I felt, she was always trying to bring us down - make us out to be pupils, rather than adult students.

(F.16, Interview, 6.12.84)

While a majority of adult students at one time or another did express some concerns over being equated with the pupils in the classroom context, there was no evidence that these were conveyed to the actual teachers. The adult students continued to occupy a status seen as equivalent to that of the pupils. This integration involved the establishment of the teacher/student relationship, membership of the overall school culture, and resulted in the adult student assuming a number of similarities in terms of interactions and behaviours to those of the school-aged pupils.

3.2 DIFFERENTIATING INFLUENCES

3.2.1 STATUS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

At the same time as the adult students were integrated into the overall school culture in a similar status and role position to the pupils in terms of some relationships, it was also apparent that they were perceived as occupying a 'different' status. Even in the terminology adopted by pupils, teachers, and adult students, there was a distinct separation. Although the generic label 'student' was sometimes employed in the case of the pupils, they were more usually distinguished as 'pupils' or frequently as 'kids', whereas the term 'adult student' was adopted in all instances where any ambiguity might occur. In addition, the pupils were subject to the integrating influences of membership of a peer grouping within a class which had daily meetings with a 'Form Teacher'. This grouping had an existence over a time period considerably longer than the one year most adult students spent in the school. In this way, then, the adult student was not subject to either the more intensive integrating influences of continuous class groupings, nor those of the time factor. These

served to further enhance the differentiations between the members of the adult student and pupil groups.

Status differentials were evident in other aspects of school life. Most adult students were not regularly involved in sporting, cultural, and social events with pupils, as M.17 remarks:

You find you miss out on a few things - you know - things that are going on. You have to really keep your ears open and watch the notices and everything 'cause you just don't hear anything. That Senior ski trip. I didn't hear about it until a month after it was going. I'd just like to [be included] a wee bit more. It's just something I've noticed - that you're fairly isolated [from the pupil culture].

(M.17, Interview, 13.8.84)

There were, however, some adult students who did participate with the pupils in various sporting and social activities. F.31 played netball for a school team, M.6 went on the ski trip with senior pupils and reported some social contacts outside school, and F.17 participated in a 'social' - non-competition - soccer team on a few occasions. In these cases, this was taken as a further indication of these individuals seeking closer 'identification' with membership of the pupil group rather than with the other adult students, particularly for F.31 and M.6 who consistently reported themselves as 'more pupil than adult student'.

Another indication of the different status of adult students within the school concerns the events at the annual Prizegiving ceremonies. During the initial years when adult students were first admitted to the school, the practice had been to give one set of awards for 'academic merit'. The Dean reported that this had resulted in the pupils feeling disadvantaged by unfair competition when the majority of such awards were collected by adult students. This was the rationale for the current practice of providing a distinct set of awards for the adult students, thereby further emphasising their differentiated status within the school.

3.2.2 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS

The presence of adult students in the school was the cause of some resentment among pupils as the following excerpt shows:

D.1 The kids often resent adult students in class and ask us why you have to be in their class.

F.30 Why?

D.1 It's because the adult students are so enthusiastic and work so hard - they see you as a threat to them and their chances of getting accredited or of doing well in exams - you're unwanted competition to some of them.

(Fieldnotes, 16.7.84)

Further substantiation of the existence of this resentment was apparent in an account M.5 provided of a conversation with a female pupil:

One day I was walking home and I started talking to this girl - I think she was in the Third or Fourth Form - and she said "Do you go to Bummers?", and I said "What?". She said "Boys' High", and I said "No, I'm an adult student at [school]". She said "Oh, you're an ant" and I went "What?". She said "A crawler". I thought 'Pleasant girl - piss off!'.

(M.5, Interview, 24.5.84)

It appeared that some pupils were willing to 'help' adult students to 'assimilate' into the school by informing them of the 'appropriate' behaviours and expectations they should exhibit in the school situation:

Have been chatting to one of the talkative girls [pupil]. She gave me some pointers on how to succeed as an A/S at [school]

- remember I am a guest at their school.*
- just sit quietly at back of class. Don't say anything unless asked to by teacher.*
- never ask any [pupil] to be quiet in class as this is bossy and A/S have no right to interfere anyway.*

She also said that the [pupils] dislike A/Ss doing UE as we always get accredited, which lowers the likelihood of borderline [pupils] (such as she) getting it.

(F.29, Diary, 16.2.84)

In talking with F.29 about this incident, she informed the researcher that other pupils had joined in and lent their support to the comments, particularly those concerning the 'unwanted competition' for University Entrance provided by the presence of adult students in the school. Indications from both staff and adult students suggested that many of the pupils held similar views. This 'hidden curriculum' of 'appropriate behaviour' and 'place' in the hierarchy of relationships did appear to be followed in certain respects by most of the adult students. F.30 remarked that she also had a similar conversation with the same pupil as F.29, and that:

She [pupil] came to me and had a chat and said that adult students weren't superior and that they were very privileged to be there. That they should not sort of take over the classes or tell them - the younger students - what to do. I agreed with her wholeheartedly on every point and from there on in she left me alone.

(F.30, Interview, 4.5.84)

Other aspects of this 'hidden curriculum' were also observed in action during the year. For example, adult students frequently reported considerable frustration with pupil behaviour in class - such as noise and the 'time wasting' strategies, yet noted that they would never consider bringing this to the attention of either pupils or teachers. Similarly, the adult students adopted, at least initially, a fairly 'low profile' in class, consciously deciding to avoid appearing to 'dominate' lessons. This is not to suggest, on the other hand, that all adult students would necessarily adopt such strategies. Indeed, the fact that some pupils found it 'necessary' to inform the adult students of 'appropriate behaviours' is most likely indicative of the point that such situations had arisen in the past, a matter confirmed by teacher comments as will be discussed subsequently.

A further feature which contributed to a 'separation' between the pupils and adult students was the seating arrangements in class. It has already been reported that the policy of the Dean to group adult students together resulted in some concentrations within particular classes. Most adult students reported that they either sat alone or with their fellow adult students in the classroom:

Like I said before, adult students sit together in a group

and you don't really interact with the rest of the [pupils] or get involved with the school.

(F.17, Interview, 3.5.84)

After an initial period where relationships between the students and pupils were somewhat tentative - on both sides - there did follow greater interaction:

I think in the beginning they [pupils] were a bit wary. I think they expected us to be superior in some way - to know more - and if you made a mistake they enjoyed it thoroughly. But, after making a few mistakes, they realised that we were just like them. The only difference was the age - otherwise we're just like them. I found that the boys, actually, were very shy. They kept apart but the girls started talking sooner and now the boys are actually - you know - they'll compare notes and give you a hand.

(F.30, Interview, 4.5.84)

The adult students were accepted by pupils as 'fellow learners' and this usually led to interaction and cooperation within the classroom. Nevertheless, full integration did not occur and a degree of separation between adult students and pupils remained throughout the period of this study. This is indicated by M.15 when he stated that:

They [pupils] will give you back-chat in school and that sort of thing, but they won't say 'Boo' to you outside. Some of them don't even look at you. They just don't know what to do. Yet in school they will wave as they go past in the corridor - that sort of thing. They just don't know how to react to you out of school. They know that, in school, you're trying to be one of them but you're not really. Once you get out, that's different. Well - it's never got beyond the acquaintance stage. I mean, there's no real - got no friendships with them or anything. You know that they look upon you as someone different - not just as one of them. They seem accepting but not completely.

(M.15, Interview, 16.8.84)

The adult students were seen, by themselves and pupils, to be 'part, yet separate' from the pupil group.

3.2.3 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Most of the adult students often appeared to be 'excluded' from aspects of the official processes of information dissemination within the school, this providing a further example of the differential treatment of adult students. For the pupils, a continuous process of information dissemination occurred through school assemblies, Group Meetings, and a daily Notice Sheet, keeping them informed of changes in routine, sports visits, meetings, and general school based information. In contrast, the adult students were not required to attend assemblies, did not have Group Meetings, and did not always receive, or read, the daily Notice Sheet. Moreover, the daily Notice Sheet often advised meetings or other occurrences on the day of issue, it being distributed to pupils during the Group Meeting at the start of each day (see Appendix D). Because of this, the adult students often felt 'excluded' from the school routines and reported that this illustrated further the 'difference' between them and the pupils.

The Dean, as the individual responsible for communicating information to the adult students, also reported this as a difference between the students and the pupils. In her view the nature of the 'adult student' precluded any effective processes of information dissemination:

...you can't communicate with people who aren't here. The problem the adults always have is finding out what's going on at school. That's always the difficulty for them. I used to take the Notices in there every morning and there'd be nobody there. But, I feel for them in the sense that they don't know really what's going on. And, the absenteeism affected that, so, when they came back, we might be doing something else as a school and they didn't know. I can say to a class of kids what's happening, but I never see the adults. See, I could go in there at Interval and find, say, six adults - and that was a good day - other days I'd go in and there would be nobody.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

The adult students were aware of such difficulties. On the other hand, they reported that the 'lack' of information concerning school events was a considerable disadvantage, and a situation which the

pupils did not face. In particular, the 'lack' of information regarding timetable changes was to become a major concern to the adult students during the year.

3.2.4 THE TIMETABLE SITUATION

The determination of student personal timetabling, and consequently their particular teachers, was carried out on the basis of available times when the individual could attend a subject (see Appendix D). Another aspect of timetabling involved adult students requesting time off for outside school commitments. Every effort was made by the Dean to match timetabling with this requirement. Despite these efforts, the variations of class times within the school timetable remained a constant source of difficulty for part-time students - such as F.19 and M.11 - in that they required different times each day from their full-time employment. When added to their travelling time in order to attend class, both students found that there were quite lengthy periods when they were absent from their jobs. In M.11's case, this was given as a contributing factor in his decision to drop out of school, while F.19 cited her timetable difficulties and work commitments as influencing her decision to drop Mathematics early in the year, and as a source of her absences on other occasions.

Overall, many adult students felt that the school timetable was not ideally 'suited' to their requirements, although they did appear to accept this as one of the realities of their decision to return to school. It was the changes to this timetable which occurred that produced much dissatisfaction and cause for concern among the adult students.

Timetable Changes

The first major change occurred at the start of Term Two when the Tuesday timetable was altered as follows:

All morning classes of 45-minute duration (rather than 1

hour as previous), giving four instead of three periods before lunch; Period 5 and Period 3 interchanged so that subject previously in Period 5 will now occur in the morning; only a single subject Period in the afternoon in place of the former two.

(Fieldnotes, 22.5.84)

These changes were advised on the daily Notice Sheet of the previous day (which was the first day of the new Term). Many of the students did not appear to be aware of these changes. Consequently, most arrived at school to find either they had missed a class, were late for it, or were not required to be at school until some other time of the day. The reactions to this particular change were mixed:

F.10 *I didn't know they'd changed the timetable! This isn't on! Why weren't we told!?*

F.15 *It was on the Notices yesterday.*

F.10 *I looked for them but couldn't find them. Hell, that means I've missed another Period and just because of them! They'll have to change it back! It doesn't suit me at all!*

F.15 *It suits most of us. It means that we've got the afternoon free.*

F.10 *It doesn't suit me! I've got the last Period this afternoon anyway. It will just have to be changed back!*

(Fieldnotes, 22.5.84)

The adult students expressed general disapproval and concern about the situation timetable changes, despite the fact that in the above instance some 'benefited'. F.24 was more outspoken than the others in her criticisms of these timetable changes as the following conversation between F.24 and the Dean shows:

D.1 *Why didn't you come to the meeting this morning?*

F.24 *It was far too early. Nine o'clock is far too early for me to get here in the morning. It's a bit like that silly timetable change too. I didn't know about either it or the meeting this morning. I reckon it is a stupid change. Like this meeting, though - why weren't we given more notice about it? I didn't know about the change of timetable until I came in and found that I had missed half of my class. That's not really very good, is it!?*

D.1 *It was on the [Daily] Notices.*

F.24 *But I didn't see them. They are just dropped in here on the table and you often don't see them. I looked for the Notices on the Monday but they weren't here when I was in - that was before lunch. I don't think they even came in here until late in the afternoon. What use is that to the adult students who aren't here all day!? Are we expected to hang around until the Notices appear!? I think the school should have informed us of a major change like that timetable one!*

D.1 *I can't ring all the adult students and let you all know of these things. It would take a lot of time, even if I could get hold of everyone.*

F.24 *Yes, but the decision must have been made some time ago that the timetable was being changed.*

D.1 *It was discussed last term but the staff didn't know it was going to happen until...the day before.*

F.24 *I just don't think it's good enough. It doesn't suit me either. I've got young children and the change means problems for me.*

D.1 *The school can't be fitted around the minority of those adult students with children. We've got the majority to consider.*

F.24 *I just don't think it's right that we should not be informed. I think the school could have made the effort to inform us well beforehand that the timetable was going to be changed!*

(Fieldnotes, 5.6.84)

With this, D.1 left the Commonroom without further comment. F.24 continued on to remark that this was yet another indication of a general 'lack of concern' for adult students within the school. Perhaps it is pertinent to note at this point that F.24 remained critical of the school, and of the 'highly paid' teachers in such an 'easy job', not being able to 'efficiently organise' a 'simple' matter like the timetable. This view was not held by others, to the extent that F.24 was 'dismissed' as one of 'those problem parents' who would be sufficient reason not to become a teacher. However, while F.24's perceptions of the 'cause' were not agreed with, the consensus did remain that the changes to the timetable seriously 'disadvantaged' the returning adult student.

While the basic timetable remained unchanged following the alteration at the start of Term Two, there were a number of occasions when classes were rearranged and cancelled (for example, teachers absent, sporting visits, cultural events, etcetera).

In Term Three, a pattern of constant variation resulted from the random rotational substitution of subject lessons for the times formerly designated as Culture and Elective Periods (see Appendix D) of Tuesdays and Thursdays. On a majority of these occasions, changes were advised only a day or so prior to the event with the consequence that adult students were unaware of the alteration and either missed classes or arrived to find that they were not required at school. A typical feeling amongst the adult students was indicated by F.17 when she appended the following comment to a series of notices placed on a blackboard in the Commonroom advising changes in the timetable:

School motto : Keep them confused!
(Fieldnotes, 14.9.84)

In general terms, the adult students had three basic concerns regarding timetable changes. First, they were often unaware that the timetable had been altered and felt this reflected the generally poor communication of information to the adult students. Second, such changes often meant a 'wasted journey' to school. And third, it was difficult for them to reorganise their other commitments in order to accommodate timetable changes.

In summary, timetable changes were seen by the adult students as a central component of the processes which differentiated them from the pupils. As the adult students stated, the pupils were both aware of such changes and unlikely to be greatly inconvenienced in that they were attending school full-time and did not have the external commitments in school time.

One further differentiating factor for the adult students was their use of the Adult Student Commonroom.

3.2.5 THE ADULT STUDENT COMMONROOM

The Adult Commonroom assumed considerable significance for the majority of adult students as the major site of their group interactions. In this light, two cautions need to be attached to interpretations of what occurred in the Commonroom. First, not all

adult students utilised this room on a regular basis, particularly those who were attending part-time (see Table 7). Second, the Adult Commonroom was the main site for researcher/student contact during the year, and therefore its 'significance' should be judged with this in mind.

The adult students, and particularly those who remained for the duration of the year, placed some emphasis upon the context and interactions within the Adult Commonroom. An indication of its importance was provided by F.17 who said that, while she did not feel part of the class or school, she did 'feel part' of the group within the Commonroom in that:

You walk in to school, do your classes, you sit around and socialise with the other adult students in the Adult Commonroom, and you walk out again.

(F.17, Interview, 3.5.84)

The 'role' of the Commonroom context in terms of the processes of becoming an adult student revolved around its contribution to social contact and interaction among the students. The Commonroom's (see Figure 3) appearance, its facilities, the noise from within and outside, and its use as a storage room, effectively precluded the room from being a place for work, leaving 'socialising' as the only viable activity which could occur there. This particular activity was considered to be of significance in becoming an adult student:

It ['socialising'] may be a little bit of a hindrance because you don't get on with your work in the Commonroom, but it has also helped in the way you feel a lot more - you have a lot more guts to go out and do it because you can talk to everyone else and see that they're feeling the same way.

(F.15, Interview, 30.4.84)

There were also a number of occasions where Commonroom interaction lead to students missing classes:

...I started to notice that my own behaviour was starting to change and become more like group standards. I started to become a rebel again and took less care over my personal appearance. Then, I even started to bunk classes along with the rest of them. That was really interesting because when apart from the group very few of them missed

classes, then, together though they would convince each other to take a Period off.

(M.4, Interview, 19.3.84)

Both of these instances illustrate the importance of such interaction to the processes of becoming an adult student. The first shows the way in which the student gained 'support' from the group, the second demonstrates the manner in which group activities could directly influence aspects of student behaviour. Those occasions where interaction lead to a student missing classes appeared to be more common during the First Term, and limited to those comprising the 'younger age group'. By the beginning of Term Two, interaction in the Adult Commonroom depended less on the factors of age and interests, as was the case in Term One, and more on membership of the adult student subculture:

I didn't like it much at the beginning of the year. We used to have little groups and you'd be quite friendly only with your group but I think everyone has settled down and they've either got stuck in or they've left.

(F.11, Interview, 3.5.84)

The 'condition' of the Commonroom - its generally poor decor, use as a storage room, lack of heating, and broken furniture - was a source of some antagonism during the year. The adult students frequently remarked to the Dean that the room was a 'disgrace' to which she usually replied that a complete refurbishing was 'imminent'. In the view of the adult students, the conditions of the room, and the lack of progress towards improving them - a start not being made until the end of the year - were a further indication of their relative 'powerlessness' to effect change, and that they were accorded 'minority' status in terms of the provision of facilities. This latter point was evident in a number of occasions where the adult students referred to the 'vastly better' conditions of the pupil commonrooms. At one stage, when the Sixth Form pupils had been 'banned' from their commonroom as a 'disciplinary' action by staff, some adult students suggested that an exchange occur noting 'we would know how to appreciate good facilities'.

Perhaps the clearest indication of how the Commonroom served to

differentiate the students from the pupils involved the exclusion of pupils from this room. While being grouped together with the pupils in the classroom was seen by the adult students to be important, they considered that the Commonroom should remain 'adult only':

You need to be able to get away with your own friends-people of your own age group. Adult students, really, are on a different level to the [pupils]. They have experienced what it's like outside school - and they tend to have more 'adult' conversations about things - like, even about the teachers - which I don't think the [pupils] would understand - they might take the wrong meaning from some of the things said about teachers. So, no - they shouldn't share the same Commonroom.

(M.15, Interview, 29.1.85)

In this way, the adult students clearly differentiated themselves as members of a separate group, and saw the Adult Commonroom as a central site for the adult to adult interactions supporting this subculture.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The preceding discussion noted that student 'familiarity' with the school environment, their 'similarity' of dress with senior pupils, and the equivalence of status between the pupils and adult students, particularly in the classroom context, served to integrate the adult student into the overall school culture. In order to meet the demands posed by formal schooling, then, the adult student must become 'part' of the culture of the school.

At the same time, the adult student was also differentiated as a member of a 'separate group', or subculture, within the school. This differentiation of the adult subculture arises through various 'sources of influence'. It has been noted, for instance, that school policies and practices served to establish the 'adult student' as a person with a different status and subject to different expectations, rules, and regulations to the school-aged pupils. The foregoing discussion has illustrated that the 'boundaries' between the two groups were enhanced by the fact that the adult student did not participate in the variety of sporting, cultural, and social events

available to the pupils. The separation was further strengthened by the lack of interaction between adult students and pupils outside the classroom situation. While the adult students were 'part' of a class, and occupied a similar position to the pupils in terms of classroom relationships, this equivalence did not extend to total 'equality'. In short, relationships with pupils were 'friendly' yet clearly different to those among pupils.

The Adult Commonroom provided the most overt example of differentiation between the adult students and pupils. Not only were pupils 'excluded' from this room, but the adult students saw this exclusion as 'important' to the student's privacy and to their need to associate with their 'own age group' in the confines of the Commonroom. This total separation between the pupils and students placed particular emphasis upon the distinctions between the two groups.

These processes of integration and differentiation were further evident in the interactions and relationships between the adult students and the teachers In The Classroom. It is to an examination of this influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student that discussion now turns.

Part Four

In The Classroom

At the start of the school year when the students gathered for the first time in the Adult Commonroom, waiting for the Dean to arrive to distribute timetables, the major concern of the students was whether the teachers in the classroom would treat them "Like adults or like kids?". This 'question' succinctly summarises the classroom

interactions and relationships between adult students and teachers with which the present section is concerned.

In the two preceding parts to this presentation of data, the themes of integration and differentiation as important components of the processes of becoming an adult student have been discussed. It has been shown that admission to the school provided the initial conditions for the adult student to become integrated into the overall school culture. Then, various policies and practices enacted by the Dean were discussed as further contributing to this particular process through which the adult students came to 'identity' themselves as members of the school. On the other hand, attribution of adult status initiated processes of differentiation which lead to the establishment of 'boundaries' between the pupil and adult student subcultures. This process, too, was then influenced by the Dean as she undertook her various functions. Further influences on each of these processes of integration and differentiation derived from the 'context' of the school - the school environment, relationships with pupils, timetable changes, and the adult commonroom, for instance - and the interactions and relationships within this situation.

While these exerted considerable influence upon the adult students, it was with their classroom teachers that the students spent the greatest amount of the time at school. This contact provided the conditions for a variety of interactions and experiences which also impinged upon the processes and experiences of becoming an adult student. Discussion now turns to a consideration of the adult students in their relationships and interactions with their teachers, 'In the Classroom'. The data subsumed under this title is presented under two categories: 'Integrating Effects' and 'Differentiating Effects'.

4.1 INTEGRATING EFFECTS

A number of aspects of the relationship between adult students and their classroom teachers exerted an influence upon the processes

of integrating the student in to the overall school culture. It is the intention of this section to provide an indication of these effects through a consideration of the areas of: *Forms of Address; Classroom Relationships: Adult or Pupil; Discipline, and; School Reports.*

4.1.1 FORMS OF ADDRESS

One indicator of the nature of the relationships between adult students and their teachers concerned the manner in which the students referred to the staff members. In general, the adult students adopted a practice of formally identifying a member of staff through the use of a title - the appropriate 'Mr', 'Mrs', or 'Miss' ['Ms' was not used] - and surname, or by referring to them in terms of their position such as 'Principal' or 'Dean'.

These forms of address persisted during casual conversation in the Adult Commonroom, although in this context there was perhaps a slight tendency to use surname only, dropping the title or position. The only exception to this general pattern was the Dean of Adult Students who was frequently referred to, and addressed, by her first name. In general, then, the adult students were relatively formal when referring to their classroom teachers. This was the case even in situations where the adult student and teacher had known each other prior to the research year. For instance, both F.10 and her English teacher, TF.5, reported having 'known each other well' for some time as a result of their involvement with children attending the same Playcentre. However, on the majority of occasions F.10 referred to this teacher as 'Mrs TF.5'.

In turn, this 'formality' of address extended to the classroom situation as well, with one teacher reporting that M.15 was even 'more formal' than the pupils:

...he called me 'Miss' - which embarrassed me. First of all, because it's a very English custom - when I was teaching in England, the kids never called me by my surname - all the kids here do [laugh]. In England, though, it was always 'Miss' - the anonymous 'teacher'. But, M.15 called me 'Miss' which was, you know, quite

different - I didn't expect that - I wouldn't expect that from an adult student in particular.

(TF.1, Interview, 23.11.84)

This formality in addressing teachers appeared to be adopted by the students in order to maintain what they perceived as the 'appropriate' relationship with their teachers. As F.11 expressed it:

But I don't like to get too friendly - too involved - with the teachers because you feel then that you can't have a pupil/teacher relationship. Well, because then for a start off - they feel, if you get too friendly with them, they feel stink if they have to criticise you - when your work's not up to standard or you're doing something wrong. That's important, I think, because you've got to know if you're doing the right thing.

(F.11, Interview, 17.8.84)

The exception to this general practice was F.14 who, throughout the investigation, referred to all but one of the teachers on a first name basis. It was only in the case of her English teacher, for whom she expressed some 'dislike', that F.14 used a surname in general conversation. F.14 appeared to use first names because of her greater 'familiarity' with staff resulting from her involvement in the Parent Teachers' Association. This involvement was frequently brought to the attention of the other adult students when F.14 reported conversations she had with the Principal and other teachers. In general, the other students registered their 'disapproval' of F.14's use of first names whenever it occurred. This either took the form of facial expressions - such as a raising of the eyebrows - or direct comment in the form of 'F.14 always uses first names', although this was restricted to situations where F.14 was not in a position to overhear the remarks.

This general 'disapproval' of F.14's use of first names in referring to staff members, further illustrates that the majority of adult students appeared to consider such close 'familiarity' as 'inappropriate' in the school context. On the one informal social occasion of the year, where the teachers were invited to a morning tea provided by the adult students, this general relationship was also evident. Held towards the end of the year in the Adult Commonroom,

there was very little interaction between the two groups, with the teachers and adult students forming two 'distinct' entities. Moreover, while teachers addressed the adult students on a first name basis on the few occasions of interaction, the adult students continued to use 'title and surname' in reply, even F.14.

Overall, then, it appeared that the adult students adopted, and 'accepted' as appropriate, a form of address and general relationship which were relatively formalised and most akin to that of the 'pupil role' existing within the school situation. This, it is argued, is an indication of the processes of integration through which a student/teacher relationship is seen to be similar to that between pupil and teacher. Further illustration of both this relationship and the processes of integration was evident within the classroom context.

4.1.2 CLASSROOM RELATIONSHIPS: ADULT OR PUPIL?

The general consensus of opinion from teachers and adult students was that, in the classroom situation, adult students and pupils were treated as being 'equivalent'. From the outset, the majority of adult students reported the 'expectation' that they would be treated in much the same terms as the pupils by their classroom teachers. This was 'confirmed' to some extent by the physical context of the classroom where adult students and pupils sat together. Moreover, as noted previously, many of the adult students adopted various practices which served to emphasise their similarity to the pupils in the classroom context. F.11 remarked that:

I found, at the beginning of the year, they'd [pupils] sort of 'try' you out to see if you'd tell on them - you know? I think if you just keep your nose out of it, and just be sort of non-biased - either way - they do accept you.

(F.11, Interview, 17.8.84)

There was also the point that most adult students considered that being 'integrated' with the pupils was the only alternative available within the classroom:

She [teacher] can't very well talk to us as a separate group. If she stops and talks to you [outside class], of course, she talks to you as an adult. But, she doesn't make a great distinction between us in the class - which is fair enough because she can't anyway.

(F.19, Interview, 7.6.84)

Similarly, the consensus among the classroom teachers was that the adult student was generally viewed as being 'part' of the class, at least in terms of the teacher/student interactions within the classroom context. TM.16 was one of a number of teachers who reported this:

I think that's quite important throughout the whole of the programme - that they are not treated as being anyone special - that they are part of the class. ...they just 'belong' there.

(TM.16, Interview, 21.11.84)

This 'sense of belonging' developed through the similarity of treatment by teachers was also reported on by the adult students:

I felt part of it. The teachers - perhaps the English teacher treated us more as adults, but the other teacher treats us just as kids. We were called 'children' and reprimanded when we spoke out of turn - and that was good. Things like that certainly made us feel like we belonged - even if it was embarrassing [laugh].

(F.30, Interview, 6.12.84)

These comments indicate a 'change of perception' on F.30's part. It will be recalled that F.30 had expressed a concern earlier in the year that teachers 'should' give greater 'recognition' to the 'adult' experience of the students and not treat them as 'children' (see p.200). Perhaps, then, the above comments are a further illustration of both the developmental nature of the processes of becoming an adult student and of the 'efficiency' of integration.

This type of teacher behaviour was seen by the adult students as being 'appropriate', on the basis that the teachers should, in the words of F.10:

...sort of treat us like adults, but also, not overdo it where the kids are. When you are looking at Sixth

Formers, they're adults too, really. See, you shouldn't really be singled out.

(F.10, Interview, 4.12.84)

The foregoing discussion has illustrated that the adult students were treated by the teachers in the classroom in a similar manner to the pupils. This was yet another factor contributing to the integration of the adult student into the overall school culture.

A further aspect of classroom relationships involving the teachers and adult students was that of 'discipline'.

4.1.3 DISCIPLINE

In the context of the present investigation, both teachers and adult students emphasised that adult students were not subjected to the same discipline as the pupils. While this did appear to be the general situation, there were some instances where both groups received similar treatment from the teacher:

I used to tell M.5 and F.16 off the same way I used to tell [pupils] off. See, M.5's such a big chatterbox at times - and he gets carried away - and I'd have to discipline him the same way I discipline the kids.

(TF.11, Interview, 21.11.84)

In turn, F.16 interpreted such actions by TF.11 in the following terms:

Our English teacher [TF.11] - M.5 and I are in the same class - she - we're very much a pupil/teacher relationship there as far as being treated like naughty kids. If we talk while she's talking - which I know is rude - she comes around and tells us off [laugh]. Like, yesterday, M.5 - I missed a class and he was reading out the notes and I was writing them down and she came over and said she was very angry with us for talking while she was talking and that it was my responsibility to catch-up notes out of class - not in her time.

(F.16, Interview, 10.8.84)

While not applicable to every adult student in the research, there were occasions where an adult student was given the same form of reprimand as would be applied to a school-aged pupil. In the majority of instances, this was in situations where the adult student talked while the teacher was talking, and drew a minor 'rebuke' from the teacher.

As the earlier comments of F.30 (see p.219) indicated, the majority of adult students appeared to accept this discipline as being 'appropriate' in the circumstances, and as making them 'feel part' of the school culture. A further illustration of this is provided by M.15's remarks regarding this issue of classroom discipline:

If you deserve it, mind you - if you deserve it, they will treat you with the contempt you deserve. There was one occasion where I made a real stupid balls-up in my Economics class and Miss TF.3 just said "Come on! Sit down boy" [laugh]. That was fair enough, sort of thing.

(M.15, Interview, 4.12.84)

There was also some 'resentment' by students to this aspect of classroom interaction in much the same way that the general policy of equating adult students with pupils caused some discontentment on the part of some students.

A further example of the ways in which discipline contributed to the integration of adult students was the general expectation from teachers that the presence of the adult student would have a 'settling influence' on the pupils in the class. Teacher statements about this were often accompanied by the assumption that this influence was brought about by the fact that the adult student was 'part' of the class, as the following comments illustrate:

...they [adults] will actually help by being a positive influence on the kids who tend to be a little disruptive within the class. Just through their presence. And, occasionally, I've heard that the adult will actually have a word or two to say to the kid who's playing up. That doesn't do any harm. Kids will respond to the peer pressure a lot more than they will to any other pressure. The adult student in class is on the fringe of their peer group, really. Sort of partly in their peer group and partly not.

(D.P.1, Interview, 25.6.84)

Certainly, there were a few instances where adult students did report having told pupils in the class to 'shut up', although this was usually only the case where an interactive relationship between students and pupils had built up over some time.

In summary, the activity of classroom discipline can be seen as having some features which either contributed to, or illustrated, the processes whereby the adult student assumed a role similar to that of the pupil in terms of classroom relationships. This served to assist in the integration of the adult student in to the overall school culture.

The final aspect of teacher effects which contributed to the overall processes of integrating the adult student into the school culture was that of School Reports.

4.1.4 SCHOOL REPORTS

Teacher comments on the School Reports were often written in the third person. The following remarks on M.15's report by his English teacher illustrate this pattern:

M.15 has worked well, however he did not provide enough detail in his examination to gain good marks.

(TF.1, School Report for M.15, July, 1984)

The adult students saw such comments as similar to those the pupils received. As F.10 remarked:

Maybe I have to take it home for [husband] to sign [laugh]. I suppose they're so used to writing it out that they can't say "You have...". Your Report [as written] is actually for your parents though, isn't it?!

(F.10, Fieldnotes, 29.6.84)

Similarly, F.11 noted that:

It feels funny to get Reports at this time of life. Have you [author] noticed that a lot of them write as if you were the third party? I suppose they're used to writing

to parents.

(F.11, Fieldnotes, 2.7.84)

While the majority of adult students commented on this aspect of the School Reports - although none appeared to take the issue as a source of particular concern - only one teacher remarked upon this practice:

I've just been having a look at some of the adult student Reports! I notice that most of them have been written in the third person! It makes me wonder sometimes about my colleagues! Why they can't write the Report to the adult student I'll never understand. Mind you, I'm not at all sure they should get Reports. I know the argument is that they are official documents, but! Surely a better way would be to give the adult student a verbal report - that would seem a lot more suitable and give a lot more recognition to their adult status. That's half the problem, I think, we try and treat them the same as pupils but they're not the same.

(TF.9, Fieldnotes, 22.6.84)

As TF.9's final remarks indicate, there was the issue that the classroom teachers adopted a general policy of treating adult students and pupils in a similar manner in the classroom context and in Reports. These Report comments implied an explicit teacher/student relationship as being in effect, rather than an adult/adult one, and that the adult student was 'identified' as in an equivalent position to the school-aged pupil.

Although the classroom teachers contributed towards the process of integrating the adult student into the overall school culture, they also had an effect on the processes of differentiation between pupils and adult students.

4.2 DIFFERENTIATING EFFECTS

The formation of the adult student subculture involved a complex web of personal characteristics, school and situational effects, and interactional processes. The purpose of the present section is to

consider those differentiating effects which derived from the classroom teachers and their interactions with the adult students. Discussion will focus upon: *Expectations; Attendance; Out of Class Interactions*, and; *Student/Teacher Conflict*.

4.2.1 EXPECTATIONS

The classroom teachers held particular expectations of the 'adult student', incorporating a perspective of them as being 'different' from the school-aged pupils. These expectations were expressed in teacher comments which reported the adult student as being 'more mature', 'more enthusiastic', and as having a 'wider experience' than the pupils. In short, teachers generally reported adult students as making a 'positive contribution' to the class, and school. On this basis, the teachers developed a rationale for differential treatment of the two groups, and for expecting different contributions within the classroom context:

... they are always eager to learn and eager to hand work in - eager about their work. They do, and can, stimulate conversation and discussion which is a really important thing, I consider, in an examination of literature. They can start the ball rolling. They can melt the ice and then the other kids will form their ideas afterwards. Also, too, I do a lot of work from the kids work. Setting them something, reading it back, "How can we improve?", and often their [adult student] models are more sophisticated so we can work on two models - "This is how to do it - this is how not to do it" sort of thing.

(TF.1, Interview, 6.6.84)

The teachers also perceived a contribution to classroom behaviours and interactions where the adult student input was expected to differ from that of the pupils:

It's good for me, as an adult, to know there's another adult in the room that you can associate with in a common age bracket. The [pupils] themselves are not that much younger than him, but we class M.5 as an adult whereas we class the pupils as children. You can talk to M.5, you can talk to the pupils, but you always feel freer when it's an adult to talk to an adult. They tend to respect your knowledge a lot more and your age they respect because a lot of adults see age as knowledge.

.... They have a really settling influence on a class. Particularly if there's any pupils who are not mature, for instance. Then, the adult students tend to bring them back into line with their quiet, efficient way of getting on with the job.

(TM.2, Interview, 6.6.84)

The overall perception of the adult student as being more 'enthusiastic' and 'hard working' had consequences for classroom pedagogy, particularly involving 'wasting time' in class:

I think...I seem more conscious if someone else is stuffing around and wasting time. I'm more conscious that there's someone in the class whose time is valuable and that their time is being wasted. So, if another pupil is messing round and disturbing the class I'm more likely to jump on them rather than just let it ride and wind down. I think I make a more conscious effort to make in every lesson something positive come out of it - I push learning through more, or the content through more. Again, because I think they've [adults] gone to a lot of sacrifice to be here... .

(TM.12, Interview, 12.6.84)

In this sense, teacher expectations of the adult student exerted a direct influence on classroom procedures, as well as this indicating the differential perceptions the teachers held of the adult student and pupil groups.

The majority of teachers also reported an expectation that the adult student would provide a useful 'role model' for the pupils in terms of classroom 'behaviour' and in attitudes towards work:

It's always good to have students who have a real interest in learning instead of having to battle with them to get them to write things down [laugh]. Their attitude to work is always a fairly good pattern for others to follow. I think seeing adults, for some of them [pupils] anyway, makes them think a bit about what they are doing themselves. The realization, perhaps, that they might not want to come back to school when they are 20, 25, 30.

(TM.4, Interview, 7.6.84)

While most teachers saw this 'model' as one of assimilation whereby pupils would observe the 'harder working' adult student, there

were others who made specific reference to the differences when dealing with pupils:

When some kid comes up to me and says "M.5 got a good result" I just talk quietly to them about determination and that, probably, for both M.5 and F.16, this may be their last chance to get qualifications. Then, I can say that they [adults] are really making the most of the chance.

(TF.11, Interview, 11.6.84)

Not only did the classroom teachers draw upon the 'enthusiasm' of the adult students in the classroom context but they also utilised the 'wider experience' difference. TF.9's comments illustrate this:

In my Sixth Form class, the benefit that I see is that, when I try to introduce a little discussion...the personal opinions that I give as an adult come across as the teacher's opinion. Now, if I have other adults backing me up from their experiences, the opinion I'm offering is from my experience as an adult, not from what I've learnt in textbooks as a teacher. We had one lovely thing. I was on my high-horse about women's liberation and said words to the effect that "You've been conned into the idea that motherhood is the highest thing that a woman can attain. But, it's not like that at all. Babies that are pink-faced in prams and all lovely and sweet-smelling in fact half the time are being sick and dirtying their nappies!". Of course, then, my adult students were able to chip in and say "Yes". I can remember F.19 saying "My daughter just howled every night for the first two years and I didn't have a whole night's sleep". I think that sort of realism from others, not just me, really does provide a good educational experience which I couldn't produce on my own, or, at least not as effectively.

(TF.9, Interview, 8.6.84)

In terms of maturity, background, experiences, enthusiasm for work and possession of set goals, the teachers expected the adult students to be markedly different from the school-aged pupils, a difference they frequently acted upon in the classroom context. As such, these expectations and their outcomes, in terms of practice, contributed towards the differentiation between the adult student and pupil groups.

For their part, the adult students also spoke in terms of a 'noticeable' difference between themselves and the pupils as to

'enthusiasm' and 'experience' and how as adult students they could make a 'positive' contribution to the classroom context and content.

A further aspect of differential treatment by teachers concerned those instances where it was reported necessary to 'curb' the enthusiasm of the adult student in favour of eliciting pupil contributions in the classroom. TF.5 remarked upon this:

I think I'm always aware that I have to balance their [adults] contribution with others - that sometimes their enthusiasm is a little overwhelming for the other Sixth Formers. And, also, of course, their responses are that much more mature and sometimes it means that other members of the class feel a little insignificant - or, as if they haven't got anything to talk about. So, it's just a matter of being aware of that and keeping the contributions balanced. It is sometimes necessary, for that, to concentrate the questions on the pupils to an extent - to 'overlook', as it were, the adult students who, because of their maturity, can accept that.

(TF.5, Interview, 23.11.84)

This assumption of adult student 'acceptance' of such differential treatment was not supported in certain instances. Some adult students reported considerable dissatisfaction with being 'overlooked' in this manner:

Another thing which really pisses me off about teachers is when they ask a question in class but never ask you the answer! You can sit there and be the only one with your hand up and they know you can answer it but they ignore you! My Biology teacher [TF.9], she really appreciates me in the class, but even she will ask someone else to answer the question even when I call out the answer!

(F.15, Fieldnotes, 20.3.84)

At least in one case, this practice of the teacher 'discriminating' in favour of the pupils appeared to contribute to a decision not to answer questions:

I never put my hand up in class. I think it's stupid to put it up! I just refuse to put my hand up in class. Even if I know the answer I'm not going to wave my hand around and look stupid or let them ask someone else.

(F.13, Fieldnotes, 20.3.84)

The majority of adult students reported that they were conscious of the fact that their 'greater enthusiasm' and 'knowledge/experience' could result in them being seen by pupils to 'dominate' the lessons. As a consequence of them not intending to convey such an impression, most adult students noted that they usually waited until no pupil had responded to a question before seeking to contribute an answer.

It is evident, then, that the classroom teachers held a number of general expectations regarding the adult students which they perceived as differentiating the adult from the school-aged pupil. On the basis of such expectations, the teachers sought different contributions from the respective groups, and applied differentiated practices. These factors contributed to the establishment of 'boundaries' between the adult student subculture and that of the pupils.

A further group of differentiated expectations and practices was evident in the approach of the classroom teachers to the issues of attendance.

4.2.2 ATTENDANCE

The classroom teachers, not unlike the Dean, viewed the attendance patterns of the adult students with some concern. In particular, the teachers noted that frequent absences could preclude an adult student from eligibility for examination entry and severely detract from the acquisition of content deemed necessary for examination success. All the classroom teachers reported this as one of the central 'issues' involving adult students, and as a major differentiating feature between the adult student and pupil groups.

The teachers reported that they did not require the adult student to comply with the same attendance requirements as the pupils. While the pupil was 'compelled' to attend class, the adult student was not. This difference was justified by the teachers on the basis of the students' age, status and outside school commitments.

All classroom teachers cited instances where adult students had been unable to attend class due to job commitments:

...they [F.16 and M.5] come to me sometimes and say "I can't turn up because of work commitments". M.5 will turn up late because he's been on night shift and has slept in.

(TF.11, Interview, 11.6.84)

This was seen by the teachers as one of the major 'problems' facing the adult student. Many of the teachers considered that the need of such students to work in order to finance their return placed an additional burden upon them, and one which not only produced attendance problems but detracted from the time available to undertake school work. Other problems also contributed to the students' absences and these were seen by teachers as applicable only to the adult student and not the pupil. TF.5 comments stress the problems faced by women students with children:

Often children - small children - babysitting problems. Problems of lack of money. Just to even get here - can they get a babysitter, can they afford a babysitter, can they afford the car to get here - because it's time, very often, and they're sandwiching in dropping off kids, coming here. The problems of, when they get home at the end of the day and want to study, they've got to be 'mums'. So, they are sharing a double load - at least - in that respect.

(TF.5, Interview, 7.6.84)

Because of these and other differences between the students and pupils the teachers adopted practices and policies which differentiated between the two groups. While pupils were required to explain absences, and sanctioned if they could not, the adult students were 'expected' to report reasons, out of politeness, but not required to nor sanctioned for either excuses or absences.

In the view of some teachers, the pupils in general 'accepted' this differentiation in terms of attendance obligations:

Most of the pupils at my Fifth Form level realise there are certain people around the school, who are there under special circumstances and aren't subject to the same forms of discipline or the same requirements of attendance. It's not really me that has to accept it - it's the rest of the class - and they seem to accept it very well.

(TM.16, Interview, 21.11.84)

On the other hand, teachers and adult students reported that pupils seeing an adult student 'free to come and go' at will, might be justified in harbouring some resentment. This appeared to underpin the fact that many teachers reported having explained to their pupils that adult students, due to factors of age, status and outside-school commitments differentiating them from pupils, were not 'required' to maintain regular attendance.

Besides school attendance, there were differences in the teachers' expectations concerning other aspects of school work requirements. For instance, many teachers reported having granted extensions of time for assignments to the adult students as:

Many of them have families, jobs, and that makes it hard. That's - yeah - that's sometimes where the other kids get upset too. If you've got assignment deadlines and things - often it's not feasible for them to meet them, right on time, because they've got other commitments. So you give them extensions and the kids get annoyed. So, then you tell them [pupils] to "Go and do a job, bring up three kids, and, at the same time, try and get your assignments in on time - and see how you go!" [laugh]. They see the point then.

(TM.15, Interview, 18.6.84)

The adult students were also given greater 'flexibility' of attendance in terms of their presence at particular lessons. The teachers reported situations where

...if it was just a study-Period I would not require them to be here. It's partly a desire not to waste their time.

(TM.19, Interview, 21.11.84)

Alternatively, the teachers, on occasions, allowed the adult students to leave the classroom prior to the end of the Period:

...sometimes, the lesson might finish a little bit early and I've known adults to go whereas pupils are not free to go. So, you've got double standards sometimes. I know that and I have to explain it to the kids and that they have to see that double standards are operating.

(TF.5, Interview, 7.6.84)

There were also situations where the adult students would take action themselves and leave a lesson. M.16's teachers noted instances

where, shortly after the start of a lesson, having ascertained lesson content, he

...walked out of the classroom a couple of times - when we've been doing revision for these exams which he doesn't see as applicable to him so he's gone for a walk. I think it would be a courtesy if he asked me and if he stuck out the Period. Or, he could come along and ask before what we were doing this Period and ask to be excused.

(TM.8, Interview, 7.6.84)

In such a situation, it can be suggested that the pupils would see the adult student being permitted to leave at will and not being required to provide any explanation nor subject to any form of sanctions. M.16 was the only adult student to adopt such an overt practice, and to report leaving classes near the start of the lesson. The more usual practice was to leave once the lesson had reached a 'conclusion' in terms of content but not time:

Sometimes, if we are all just doing something in class like finishing an experiment or something, and it's ten minutes before the end of the lesson. I'll just go and quietly leave, whereas, if I was a pupil I'd have to sit there and look at the clock. I just feel I can use my time more efficiently as an adult student.

(F.32, Interview, 11.9.84)

Like their teachers, the adult students adopted a view that their time was 'wasted' in particular classroom situations according to lesson content. This viewpoint was more evident towards the end of the year when the majority of adult students, either at the suggestion of teachers or more commonly at their own initiative, adopted a strategy of not attending classes. Even those who had almost continuous attendance during the early stages of the year reported that their absences were due to this factor:

...quite a few of the times I've missed there's been nothing happening at school. I don't want to be there - because it's a waste of time... . I didn't mind at all in the beginning of the year because class-time was valuable and we were learning it. Now, we just seem to be killing time to the exams - might just as well do that at home and get something worthwhile done [housework, mentioned earlier] at the same time [laugh].

(F.30, Fieldnotes, 6.11.84)

Yet another differentiating factor was that teachers would not require an adult student to remain with a class kept in over time. Such situations were infrequent, although there were occasions where the teacher reported admonishing the entire class during a lesson. In these circumstances, the teachers assumed that:

You've still got to go ahead and carry out the discipline and I think the average adult student is mature enough to realise that they are not the one who is being talked about.

(TF.3, Interview, 21.11.84)

Here again, the adult students were perceived by the teachers in a manner which implied their differentiation from the pupil group. The adult students did note that they were aware that such disciplinary comments were not directed at them, nevertheless, many found this personally embarrassing. An example occurred where a number of the adult students in TM.19's History class recounted situations in which the teacher 'admonished' pupils sent to him by other teachers. F.10 commented upon this situation:

It worried F.24 if he [TM.19] said "I'll cane you" or something like that. She used to get a bit nervy and say "I don't think he will, but I'm not going to stay here if he does". But I knew him from last year and knew he wouldn't cane them...it's just unfortunate that it had to be our History class [laugh]. That [adults present] could have been very belittling for the child, really, when you think about it.

(F.10, Interview, 4.12.84)

As well as the implied differentiations concerning discipline, it can be suggested from this that becoming an adult student also involved the ability to 'distance' oneself from disciplinary actions undertaken by teachers in the classroom context to the extent of remaining 'uninvolved' and coping with the embarrassment.

4.2.3 OUT-OF-CLASS INTERACTION

In-class interaction between the adult students and their teachers was typically formal and akin to the pupil/teacher interaction. A more adult to adult interchange did exist in certain

specific circumstances. In these situations, both adult students and teachers reported that they had conversed following a class or during a break or free Period. Such conversations were held to be adult/adult in terms of interactions and relationships and perceived by teachers and adult students to be qualitatively different from that which might occur between pupils and teachers, even in similar circumstances. TM.19's comments illustrated this:

Sometimes, at Interval, you might be talking to a few and say "How are things going?" and then they might talk about their child who has a reading problem, or something like that. So, I have found that, if their class is followed by Interval or Lunch, and they are, perhaps, chatting amongst themselves, and the rest of the kids have gone, then I sometimes establish - you can feel a different sort of atmosphere then. Then, definitely, it's not a teacher/student thing - they play the role very well in class, and when the kids have gone - when they are lingering after class - then the role's gone - it's just people having a chat.

(TM.19, Interview, 21.11.84)

This view of a qualitatively different relationship existing in situations outside the classroom, or at least in the absence of the pupils, was common among the teachers:

I felt very much that it did me good. It gives another form of conversation separated from teaching. I guess it makes for a more friendly relationship - at least outside class. In the class it's pretty much a teacher/student relationship, outside it's more an adult/adult relationship. So, it does vary on the situation.

(TF.9, Interview, 30.11.84)

For TM.16, this adult/adult interaction outside the classroom context was not only different from that possible with the pupils but also 'necessary' for the adult student:

...what I said earlier was that they have made a courageous move - they have distanced themselves from their own peer group - the adults, then, may well stay behind after class as a re-establishment of the various roles they have, and, I think, probably that's her [F.14] re-establishment - or any adult student - re-establishing the rapport between adults. I think that's very important for them - so, I've got the time to do that. You never get that from ordinary students [pupils] - not in the same sense. With the pupils the roles are clearly

established - they may come up to you but it's not in the sense of 'two adults' together.

(TM.16, Interview, 21.11.84)

One qualification teachers placed on this type of interaction was that it was 'appropriate' only in situations where the pupils were not present. Some teachers emphasised the need to maintain a student/teacher relationship within the classroom, restricting the adult/adult interaction to other situations. Incidents were cited by some teachers where an action by an adult student, perhaps appropriate within an adult to adult relationship, had created difficulties when it occurred during a lesson. TF.1 elaborated on this when referring to an experience from a previous year:

She was actually my first adult student. Although she was very sweet and worked very hard, she was a Dutch lady and had problems with her - her first tongue was obviously Dutch - and she was just very exuberant. She used to actually yell out in class [laugh]. I had a top stream English Fifth Form and, of course, they used to 'break-up' at some of the things she said because of the way she said it, you know, and it used to annoy me sometimes. I can remember being really angry with them because I'd given them something to do and they'd done it very poorly. Anyway, I ranted at them for about five minutes. I must have looked really angry, and they were really quiet. Then, she put her hand up and I said "Yes?", and she said "Do you know that you look beautiful when you're angry?". I could have kicked her - I really could - it just completely destroyed the whole atmosphere in the class. I may as well not have said anything to the kids [laugh].

(TF.1, Interview, 6.6.84)

While all teachers reported on adult/adult interactions, it was apparent that some were more involved than others. In particular, TF.5, TF.9, and TM.19 were more frequently approached by adult students. Similarly, not all adult students were as likely as others to engage in this form of interaction (for example, F.10, F.4, and F.30 were more often involved than, for instance, M.5 or F.16). There was also some suggestion of a possible 'age factor' in that the teachers reported such interactions occurring primarily with those students in the 'older' age group.

Overall, this type of interaction between teachers and adult

students outside the classroom context was somewhat dependent upon the individuals involved. However, the potential for such interaction was, by definition, restricted to adult students thereby reinforcing a further difference between the students and the pupils. Many of the teachers were willing to devote considerable time to such interaction, and viewed it as being 'necessary' for the adult students.

4.2.4 TEACHER/STUDENT CONFLICT

Throughout the present investigation, adult students and teachers expressed 'satisfaction' with their relationships and interactions. A typical instance of the general form of teacher comments on adult students is provided by TF.13:

There's always been a good rapport between the adult students and Staff. We've appreciated their presence. But there's always the odd one out who grates a little bit on someone's nerves [laugh], or has made herself or himself persona non grata at times...but, nevertheless, the contribution has been tremendous.

(TF.13, Interview, 13.6.84)

The general consensus among teachers was that the adult students were 'more than welcome' and that 'more' should be encouraged to return to school. Similarly, the majority of adult students reported generally favourable relationships with their teachers. The comments of F.10 were typical:

I found them really good this year. I didn't have any problems with them. I found they turned more to be friends, really, than teachers. I found them really supportive and everything.

(F.10, Interview, 4.12.84)

While this was the case in general, there were instances during the course of the year where 'conflict' situations arose between adult students and teachers. The term 'conflict' is used in this context to include situations where at least one party reported some 'anger' over the events and where both parties were aware of the situation. This definition excludes those incidents where, for example, an adult

student passed some critical comment regarding a teacher who remained unaware of the event.

Before proceeding to elaborate further, it is appropriate to note that these conflict situations were relatively rare in the present research. Indeed, only three such incidents were reported during the course of the year. While not denying the importance of these to those involved, nor the impact they had upon aspects of the experiences of becoming an adult student for these individuals, this small number of incidents does not appear to warrant detailed commentary at this point. The case studies of these situations are provided in Appendix E, and discussion here will focus upon the general aspects of such conflict.

The first conflict situation involved F.15 and, of the three, precipitated one of the critical incidents of the year when, early in Term Two, she brought to the attention of the Principal a number of matters over which she was 'angry'. The basis of F.15's complaints concerned the point that she found it difficult to manage her school and external commitments due to the time she was devoting to one subject. F.15 then withdrew from this subject early in the year, an action which subsequently contributed further to the conflict situation. At enrolment, the Dean had informed F.15 that only two subjects were required for her goal of entry to university, whereas she actually needed four being under the age of twenty-one. When this was 'discovered' by F.15, she became critical of the lack of guidance she was given, and this added to her initial concerns over the amount of work she had been expected to undertake in one particular subject. As well, F.15 was also critical of certain teacher practices, such as the 'lack of control' one teacher maintained in class. Armed with these issues, F.15 confronted the Principal. She left school shortly afterwards indicating that matters could not be resolved to her satisfaction.

The other two incidents each involved a single teacher and student in a conflict situation. One of these students, F.14 on one occasion went to school for her sole class of the day to find the room empty, later determining that they had moved location. The following day, F.14 brought the matter to the teacher's attention in front of

the entire class. The teacher viewed this as 'inappropriate' in that it was an adult/adult form of criticism and should not have been conducted with pupils present. Having strongly expressed her disapproval of the teacher 'wasting her time', both F.14 and TM.16 considered the issue closed. In the third situation, F.16 reserved her criticisms of TM.15's 'sexist and anti-gay jokes' to outside the classroom. F.16 first informed the teacher after the class then followed this with a letter (see Appendix E) detailing her objections to the teacher's practices. The outcome of this was that the teacher accepted F.16's case as 'completely valid' and subsequently reported to the researcher that his practices had altered as a result of this interchange.

These three incidents show that some adult students were both willing and able to question practices and policies and attempt to effect changes.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The classroom teachers contributed to the integration of the adult student into the overall school culture and at the same time influenced the development of an adult student subculture.

The preceding discussion noted that the adult students adopted the use of a formalised form of address, generally referring to their teachers by title and surname. In so doing, the adult students adopted, and appeared to accept, as 'appropriate' the same form of address for their teachers as did the school-aged pupils. This formalised form of address was seen by some adult students as directly contributing to the maintenance of a form of 'pupil/teacher' relationship between them and their teachers. As such, this assisted in the processes of integrating the adult student into the school culture in a position within the hierarchy of relationships similar to that of the pupils.

Adult students and teachers also reported these formalised teacher/student relationships within the classroom context. The 'policy' of the teachers appeared to be to treat pupil and adult

student as being the 'same', to see both as being 'part' of the class. The majority of teachers saw this as both 'desirable' and 'preferable', while adult students reported the outcomes in terms of it promoting a sense of 'belonging'. Overall, there was a general consensus, among teachers and adult students, that there should not be any great extent of differentiation between pupil and adult student in terms of the classroom relationships. Even in some aspects of discipline, adult students and pupils were treated in the same manner.

It was also reported that the School Reports for the adult students exhibited a marked similarity to those of the pupils, certainly in the extent that both contained teacher comments addressed mainly in the third person.

Through such teacher effects, the adult student was integrated into the school culture, and treated in an equivalent manner to the pupils, particularly within the classroom context.

The foregoing discussion has also illustrated that the teachers perceived adult students as being 'more mature', 'more enthusiastic', 'more experienced and knowledgeable', and as having 'more well-defined set goals' compared with the pupils. In particular, the adult student was considered to have a 'settling influence' in terms of classroom behaviour, to provide a source of 'other adult' opinion and knowledge to supplement that of the teacher, and to act as a 'role model' for 'desired' behaviours and work habits. As such, becoming an adult student required accepting such differential treatment and expectations and being willing to 'hold back' from dominating in the classroom.

The teachers differentiated between the pupils and adult students in terms of attendance requirements. It was noted that the teachers adopted a policy of 'flexibility' governing adult student attendance, while the pupil was 'required' to attend all classes. These differences in attendance obligations clearly indicated a subculture 'boundary' between the pupils and the adult students.

Becoming adult students also involved being able to accept that general disciplinary comments were not necessarily directed at them.

It was suggested that the adult students were required to 'distance' themselves from disciplinary actions in the classroom context, even when they found the situation personally embarrassing.

While these differentiating effects were located within the classroom context, it was also evident that a more adult/adult form of interaction occurred between teachers and adult students. This usually took place outside the classroom and provided a further example of the differentiations between pupils and adult students.

Although relatively infrequent, conflict situations did arise between adult students and staff members. As well as demonstrating a further factor in the differentiation between pupil and adult student in terms of the form such conflict took, the accounts provided in this thesis indicate the 'power' of those in control to define the 'appropriate' behaviours 'acceptable' within the social context. In the conflict situations described, it was apparent that 'change' was more likely to occur where the interaction was adult to adult and occurred outside the classroom. However, even under these general conditions, there remained the possibility - as with F.15 - that the 'case' could be 'dismissed' on the grounds of the form being 'inappropriate' regardless of the 'accuracy' of the concerns. Certainly, this particular incident clearly establishes the point that if the conflict cannot be resolved, the most viable option for the student is to withdraw from the situation.

Overall, the classroom teachers contributed to the processes by which the adult subculture was differentiated from the pupil group and, through their policies and practices, assisted in establishing the 'boundaries' between the groups.

These two processes of integration and differentiation, then, were the outcome of a variety of influences as the individual underwent the experiences of becoming an adult student. These influences stemmed from the individual student, the social context of the school, and the interactions among the various people involved. The result saw the student, at one and the same time, become 'part' of the overall school culture, and a member of the differentiated adult student subculture.

In the section to follow, the discussion will focus explicitly on the adult subculture 'in action' as the students encountered various Decision Points during the processes of becoming adult students.

Part Five

Decision Points

The second research objective for the present investigation focussed on deriving an account of the processes involved in becoming an adult student. The preceding sections have presented a discussion of the influences upon this process which stemmed from the factors of Returning to School, School Policy, Adult Status and the Role of the Dean, and through the adult student being In The School and In The Classroom. Before introducing and discussing the next aspect of the processes and experiences of becoming an adult student it is appropriate to recapitulate briefly.

Becoming an adult student has been taken to be an ongoing process, complex and dynamic, and multidimensional, involving the interplay of biographical, contextual, and interactional factors. The main concern here has been with the effects of such factors of influence.

It has been noted that the adult students came to the school already in possession of a prior background and experience which directly impinged upon the processes they underwent in the school context. Furthermore, this 'external' situation was in itself ongoing and not only an influence upon their experiences in school, but also influenced by their return. This background was clearly evident in terms of the goals held by the adult students, as well as their personal circumstances and predispositions towards schooling.

While the decision to return to school may have been taken some time prior to actual enrolment, it was the act of enrolling at school which is held to have initiated the processes of becoming an adult student. Once entry, in accordance with school policies and practices, was obtained the individual was inducted, over time, into the school culture and came to 'occupy' a 'role' and status at least similar to the school-aged pupils. This has been termed the process of integration.

The process of integration was influenced by a variety of factors which were both interrelated and interactive. For instance, the adult students were inducted into the school partly as an outcome of their prior experiences and predispositions, along with the 'familiarity' of the environment, 'similarity' of appearance and the interactions with others in the social context. The preceding discussion illustrated the effects of both the Dean and Classroom Teachers. The Dean sought to place adult students in senior classes reflecting a general perception among the staff that pupils at this level were most 'similar' to adult students in a number of characteristics, thereby 'easing' integration. In the classroom context, the teachers gave emphasis to the 'appropriate' role relationship being one of teacher/student, rather than adult/adult. As an outcome of these and other effects, it was noted that the adult students became 'identified', and responded to, as 'part of the class', occupying a similar position and role within the hierarchy of relationships to that of the school-aged pupils.

The processes of becoming an adult student were also influenced by the establishment of an adult student subculture which identified the students as different. Discussion has indicated the ways in which both the Dean and Classroom Teachers implemented policies and practices which gave emphasis to the 'differences' between adult students and school-aged pupils. It was reported that staff members allowed adult students considerable 'flexibility' in terms of attendance obligations, whereas pupils were required to attend all classes and subject to sanctions if they did not comply. This freedom from attendance requirements was both necessary to the adult student and an integral component in the definition of adult student status. Furthermore, Dean and teachers held different expectations for the

pupils and adult students which provided the basis for differential contributions from, and treatment of, the two groups in the classroom context. Both pupils and adult students became aware of these 'differences' which led to the separation of, and establishment of boundaries around, the adult student subculture, perhaps most overtly evident in the context of the Adult Student Commonroom.

These, then, were the two central processes evident in the data presented to this point. This is not to suggest that these were the only factors involved in becoming an adult student, nor that the adult students were 'passive receivers' of an imposed procedure. As the data clearly indicates, the adult students were active participants and not the 'end-point' of some deterministic process. The adult students demonstrated both individualistic and idiosyncratic characteristics in their response to the processes of integration and differentiation. In this context, discussion has indicated the importance of the 'self-identification' with the status of adult student, an integral component to the process of becoming an adult student which could override the definitions of the situation imposed by others. Becoming an adult student, then, was not merely a process of status 'attribution' by school staff and peers. Similarly, it was noted that individual students underwent processes of 'self-evaluation' of their return as well as deriving a 'self compromise' in terms of attendance patterns. Becoming an adult student, in other words, is the outcome of an ongoing, interactive, process, exhibiting individual variations of interpretation, construction, and participation. It is upon these aspects of the processes and experiences that the present section is to focus.

The following discussion is concerned with various decision-making strategies within impinged upon the processes of becoming an adult student. These 'Decision Points' are presented here in terms of three basic questions: 'To Drop A Subject?'; 'To Attend School?'; and, 'To Become an Adult Student?'. These, in turn, represent the notion of the adult student subculture 'in action'.

5.1 TO DROP A SUBJECT?

The adult students made subject choices based on credential-based goals, in the majority of cases. Then, in consultation with the Dean, a particular course of study was decided upon for each individual and they were allocated to both a particular level and teacher and the year of study was commenced. But it was only a matter of a few weeks before some of the students decided to withdraw from certain subjects.

Before embarking upon a discussion about those who did drop a subject it is appropriate to note that the number of subjects taken by an adult student represented a compromise between the goals they sought and their external commitments. In the majority of cases, this resulted in a situation where the adult student could not withdraw from a subject and still achieve their goals:

That's the main reason why I won't drop any subjects I'm doing - it's pointless, really, to drop one and ending up with three and not getting accredited!

(F.10, Interview, 30.4.84)

In terms of such goals, the following general 'restrictions' applied: any adult student required a minimum of four Seventh Form subjects to be eligible for University Bursary; a minimum of four Sixth Form subjects were required to attain the full qualification of University Entrance by either examination or accrediting; if aged under 21 years, four U.E level subjects were needed for entry to university, two if over 21 years of age, and; while single subject passes were available for School Certificate, four were generally assumed to represent the 'attainment' of the full qualification.

The option of withdrawal from a subject was available to the adult students, and some did so during the course of the year. The focus in the present section is upon those students who dropped a subject, yet remained enrolled at school at least for some time afterwards. The one case where a student withdrew from her only subject is discussed in a subsequent section.

Certain general patterns can be discerned about students who dropped a subject - see, Table 20. First, adult students tended to withdraw from only one of their courses which, in most cases, left them still eligible for their credential-based goals. In this situation, retaining four Sixth Form level subjects meant that M.4, M.5, F.16, F.17, and F.23 had the required number to attain their goal of University Entrance if they were successful in their examinations. Similarly, both F.19 and F.24 could still attain their goals despite withdrawing from one of their two subjects. The two exceptions - M.6 and F.15 - will be discussed shortly. Accordingly, a decision to withdraw from a subject had little effect upon the goals the students had set for themselves.

TABLE 20
Dropping Subjects

<i>Code No.</i>	<i>Subject Dropped</i> *	<i>Date</i> **
M.4	Chemistry (4)	14/2
M.5	Technical Drawing (4)	29/6
M.6	English (4)	8/4
F.13	Geography (4)	27/2
F.15	Geography (4)	1/3
F.16	Mathematics (4)	27/2
F.19	Mathematics (4)	27/2
F.23	Art History (4)	13/2
F.24	Economics (2)	6/3

* The figure in brackets indicates the number of subjects the student continued with.

** The date at which the researcher became aware, or was informed, that the student had withdrawn from a subject. Day/Month indicated. (Note: 1/2 = start of school year.)

The second point illustrated by Table 20 is that the decision to drop a subject was generally taken early in the school year. The one exception was that of M.5 who remained enrolled in Technical Drawing until mid-year, although he reported during the later stages of Term One that he was 'making little effort' in the subject.

In deciding to withdraw from a subject, the adult students reported a number of contributory factors:

I'm dropping Technical Drawing. I'd rather spend the time in Art. There's too much background [in Technical Drawing] I can't remember [from prior schooling] - it's too long ago and I just don't know how to begin, so I'm dropping it. I'll drop Technical Drawing and spend all the time in Art - I need a good deal for the Art, so that's decided. Yeah. And I don't really enjoy it that much.

(M.5, Fieldnotes, 29.6.84)

The majority cited general reasons for withdrawing, such as a 'lack of background' and the increase in time to devote to other courses. In each case there were those idiosyncratic reasons which also contributed to the decision to drop a subject. For instance, as well as the 'lack of background' and the needs accruing from her full-time work commitments, F.19 reported that her decision to drop Mathematics was also due to the fact that:

Of course, when I was at school, girls weren't exactly encouraged to do Maths, either, and I think that's still hanging over me.

(F.19, Interview, 7.6.84)

In this case, prior schooling experiences - F.19 was aged 38 and left school originally in 1962 - was also an influence upon the decision-making processes. Current experiences within the school also contributed:

As for Economics - well! I just lacked the motivation there to persevere with that. I just didn't really enjoy it and I was the only adult student - of my age group [42] - and I think that if I'd had someone of my age group that might have helped things a bit. There were quite a few smart young pupils in that group who really had answers for everything and I felt that I didn't know anything and they knew more than me [laugh] - and perhaps they did. I just didn't like being in that situation [laugh].

(F.24, Interview, 30.4.84)

From these instances, it is apparent that adult students dropped subjects primarily on grounds of 'lack of background' and an intention of giving more time to their remaining subjects, as well as a variety of individualistic reasons which also contributed. As a consequence, dropping a subject often represented a case of 'rationalising' an

initial enrolment decision. Certainly, this was the situation with the majority of those students listed in Table 20.

Not all students faced with a 'lack of background', and even with 'lack of progress', decided to drop a subject. A case in point is F.23. On a number of occasions, F.23 reported a 'lack of background' in both English and Mathematics, and cited this as a factor contributing to her low examination marks (see Appendix D) in these subjects. Despite this, F.23 persisted, although she was attending school infrequently. She left at the end of Term Two, but sat the end-of-year external examinations. As discussed in a subsequent section will show, F.23 did not complete the processes of becoming an adult student, although it appeared that this was due to factors other than her decision to withdraw from Art History and her difficulties with English and Mathematics. Pertinent to the present discussion is the manner in which F.23 considered that her difficulties with Mathematics should be resolved. While acknowledging her 'lack of background' in the subject - reporting that she had not done a 'full' mathematics course at secondary level - F.23 reported her perception that it was up to the teacher to spend more time with her in class in order to compensate for these difficulties and bring her to the same level as the pupils. The teacher rejected this option noting, to the researcher, that F.23's 'background' would require extensive time to build up, that there were thirty others in the class to consider, and how her frequent absences effectively negated any progress she was likely to make. This view of F.23 represented one response to the situation where an adult student experienced difficulties with subject content. A more comment response was as described by F.24:

The English teacher's quite good too. I can approach her but I've got to approach her when...she seems to have a bit of spare time. She seems to be busy and there's other pupils...waiting to see her too... . I feel sometimes that I should know the answer. I get the feeling that I should know it - that I'm an adult student and I should sort it out for myself. I think that I should know the answer and not have to come and ask her. Then I think "Well, if I think that what am I doing here!" - if I knew all the answers I wouldn't be here! [laugh].

(F.24, Interview, 30.4.84)

Thus, while such difficulties with content did not necessarily

lead to the student considering withdrawal from a subject they did have an effect upon the individual. Certainly, F.24's comments indicate a perception which was evident with some adult students that they should 'know the answers' as a result of their age, and this led them to frequently adopt the strategy of seeking assistance after the class.

Two further students warrant consideration because their decisions to withdraw from a subject had a profound influence upon their becoming an adult student.

The situation of M.6 was particularly complex in that not only did he drop a subject - English - but he also changed from Sixth Form to Seventh Form level in both Biology and Chemistry, only then to revert back to Sixth Form in these sciences by mid-Second Term. These changes represented the outcome of a number of influences. M.6 was a 19-year-old student who was enrolled by his mother. He was 'continuing' at school having during the past four years made two attempts, one successful, at School Certificate, and two at University Entrance passing only one subject, Chemistry. His decision to drop English was at the instigation of the teacher who pointed out to M.6 that he was very unlikely to succeed. M.6 accepted this judgement reporting that he was currently receiving external specialist assistance with language and written expression difficulties (see diary entry on p.99). In the present context, it is the outcome of these changes to his course that are of some importance. First, the dropping of English, and the difficulties he experienced with his other subjects, led to M.6 'abandoning' his goals of University Entrance and deciding that tertiary education was 'beyond' him at this stage. The second, and more significant outcome, derived from the change in class level. As a consequence of this, M.6 came into closer contact with the Seventh Form pupils, some of whom he knew from his prior schooling. It was with these pupils that M.6 then spent most of his time, and subsequently reported that he now 'identified' himself as 'one of them'. This marked an important stage for M.6 and saw him assume the status of 'pupil' and become part of their subculture, not an adult student as he separated himself from membership of the adult student subculture.

In F.15's case, her decision to withdraw from Geography also had consequences for her becoming an adult student. The decision to drop this subject was taken on the basis that F.15 considered the work requirements as excessive and as 'interfering' with her external commitments and relationships. As a result, F.15 assigned precedence to her 'adult' life outside school and subsequently left school. In a sense, F.15 almost placed a total emphasis upon the adult component of her life and withdrew from membership of the adult student subculture.

The decision of students to withdraw from a subject illustrates a further difference between them and the school-aged pupils. M.16's situation is worthy of comment here:

M.16 wasn't an adult student when I first had him. As soon as he changed to an adult, he stopped coming [laugh]. That's why he changed - so he could drop that subject [maths] - from what I've heard. If he'd stayed on the pupil roll, he couldn't have done it - dropped a class.

(TM.14, Interview, 15.6.84)

While M.6 did not cite this as a reason for his change in status, this anecdote seems to indicate that an adult student could more easily withdraw from a subject than could a pupil.

5.2 TO ATTEND SCHOOL?

It has already been established that the issue of absenteeism among adult students was of major concern to the school staff. It has also been shown that while school staff operated from a perspective which saw 'full' attendance as the 'ideal', the adult students were permitted 'flexibility' in their attendance obligations. The students' 'freedom' from attendance obligations was seen as an important component in the processes of differentiating them from the pupils and significant for defining 'adult status'. The importance of freedom from attendance obligations was clearly indicated by M.5's comments:

You haven't got the rules to get at you like when you were

a pupil. You don't have to come if you don't want to. You only let yourself down if you don't come. You don't get them on your back - the kids do - they get nagged to get to class...you just do what you want to do. Put it this way, I wouldn't have come back if we'd had the same rules as the kids do. Most of the other people wouldn't have either.

(M.5, Interview, 9.8.84)

The present section provides elaboration on the issue of attendance. It should be noted from the outset that adult students, unlike pupils, were not under any 'legal obligation', nor any school imposed regulations, to be present at school.⁸ It was this provision which provided the conditions for the students to assume responsibility for determining their own attendance patterns.

5.2.1 THE ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Two sources of data recording adult student absences, supplemented by researcher observations, were available in the present research context. The first was the School Register maintained by the Dean on the basis of class absence returns of teachers.⁹ This source provided the information for the calculation of the percentage of absences for each student reported in Table 21.

There were some discrepancies in this record. In the first instance, the Register recorded M.9 and F.12 as 'enrolled', yet neither attended school at all. This reflected a school practice

⁸ This, in part, being derived from the point that all were over the school leaving age of 15, but also from the point that this 'lack of obligation' was part of the definition of 'being' an adult student. However, there was some lack of clarity as to certain aspects of their obligation to attend. Certainly, regulations for external examinations contain criteria for levels of student attendance and completion of requirements. Yet, there were instances - notably F.23 - where a student was 'allowed' to sit the exams with a very low attendance rate.

Similarly, accrediting is also seen to require specific amounts of attendance, yet this did not appear to have any influence on either M.5 or F.16 - both often absent - being accredited. Thus, while the school staff 'expected' the adult students to attend, they were under no obligation, nor, it appeared, were there any 'sanctions' which were invoked, to ensure that they did.

⁹ While it is a legal requirement for the school to maintain a School Register in which pupil absences are duly recorded, no such obligation exists in the case of adult students.

TABLE 21
Percentage of Total Half-Days Student Absent

Code No.	Date Enrolled *	Percentage of Absences**			Date Left ***
		Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	
M.4	1/2	16	-	-	19/3
M.5	1/2	2	10	14	30/11
M.6	1/2	14	16	-	17/8 [2/10]
M.7	1/2	70	-	-	14/2 [5/3]
M.8	1/2	3	11	11	30/11
M.9	1/2	100	-	-	1/2 [5/3]
M.10	1/2	21	-	-	17/2 [5/3]
M.11	1/2	14	-	-	4/5
M.13	29/2	21	-	-	16/4 [14/6]
M.15	26/3	2	11	10	30/11
M.16	27/2	10	7	27	30/11
M.17	26/4	0	0	1	30/11
F.9	1/2	34	-	-	9/4
F.10	1/2	0	0	1	30/11
F.11	1/2	3	47	-	17/8 [19/11]
F.12	1/2	100	-	-	1/2 [5/3]
F.13	1/2	26	43	-	17/8 [2/10]
F.14	1/2	8	11	12	30/11
F.15	1/2	31	66	-	14/6
F.16	1/2	11	25	31	30/11
F.17	1/2	12	14	44	30/11
F.18	1/2	6	21	-	16/7 [17/9]
F.19	1/2	2	20	24	30/11
F.20	1/2	6	-	-	15/3
F.22	1/2	9	-	-	12/3
F.23	1/2	17	55	-	17/8 [30/11]
F.24	1/2	4	2	1	30/11
F.26	1/2	17	-	-	5/3
F.27	1/2	45	100	-	31/5 [5/10]
F.28	1/2	3	14	4	30/11
F.29	13/2	0	-	-	26/3
F.30	13/2	3	5	19	30/11
F.31	21/2	20	38	-	5/7
F.32	29/2	1	11	6	30/11
F.33	3/4	0	0	-	25/5
F.34	27/6	-	11	11	30/11

* Providing the day and month. 1/2 = first day of school year.

** Expressed as a percentage in terms of the total length of student's enrolment for each term. Term 1 = 124 half-days; Term 2 = 122; Term 3 = 94 [Up to time of external examinations where absences were no longer recorded - 14/11]. Derived from School Register and requiring caution in interpretation. In particular, a number of instances were observed where students were absent from school but this was not recorded. Furthermore, situations where a student was being recorded as both 'present' and 'absent' for considerable periods of time after having actually left school, such as the cases of M.13, F.18, and F.27.

*** Two figures are provided. The first is based on the researcher's records and provides the date on which the student was last observed at school, or reported as the date of leaving. The figure in brackets is the day on which the withdrawal was recorded in the School Register. Those retained until 5/3 appeared to reflect school policy of keeping a student on the roll until the March 1 Department of Education Return was completed. Other cases resulted from factors such as the student not informing the school of their withdrawal, the time it took for the Dean to receive information regarding a student leaving school, and a variety of other 'administrative errors'. 30/11 = final day of the school year.

reported by the Dean in the following terms:

The Boss wants me to keep her [F.12], and any others on the roll until March before I take them off. It's all part of the 'numbers game' for extra staffing.

(D.1, Fieldnotes, 22.2.84)

As a result of this, there were occasions where students remained on the roll for some time after they had actually left school. F.18's situation illustrates this. Although leaving school in July, F.18 was still reported as 'present', with occasional 'absences', until September. Similarly, F.27 infrequently attended in Term One, was at school on only a few occasions in Term Two, yet was reported as 'present' in this Register. One reason for these inaccuracies, cited by both the Dean and teachers, was due to some teachers not recording adult student attendance.

A second source of information was the record of attendance kept by the Dean from which she compiled the School Register, and accordingly to which the same restrictions must be applied. Yet, the Dean's records did contain some data not available in the Register (for example, a class by class record of attendance), which then appeared to provide a more complete account of student attendance. This is reported in Table 22 on the following page.

While recognising the inherent difficulties with attendance data, it remains possible to discern some general points regarding adult student attendance patterns. On the basis of the data reported in Tables 21 and 22, it is readily apparent that a number of adult students were frequently absent. In particular, F.11, F.13, F.23, and F.31 had significant periods of absence. The data also indicates that absences generally increased as the year progressed. Less evident in the data, but readily apparent from observation, was that absences were more frequent immediately before and then following examinations, particularly during Term Three. Finally, these tables also illustrate the point that some students - such as M.17 and F.10 - maintained almost 'full' attendance during the year.

Such data, however, provides little insight into either the

TABLE 22
Percentage of Days with
Recorded Absences

Code No.	Percentage of Days with Recorded Absences*		
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
M.5	15	23	36
M.6	29	44	100
M.8	15	10	15
M.15	23	30	42
M.16	31	26	31
M.17	0	5	2
F.10	2	0	7
F.11	32	61	93
F.13	40	51	100
F.14	21	26	17
F.16	35	49	51
F.17	19	33	47
F.18	0	11	20
F.19	15	23	20
F.23	34	64	100
F.24	8	2	5
F.27	65	72	100
F.28	5	20	8
F.30	4	18	31
F.31	65	47	-
F.32	2	18	19
F.34	-	11	15

* Derived from Dean's records in which was reported a period by period listing of all absences for this group of adult students. The available record only listed those who were still 'officially' enrolled from Term 2 onwards. For the compilation of this table, each day of the term where an absence was recorded, be that single period or full day, was counted as a 'day with absences' which was then expressed as a percentage of the total of the student's total enrolment for that term. Term 1 = 62 days; Term 2 = 61; and, Term 3 = 47. Subject to the same qualifications as previously noted for school-based absence records. For instance, F.18 still being recorded as 'present' in Term 3, despite having left school mid-term 2.

students' perception of their attendance record or the reasons for their absences. It is to these aspects that discussion now turns.

5.2.2 ATTENDANCE: THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

In the first instance, it was evident that the adult students themselves held a different perception of their attendance record than did the staff, particularly the Dean who was earlier reported as

seeing absenteeism as the 'worst ever'. A self-rating of attendance was derived from responses to Questionnaire Part Three, and is reported in Table 23.

TABLE 23
Attendance Record: Student Perceptions

<i>Attendance Scales</i>	<i>Adult Student's Ratings</i>
Excellent, hardly missed a class	M.5, F.10
Average, missed a few classes	M.4, M.13, M.17, F.14, F.17, F.18, F.19, F.24, F.28, F.30, F.31, F.32, F.33, F.34
Average [to] Below average	M.16
Below average, frequently missed classes	M.6, M.15, F.16, F.29
Below average [to] Well below average	F.13
Well below average, missed more classes than attended	M.11, F.23

Comparing Table 23 with the two previous tables, it is apparent that some adult students viewed their attendance record in a more 'favourable' light than perhaps the official account would suggest. M.5 rated his attendance as 'excellent' yet had a number of absences and was reported by his English teacher as being 'fortunate' that his record was not brought to the attention of staff during accrediting decisions as he would not have met the required attendance criteria for this award. Others, it appears, saw their records in a more 'negative' light. For example, M.11 was only absent on a few occasions, yet evaluated himself as 'well below average'.

When attention is then focussed upon the 'reasons' for absences, it becomes apparent that a variety of sources were of influence. F.13 provides a typical example. She recounts some contributory factors to her absences as being:

Well, I don't come to school on Thursday because I go to work anyway, and I've only got two classes and one of them is Economics. So, I don't miss much that day. Like, Tuesday I didn't wake up so I didn't bother coming [laugh]. When you wake at 2.30 in the afternoon it's not really worth it [laugh]. Normally I try to come but some

days I just don't feel like it - I want to catch up on the [television] 'Soaps'.

(F.13, Interview, 25.5.84)

Over the period of her enrolment, F.13 cited the following as causes for her frequent absences:

Slept in; couldn't be bothered; it's boring; illness; father's wedding; job commitments; watching 'Soaps'; had hair done and didn't want anyone to see it; went on holiday; too tired; moving house; weather; timetable changes; don't like teacher/subject; and a number of others.

Such a 'list' suggests her absences were the result of a variety of factors, some arising from within the school context and others from external commitments. This was the case with the majority of adult students, certainly to the extent that no single factor appeared to be the major cause of absences.

In addition, there were those instances where absences were a result of interactions between adult students, as the following incident illustrated:

F.9 I can't be bothered going to Biology. Have you got anything now?

F.15 No, I've got a free [Period].

F.9 Well - if I don't go to Biology what have you got next Period?

F.15 Economics. Maybe I won't go to that either.

F.9 Okay. Fuck Economics, fuck Biology - we're not going.

F.15 Right. Fucking neat idea. Let's go up town instead. We can call in to work and pick up the car.

F.9 Right. Let's go.

(Fieldnotes, 6.3.84)

This is not to suggest that the adult students were unaware that absences might prevent them from achieving credential-based goals. F.16's comments upon her end-of-year School Report demonstrates this:

But, what [teacher] said about study - telling me to study - makes me think I haven't been Accredited. I'm starting to worry. I've had a lot of absences - 25 half-days.

That's just this term. My English teacher said she had kept quiet about my absences for the Accrediting. So, I've definitely had too many.

(F.16, Fieldnotes, 7.11.84)

Then, when F.16 was Accredited, she expressed considerable surprise that her attendance record had not been 'held against her'.

5.2.3 THE 'ABSENTEE': A NEGATIVE REFERENT

At this juncture, one further area in which absences exerted some influence upon the processes of becoming an adult student is worth consideration. On a number of occasions, the issue of attendance arose during interactions among adult students in the Commonroom. There was a sense in which those frequently absent were used as a 'negative referent' suggesting something of a rejection of those not 'playing the game' and attending class. For instance, following a period of absences, F.13 returned to school and the conversation below ensued as others noted her 'presence' among the group:

F.11 *Bloody hell!*

M.16 *Christ!*

F.13 *Don't pick on me! Leave me alone. Not feeling well!*

M.16 *D.1 will be asking you to get a bloody leaving slip!*

F.13 *Just shut up! I'm not feeling well. I was sick. You can ring my doctor if you want to know.*

....

F.13 *Everyone's been giving me shit this morning [laugh]. My Economics teacher was too. It's not my fault.*

I *Did they ask you where you'd been lately?*

F.13 *No. Not quite [laugh]. Just said "Oh, a new student!" [laugh].*

....

F.10 *Good grief!*

F.13 *Don't pick on me.*

F.10 *Not worth coming back is it? The time you've been away!? Shocking child.*

(Fieldnotes, 3.8.84)

This type of conversation, where the 'absentee' was 'admonished' by others occurred on a number of occasions. It was apparent that the other adult students used F.13 as a 'bench mark' by noting that their attendance record was at least 'better' than hers. Then, as her absences continued, others in the group cited F.13 as an example of an individual who was 'not an adult student' because she was 'never present' at school.

However, there remained the extent to which at least some absences were 'expected' by the adult students and appeared to be deemed as 'acceptable' within a perspective that allowed the individual to determine 'appropriate' attendance rates. In turn, this reflected the general opinion among the adult students that the return to school was but part of ongoing lives, and not necessarily even the most important part:

*It's important to me that study is only a part of my life
and not the whole of it.*

(F.32, Fieldnotes, 5.4.84)

It was this view of their return to school which provided the rationale for the self-determination of attendance patterns and which appeared to underpin the individual variations discussed in this section.

5.3 TO BECOME AN ADULT STUDENT?

It has been noted previously that of the original 36 adult students who were enrolled at school, 15 completed the year of whom 14 (M.8 being the exception) remained as participants in the present investigation.

In the following discussion, an indication of the influences which contributed to the decision to withdraw, or 'drop out' from school or from the adult student subculture, is to be provided.

On the basis of the information given in Table 24, it is

TABLE 24
The 'Dropouts'

<i>Code No.</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Date Enrolled</i> *	<i>Date Left</i> **	<i>Length of Enrolment</i> ***
M.4	19	1/2	19/3	6.5 weeks
M.6	19	1/2	17/8	2 terms
M.7	18	1/2	14/2	2 weeks
M.9	18	1/2	1/2	Nil
M.10	17	1/2	17/2	2.5 weeks
M.11	20	1/2	4/5	1 term
M.13	21	29/2	16/4	6.5 weeks
F.9	17	1/2	9/4	9.5 weeks
F.11	22	1/2	17/8	2 terms
F.12	24	1/2	1/2	Nil
F.13	18	1/2	17/8	2 terms
F.15	19	1/2	14/6	1.2 terms
F.18	37	1/2	16/7	1.6 terms
F.20	48	1/2	15/3	6 weeks
F.22	24	1/2	12/3	5.5 weeks
F.23	17	1/2	17/8	2 terms
F.26	17	1/2	5/3	4.5 weeks
F.27	17	1/2	31/5	1.1 terms
F.29	24	13/2	26/3	6 weeks
F.31	17	21/2	5/7	1.5 terms
F.33	29	3/4	25/5	6 weeks

* Provides day/month, where 1/2 = First day of school year.

** Provides day/month. Based on researcher's observations as to last day student attended school. [Note: In many instances, the student was retained on the official school roll for some time after being observed as having left school - see prior tables reporting attendance].

*** Based on researcher's figures. Term 1 = 12.4 weeks; Term 2 = 12.2 weeks; Term 3 = 9.4 weeks [up to commencement of external exams], of 'possible' length of enrolment.

possible to make certain generalised statements about those who dropped out. It is apparent that a slight majority (57 percent) of those leaving school did so without completing a full term at school. Also evident from the Table are gender patterns where seventy one percent of males and fifty percent of females who left school did so within a few weeks of their enrolment. As for age patterns (see Table 25), 69 percent of those under 25 years of age dropped out. The data also indicates that 78 percent of females and 58 percent of males under 25 took the alternative of leaving school. In summary, those in the younger age groups were more likely to drop out and the younger

males reached this decision within a few weeks of their initial enrolment. School staff suggested that this had been a pattern in previous years as well.

TABLE 25
Length of Enrolment of Sample by Age-groups

Numbers Enrolled at:	Age-groups											
	16-20		21-25		26-30		31-35		46-40		40+	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Start of year	10	8	2	6		2		3		3		2
End of year	4	1	1	2		1		3		2		1

5.3.1 REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

The decision to withdraw from school was usually an outcome of a self-evaluation process by the adult student. Earlier discussion illustrated that the processes of becoming an adult student involved a consideration by the student of 'costs' and 'likely benefits'. What, then led to adult students withdrawing from school?

It has already been noted in previous discussion that there were those (for example, M.6, F.23, F.31) who enrolled as adult students, yet withdrew from the subculture some time before leaving school. These students constitute a slightly different group from those who remained members up to the time they withdrew from school. On the other hand, the decision to withdraw - from both the subculture and eventually the school - by those such as M.6, also represented a 'consideration of options' or self-evaluation of their return.

A variety of individual reasons appeared to underpin a student's decision to leave school. For F.20 it was the situation at school itself which was cited as the contributory factor:

I got fed up. You'd go in there and the teacher wouldn't turn up! Then - if he turned up - he was half-an-hour

late or even more! ...and I thought "Oh, blow it". I couldn't be bothered wasting my time going in there.

(F.20, Fieldnotes, 27.4.84)

While for M.11 it was his full-time work commitments which he reported as directly influencing his decision to leave school:

...hassle of just having to leave work...[to]...go to school. That really upsets things - upsets your day. Even if it is only for an hour, it interrupts your whole day [at work].

(M.11, Fieldnotes, 18.6.84)

For M.4 the processes of self-evaluation included an examination of reasons for enrolling at school in the first place. As a result he felt that:

I don't even know why I came back to school except to escape my responsibilities. Now, I feel that I should face up to them and the only way I can do that is to go back to the farm where I feel that I want to be. I went back for the weekend to try and sort it out and I didn't want to come back down here. I just wanted to stay there. It's what I want to do.

(M.4, Fieldnotes, 14.3.84)

One of the more usual reasons - financial situation - leading to a withdrawal from school was cited by M.7:

I wanted to get back out to work - I came back too early - my school days were too recent, I think. I left now because I was just keen to go and do something rather than settle down to school again. I just wanted to have a good time! I wasn't going to be any different than before, so it was a complete waste of time for me. So, I left and got a job. I wasn't ready to come back and do the study that's required. There was no incentive for me to stay. Money was definitely part of it! I get \$300 in my hand a week now! So, that was another reason. Also, I was living at home and having hassles with Mum so I had to move into a flat as well. There was no way, then, that I could stay at school! I couldn't flat and live on \$6 a week! So that's really why I left. I couldn't handle it - the amount you get can't support you which means you're forced to cadge off your parents and lose your independence! That I didn't like - you know - having to beg! The school part was good, but losing my independence wasn't! I just couldn't handle that and that's the main reason why I left.

(M.7, Fieldnotes, 17.4.84)

F.15 also noted her 'dependence' upon her fiance for money as contributing to her decision to leave. Similarly, F.9 left school to seek a job in order that she could leave home, while F.33 noted the 'difficulty' of returning to the family home after a number of years of independent living. F.33 also reported that she was required by circumstances to 'return' to the role of 'dutiful daughter', as well as cope with the common difficulty among adult students of finding a quiet area for study. As an outcome, then, of this situation F.33 also left school to take up a full-time job and to move to a flat, a result which she reported as being

...a shame really as I was quite enjoying it here [school] but the need for money and a flat is much more urgent.

(F.33, Fieldnotes, 23.5.84)

In these and other instances, the common factors influencing a decision to leave revolved around the issues of financial concerns and interpersonal relationships. The latter factor could exert considerable influence upon the processes of becoming, and remaining, an adult student.¹⁰ Further substantiation of this may be derived from the point that a majority of those who remained at school made frequent mention of the importance of the support of family and friends in their continued enrolment at school:

If you didn't have a relationship with your family that understood - I think it could really put quite a strain - I don't think that - if my family hadn't been understanding or anything, I don't think I would have succeeded in going on really. Yeah - you need your family to get you through, I reckon. And, just having that support from your teachers and your friends has been important, too. If you are encouraged about something. I felt that pushed me along, too, knowing that people were behind me - supportive.

(F.10, Interview, 4.5.84)

Indeed, of the 14 adult students remaining at school for the duration of the year, only F.28 reported her husband being somewhat 'unsupportive' of her schooling:

¹⁰ Although not a factor in the present research, the Dean and a number of the teachers reported past instances where a husband had explicitly prevented his wife who was a student from remaining at school. This, they suggested, was a 'major cause' of women withdrawing from school. There was, however, a suggestion by one teacher that F.22 had left due to pressure from her husband but this could not be confirmed (see, Appendix D).

...in lots of ways, I don't really believe that he went out of his way to stop me going to school. These [jobs] just arose and someone had to attend to them - as he was too busy, that meant me. He used to - I wouldn't say he was ever malicious or anything, but he - um- "Where are you going today?" - and I'd say "School" - "Oh, not that again! Why can't you stay at home? You're running up too many miles in the car. Petrol's expensive" - just things like that. But, in the end, when I got School C he seemed quite pleased - you know, it probably would have been different if I had failed - but he seemed quite chuffed, I think, that I got it.

(F.28, Fieldnotes, 7.2.85)

At this point, it is relevant to note that all adult students reported that their return to school exerted considerable influence upon their lives outside the school situation. In particular, they cited instances where schooling commitments resulted in less time available for interaction with family and friends, or to engage in various social or sporting activities. F.24's comments illustrated this:

In one respect I haven't got as much time to spend with the children - like with reading to them. I feel that I want to go back and read something out of a History book or read my History notes and, by the time I've got the tea prepared and we've had it and I've done the dishes, I feel that I just don't have time so much - especially if there's a test coming up or we have to do a project with a bit of reading in it. The children are perhaps missing out and perhaps I'm a bit more grumpy towards them sometimes than I normally am.

(F.24, Interview, 30.4.84)

Becoming, and remaining, an adult student, then, required the individual to successfully 'manage' a variety of activities:

I successfully managed to combine full-time study, part-time work, motherhood, marriage, and housework - wouldn't have lasted out the year if I hadn't.

(F.32, Interview, 30.1.85)

5.3.2 THE 'DROP OUT': A NEGATIVE REFERENT

Those who left school during the year also contributed to the

processes of becoming an adult student by providing a component or reference point in the definition of 'adult student'. The case of F.9 can be given as an example. A few days after having left school, F.9 returned to the Commonroom announcing that she had come in for a 'chat'. It was observed that those present 'ignored' F.9 and did not respond to her efforts at initiating conversation beyond making polite 'acknowledgement' of her presence. Reflecting on this incident later in the day, F.10 remarked that the other adult students did not 'really want F.9 in there sidetracking everyone'. F.30 commented:

Everyone's written F.9 off. She's not one of us any more - because "You're not trying". I noticed that actually. It was as if she was no longer part of us. She was right on the outer.

(F.30, Fieldnotes, 27.4.84)

In this sense, those who left school were taken by those remaining to characterise an adult student as one who 'tries' and who continues at school. There were numerous occasions where the adult students referred to others leaving in similar terms, often in the context of the individual stating that they were still at school:

...at least I'm going and I'm doing it. I'm not dropping-out or anything. The actual business of going and keeping it up is the main [achievement].

(M.11, Interview, 30.4.8)

Part of the subculture involved remaining at school for the year, successfully 'managing' finances and both school and external commitments and relationships.

At this point, then, it has been stated that only those students who remained at school for the year could complete the processes of becoming an adult student. Those who withdrew from school, or from the adult student subculture first, therefore cannot be considered as being 'adult students' in these terms. It now remains to discuss the data subsumed within these 'Decision Points' before the focus moves to a consideration of the Goal Achievements experienced as part of the processes of becoming an adult student.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Becoming an adult student was the outcome of a process involving the complex and dynamic interactions among individuals within the social context. In this, students were participants in the interpretation and construction of individualised processes of becoming an adult student and member of the subculture.

In the preceding section, it has been argued that the dynamics of the adult student subculture in operation were evident in the responses of members to three 'rituals', here stated as questions. These questions were: 'To Drop A Subject?'; 'To Attend School?', and; 'To Become an Adult Student?'. As particular individuals addressed these issues, they became involved in a process of rationalization whereby they sought to evaluate their return to school and their status. In so doing, the adult student was engaging in decision-making actions and activities invoking consideration of factors derived from both school and external contexts. These decisions, then, reflected the nexus between the 'adult' component - background, experiences, external life and commitments, and goals - and the 'student' component involving membership of the school as an institution. The outcome of such a process, it was suggested, saw individuals evaluate whether or not to continue at school, or at least to consider the form of their commitment to school.

During the process of evaluating their courses, the adult students were acting under constraints imposed initially by a compromise between their external commitments and the particular requirements of their credential-based goals. In the majority of cases where students withdrew from a subject, they retained their eligibility for the particular qualification sought. The two exceptions to this were M.6 and F.15, both of whom were reported as not becoming adult students primarily because of their decisions to withdraw from a subject. M.6 was to 'become' a 'pupil' by processes of self-identification with other pupils rather than adult students, to which his decision to change subjects and class levels contributed. For F.15, her decision to drop Geography was part of the overall

conflict situation which eventually resulted in her withdrawal from school.

While a decision to withdraw from a subject generally included a consideration of a perceived 'lack of background' and a wish to focus greater effort upon the remaining courses, it was also indicated that a variety of idiosyncratic reasons usually influenced each particular student. It was also pointed out that the responsibility to drop a subject lay with each individual adult student, invariably an action taken without consultation with staff members except in the case of M.6.

Students' attendance patterns also were highly individualised and involved various compromises between their school and external commitments. In reaching such a compromise, the students reported a variety of factors contributing to their non-attendance at school. Moreover, students' perceptions of attendance differed somewhat from those held by school staff. Patterns of attendance varied over the year with 'peaks' of absences before and after each examination period and during Term Three.

The final part of this discussion focussed upon those who left school during the course of the year, and those who withdrew from the adult student subculture so as to 'identify' with the pupil group. Students' decisions to leave brought into play a self-evaluation which saw the likely 'benefits' of staying not outweighing the 'costs' incurred through remaining at school. Two such 'costs' were 'financial' considerations and 'relationship' issues. Becoming an adult student required both financial support and a supportive relationship with family and/or friends to the extent that where this was not the case the student was more likely to leave school. In short, becoming and remaining an adult student appeared to require the 'successful management' of financial situation, schooling commitments, and external commitments in terms not only of occupation and other tasks but also relationships with family and friends.

One final aspect of the processes of becoming an adult student, apparent throughout the discussion so far, has been students being confronted by various incidents and events, or, more precisely,

situational 'episodes'. These differed in type, intensity, duration, and outcome. This aspect of the process has perhaps been more evident in the present section, although common to the entire experience. An example of this is provided where both F.11 and F.28 reported a 'lack of support' in their return to school from their respective husbands. While F.11 was to leave school, in part as an outcome of this, F.28 remained. Other episodes also produced different outcomes. Both F.10 and F.15 reported considerable difficulties concerning the amount of work required in Geography, yet F.10 stayed at school while this situation was a major contributory factor to F.15's conflict with school staff, and eventual decision to leave school. At this point, it remains to illustrate the extent to which these adult students achieved the goals which provided the reasons for their return to school.

Part Six

Goal Achievement

The focus here is on the achievement of the goals held by the adult students. It is contended that the extent of achievement of their goals represents the degree to which the processes of becoming an adult student were 'successful' for the individual. Three categories of goals can be identified: 'Personal Goals'; 'Credential-based Goals', and; 'School Awards'.

6.1 PERSONAL GOALS

While the attainment of credential-based goals was largely

dependent upon the student remaining at school for the duration of the year, and thereby becoming an adult student, no such conditions necessarily applied to personal goals. There were some instances where these personal goals were attained even though, and sometimes because, the student left school. It was therefore possible for the individual to achieve certain personal goals without becoming an adult student.

6.1.1 AN INITIAL GOAL

The initial goal for many of the adult students was that of reaching a decision to return to school, and its 'achievement' became the actual enrolment. The comments of F.30 give an illustration:

I want to run around telling everyone "Why don't you go back to school - why don't you do something" - because it's just so much easier than I ever thought it would be. It took me three years to get the get-up-and-go to do it - just the courage. Now it just seems so easy.

(F.30, Interview, 4.5.84)

This initial goal of returning to school was also related to the student's experiences of prior schooling. In short, the longer the period between experiences, and the more negative the perception was of prior schooling, the longer it took to reach a decision to return. F.30 and F.34 were typical examples. Both recalled their prior schooling as predominantly 'negative' and 'unsuccessful' and each reported a period of some years being taken to finally decide to return to school.

Even for those with recent schooling experiences, there was also an extent to which their decision to return represented a 'hurdle overcome'. The comments of F.13 exemplify this:

I found it hard to get back to school again. I smoked a packet of smokes in my first day! [laugh]. In the first two hours! I was a bit nervous - I think we all did, though - everyone was puffing up large. We were all a bit petrified of little Third-formers and Sixth-formers treating us a bit strange, but they don't really. I thought "Have I done the wrong thing coming back?". But it was too late - I'd paid my book

deposit [laugh]. I was a bit petrified of whether I would fit in with people. I thought they were a pack of jerks - everyone in the Commonroom. I thought "My gawd - what have I got myself in to!?" because everyone looked as though they were really intelligent and had high hopes for themselves - I thought "Hell, all I want to get is my U.E." I thought I was really thick and the rest of them were ultra brainy, but then I realised that they weren't [laugh]. That's why they were back at school - because they were thick too [laugh].

(F.13, Interview, 3.4.84)

6.1.2 PERSONAL GOALS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

An integral part of the processes of becoming an adult student involved the self-evaluation of the return to school. As an outcome of this process, there were those who, in considering their options, decided to withdraw from school and therefore did not become adult students. This type of situation did not preclude the individual from achieving certain personal goals. For instance, M.6 reported that his experiences had been predominantly negative, particularly in that his credential-based goals were perceived - both by himself and teachers - as 'beyond' him, and that academically he had 'achieved nothing'. On the other hand, he noted that his 'social interaction' had improved and that his return had enabled him to 'consider' options and realise that school was currently 'unsuitable'. M.6 saw these as a personal 'achievement' which resulted from his return to school.

Similarly, F.18 reported that:

...I didn't like Typing as a subject. I don't ever want to do it as a job. But - I realised, too, that I would have to do it a lot more than that to ever get a job typing. It was useless. I don't suppose anything's ever wasted. But, as far as getting a job through it went, I just knew I wouldn't. I don't regret the fact that I tried the Typing - at least I found out that I didn't like it. That I don't ever want to do anything like that.

(F.18, Fieldnotes, 24.6.84)

F.18's return had also established a 'negative' outcome through demonstrating an option she did not wish to pursue. There were also

some 'positive' aspects of the experience where F.18 reported personal 'benefits' as having been achieved:

It was good in that I had to get up every morning and get cracking and that I had something to do. It was good for that. [Further] one thing I did enjoy was that I met other people through going - although I have lost touch with most of them. That's been good for me. It's very lonely on your own like this - very lonely.

(F.18, Fieldnotes, 24.6.84)

Attainment of a variety of personal goals was possible without experiencing the complete processes of becoming an adult student. Such goals could be attained independently of either remaining at school or achieving credential-based goals. The comments of F.33 illustrate this:

A little bit of a gain in knowledge [laugh] - hopefully! [laugh]. Achievements - crikey!? I think it's just the self-satisfaction, isn't it - of actually learning something. I've always believed that whatever you can learn is a bit of a bonus in life... . It's all a bit of an achievement to me. Whether or not it has any end to it - whether or not I continue - I won't have regretted coming because there are lots of things I have learned. It's opened up, perhaps, new fields I never thought about, and I've got books of my own which now make a bit more sense - Chemistry and Physics books. So, just sort of self-satisfaction and satisfaction of learning things.

(F.33, Interview, 3.5.84)

It can, therefore, be suggested that 'credential success', and even becoming an adult student, is not the only means whereby an individual may achieve something from a return to school. In those cases where the self-evaluation processes lead to a decision to withdraw from school, the return at least produced the outcome of allowing them to:

...clarify their thinking [and have] a time-out to have a chance to consider their options.

(D.1, Fieldnotes, 28.5.84)

While attention has been focussed upon those who left school this is not to suggest that those who remained enrolled to become adult students did not also report achievement of personal goals. All those who enrolled at school, and who participated in the research beyond

the initial stages, reported some 'positive' outcomes from their return to school.

6.1.3 PERSONAL GOALS OF ADULT STUDENTS

In reporting the 'achievements' and benefits to accrue from their return to school, the adult students also cited a variety of personal outcomes. F.24 reported at one stage that not only had the return broadened her knowledge and skills, but also that her self-confidence and self-image had 'improved' as an outcome:

[schooling] is making me appreciate, when I read something in the paper which has a historical 'bent' to it, and understand it a lot better. With my writing, generally, it's improved quite a bit if I want to write away for something - I feel that the English has helped me there. I've got more confidence and I can express myself better than I could and I can explain things to my children. It's helping there - getting the message across to my children to try and do their best or there won't be any jobs! I feel that I'm achieving something! Especially when it comes to History - I'm learning something new that I didn't know before and I feel good about that.

(F.24, Interview, 30.4.84)

A further illustration of this achievement of 'self-confidence' and 'self-image' is provided by F.30's report that her return to school

...changed me. I'm more confident and self-assured - about a lot of things. I feel I could go out and apply for a job now and I couldn't have done that three months ago. I think it's changed my perspective on life in general. Just - even the people I'm mixing with - because my life was so narrow before and I didn't socialise much and now I'm seeing so many different people from different walks of life and different outlooks - that in itself is a great thing. My marks have been good - better than I'd hoped - which gives me a lot of confidence. A matter of self-esteem - liking myself better and thinking "Gee, I'm not a vegetable after all" - something I'd thought for years! [laugh]. I've proved to myself that I can do other things as well as being 'mum'. Until now being 'mum', in my mind, was a full-time occupation. But, I'm finding that I can cope with more than just

motherhood - I can add things to it and I feel I can go on.

(F.30, Interview, 4.5.84)

For F.16, her return had several outcomes:

My relationships have improved a bit - I talk to more people now. Also, I suppose, I'm thinking more about what I want to do after this [year]. Also, I'm more confident in myself and I've found that I can actually do it and get good marks.

(F.16, Interview, 2.5.84)

While 'marks' were often reported by the adult students when listing their 'achievements', they also indicated that such personal goals as illustrated here were largely 'independent' of examination results. Over the course of the present research, all adult-students cited a number of individualised, personal goals which had resulted from their return to school.

6.2 CREDENTIAL-BASED GOALS

In the preceding sections, it has been demonstrated that becoming an adult student required the individual to complete the school year. It is now appropriate to focus here upon the role of the end of the year examinations for those who became adult students.¹¹

First it must be acknowledged that there were three cases where individuals who sat these external examinations were not adult students under the criteria established here. Previous discussion has shown that M.6, F.13, and F.23 did not become adult students and that all had frequent periods of absence prior to leaving school at the end of Term Two. Despite this, all did sit for their external examinations, a situation the Dean considered as 'inappropriate', particularly in the cases of F.13 and F.23:

¹¹ A description of goals and achievements of all those enrolled - where applicable - is part of the data files provided in Appendix D.

That just makes nonsense of the whole thing. But, see, that's out of my hands - it must have been the decision of the Sixth Form Dean. See, the [Form] Dean is responsible for...all that legalistic stuff to do with regulations- and, if they let F.13 and F.23 sit the exam, well, as far as I'm concerned, they shouldn't have.

(D.1, Interview, 4.12.84)

It did remain possible, then, for an individual to sit external examinations without becoming an adult student, or without maintaining regular attendance at school. Furthermore, the fact that F.13 passed three of the four subjects attempted in these exams (although M.6 and F.23 did not) supports the view that becoming an adult student is not a prerequisite condition for examination 'success'.

Having acknowledged these particular exceptions, we now consider those who completed the school year, and did become adult students. The section is divided into two subcategories: '*The Exams*' and '*Goals and Outcomes*'.

6.2.1 THE EXAMS

The three examination periods - school-based in June and October, and external in November - were marked by an increase in absences among the adult students. These absences appeared to provide a further illustration of the differentiation between the adult students and pupils in terms of attendance obligations. During a conversation with a group of adult students, the Dean reported that this practice was

...very hard on the pupils though. They've got to continue to come to school and they don't understand why the adult students should be allowed to stay at home and swot for the exams. It's not really fair on them. So, please, give everyone a fair go over this.

(D.1, Fieldnotes, 17.9.84)

The adult students, in contrast, reported that they felt they could more effectively use their time at home rather than attend revision lessons at school:

There's not much point coming in 'cause we just seem to go over exam papers and that's very boring.

(M.16, Fieldnotes, 2.11.84)

The option of staying at home rather than attend such revision lessons was adopted by the majority of adult students, particularly in the period between the school end-of-year examinations in October and the external examinations in November. This, however, is not to suggest that this time away from school was necessarily occupied by the student revising for the examinations. For instance, M.5 remarked that:

I hope I get it Accredited. I'm not doing any swot at all - I just can't be bothered - you know - after the last [school] exams it's impossible to get interested again.

(M.5, Fieldnotes, 18.10.84)

This appeared to be the general situation with the other adult students as well.

Following both sets of school examinations, the majority of adult students reported 'difficulties' in becoming 'motivated' again. They reported feeling a 'need' to 'relax' and that a 'climax' point had been passed with the completion of the examinations. The following conversation between F.10 and F.30 exemplifies this:

F.30 *Are you having trouble getting interested again?*

F.10 *Yes. Now that the exams are over, I feel a bit bored with it all.*

F.30 *.... Perhaps it's just that the exams are over, now 'so what?' - you know? There's no pressure and no incentive to work, so you don't. I'm finding it really hard to get motivated again.*

F.10 *Yes.*

(Fieldnotes, 26.6.84)

Overall, the examination periods saw the adult students continuing with the process of seeking a compromise between school and external commitments. They reported a number of activities, including varying amounts of revision prior to the examinations, as occupying their time over the period before and after examinations.

It was evident that some 'anxiety' did manifest itself, particularly, during the first examination period. This varied with the individual concerned:

You should've seen them. Talk about nervous wrecks! F.15 was sitting there munching away [laugh]. She had two drinks [at a hotel] before the exam to make her relax! [laugh]. M.15 had a bad case of the nerves five minutes before he walked in the door. F.13, like me...she couldn't care less. It was just inconvenient having an exam and that was all there was to it.

(F.17, Fieldnotes, 7.6.84)

It was also apparent that some of this 'anxiety' concerning the examinations had effects upon relationships outside the school context:

I'm thinking about leaving home for a week [laugh]. I honestly am - think I will move to a motel. Just little things - like - shit I got shitty last night! They [children] all came home absolutely soaked...and it's me that's got to hang their coats...and bring their shoes in! So, I've gone on strike [laugh]. Said "I'm not cooking any more meals until after the exams". There's still washing to be done - still so much to do - it slacks me off at times. That's what I think - you know - these kids [pupils] here, their parents can do it for them.

(F.10, Fieldnotes, 27.9.84)

F.10 did not 'leave home', although she indicated that her family did make some efforts towards assisting her with the housework during the examination period.

The examination periods also represented an 'intensification' of the experiences of becoming an adult student. There was the noticeable increase in absenteeism, further emphasising the 'freedom' from attendance obligations characterising the adult student status, and differentiating them from the pupils. Then, the act of sitting the examinations alongside the pupils in a crowded hall supervised by teachers was reported as providing an illustration of the 'equivalence' of role and status between the two groups. During examinations, there was an increase in interaction in the Commonroom, as the adult students discussed the 'common topic' of the moment. This was particularly evident in the time immediately following the examinations where discussion centered on the papers, the results-

both 'expected' and actual, School Reports, and the effects upon goals of examination outcomes. The examinations did appear to provide something of a 'unifying theme' in terms of a shared and common experience. Finally, there also appeared to be higher levels of interaction between adult students and teachers following the examinations. Here, many of the adult students reported approaching teachers outside the classroom to discuss both the examination and their results.

In these ways, then, the examination periods appeared to 'focus' the processes of becoming an adult student, providing a significant episode within the experiences, rather than contributing some influence not already encountered in another situation.

6.2.2 GOALS AND OUTCOMES

While most of the students reported credential-based goals as a factor contributing to their decision to return to school, a significant proportion left school without attaining such goals. It would appear processes of self-evaluation experienced while becoming an adult student can lead to change in the goals sought by the individual. This pattern was no less evident among those who completed the processes of becoming an adult student. Of the 14 who became adult students, only M.17, F.10, F.32, and F.34 retained the full complement of subjects and goals throughout the year. Two others - M.5 and F.19 - retained their goals but both did drop a subject during the year. A summary of these goals, and an indication as to whether or not they were attained, of the 14 adult students is provided in Table 26 on the following page.

For those adult students who changed their goals during the year, a variety of factors were of influence. M.15's results in the school examinations and his attendance record were cited by him as contributing to 'abandoning hope' of being accredited University Entrance, while a 'lack of effort' would, in his view, prevent him passing the external examinations. As an outcome of this, M.15 indicated:

TABLE 26
Adult Student Goals and Achievements

Code No.	Stated Purpose of Enrolment *	Actual Destination **
M.5	U.E; Technical Institute, Interior Design	Achieved
M.15	U.E; A 'better job'	2 subjects U.E; bank officer
M.16	S.C; Broadcasting	1 subject S.C; returned to school
M.17	Preparation for following year, university	Achieved
F.10	U.E; Nurse training	Achieved
F.14	S.C; kindergarten teacher training	Part-time teacher's aide
F.16	U.E; university, changed to Naturopathy	Achieved
F.17	U.E; kindergarten teacher training	2 passes U.E; kitchen-hand
F.19	Credit towards N.Z. Certificate of Science	Continuing
F.24	U.E; A 'suitable job'	1 subject U.E; housewife
F.28	S.C; Nurse training	1 subject S.C; nursing 'in future'
F.30	U.E; Teacher training	1 subject U.E; part-time cleaner
F.32	U.B; university for Medical Intermediate	Achieved
F.34	Interest; return to school next year	Returned to school

* Derived from questionnaire responses and student indications of preferred occupations, this provides a general indication of goals at the start of the year, and the only case [F.16] of a reported change of these goals. This is not to deny that others did not come to see these goals as becoming 'unlikely' in view of the outcomes of their experiences, but that they were not replaced with specific alternatives.

** This provides their reported position at the time of last contact with the researcher.

In some ways I think it's been a bit of a waste of time. You know - I've spent a lot of money and I haven't really done anything. I mean, it's mainly my fault, but - well, in fact it is - it's still been a bit of a waste of time. You know, I thought I was ready for it - ready to go back and really get stuck in to it and that sort of thing. But, after a month or two back, I found it was just the same as when I was in the Sixth Form in the first place. Except, of course, I had an excuse - I didn't have to bother turning up - it was totally up to me. I did to start with, but, you know, at the end there - well, there was no hope of getting Accredited so I thought "Stuff it".

(M.15, Interview, 4.12.84)

In M.16's case, it was the 'non-attainment' of his goal of School Certificate which saw him return to school in further pursuit of this qualification, and 'defer' his long-term ambition of seeking a job in broadcasting. Similarly, F.28 remarked that her long-term goal of entry to nurse training had been deferred until some future time. Influencing her decision were family commitments and involvement in her husband's business.

The circumstances surrounding F.30's change in goals provides another case illustrating the idiosyncratic nature of the processes of becoming an adult student. At the start of the year, F.30 indicated that she wished, as her long-term goal, to qualify as a school teacher. Accordingly, she submitted her application for teacher training towards the end of Term Two. Although interviewed for teaching, F.30 was unsuccessful. Yet, she decided to continue with this goal by undertaking a degree in Education at university as an alternative path to enter teacher training. F.30 then successfully applied for provisional admission to university and, over the early stages of the 1984 Christmas holiday period, expressed considerable enthusiasm for this further study. By the start of 1985, F.30 reported that she had decided not to enrol at university, and that reaching this decision had caused her considerable concern. F.30 noted that her decision had been taken in view of her children's needs and the family needs for her to earn sufficient money for their support. Further, a male friend had advised her that the children 'needed her at home' rather than having her occupied in further study. At this stage, then, F.30 reported that her long-term goal of teaching was 'sometime in the future' and perhaps not until her youngest son (aged nine) was 'old enough'.

These examples illustrate that credential-based and long-term goals for future occupations exhibited change during the course of the present investigation. These changes were the outcome of a variety of influences, some from the school context and others from the external situation.

Of the 14 adult students, 13 - F.34 being the exception - sought examination-based goals. Table 27 on the following page lists the outcomes for these thirteen adult students. On the basis of these marks and results, it is evident that the adult students in the present research met with varying levels of 'success' or 'achievement' in terms of their credential-based goals.

The student's reactions to these results varied, not only in reflection of the marks achieved but also in terms of what they 'expected'. M.15 had expected his result on the basis of a reported 'lack of effort', yet he still expressed some 'disappointment' with

TABLE 27
Adult Student External Examination Results

Examination	Code No.	Subjects and Marks (Percent) *
School Certificate	M.16	Eng 37; Bio 41; Econ 54; Sci 41
	F.14	Eng 45; Bio [Abs]
	F.28	Bio 57
University Entrance	M.5	Accredited: Eng; Art; Geog; Art Hist
	M.15	Eng 40; Bio 61; Econ 56; Physics 37
	F.10	Accredited: Eng; Geog; Bio; Hist
	F.16	Accredited: Eng; Art Hist; Bio; Hist
	F.17	Eng 56; Geog 33; Bio 60; Econ 43
	¹ F.19	Bio 34
	F.24	Eng 48; Hist 60
University Bursaries	M.17	Bio 28; Chem 62; Maths [Abs]; Physics 57
	F.32	Eng 60; Bio 76; Chem 62; Maths 63
<p>ENG = English; BIO = Biology; ECON = Economics; SCI = Science; HIST = History; GEOG = Geography; CHEM = Chemistry; ART HIST = Art History</p> <p>* Derived from student reports, verified where possible (see, Note 1 below) from student and school records.</p> <p>¹ This is the mark for F.19 derived from school records. She reported to the author having achieved a mark of '51' in the exam. This, however, could not be verified as F.19 was 'unavailable' to meet with the researcher at the completion of the fieldwork, at which point the student records had been viewed in every other case. This, then, presented something of a dilemma. One of the two 'accounts' of her marks only can be 'correct'. F.19 was contacted by telephone and informed of the point that the researcher had a 'mark of 34' for her results, at which point she repeated the '51' as being the 'actual mark' on her notified results. At this stage, both the school - where staff insisted on the accuracy of their results - and F.19 had been informed of the situation, although it appeared that no further action was taken by either party.</p>		

the outcomes of these examinations. On the other hand, the fact that M.15 felt that his return to school had contributed to his gaining a position as a bank officer enabled him to report some 'achievements' accruing from the return to school. For F.14 there were few benefits:

I just feel I've had my go - I don't want to go back and make an idiot of myself again [laugh] - in case I didn't [pass] again.

(F.14, Fieldnotes, 29.1.85)

The measure of 'achievement', then, was an individual response, linked to examination results, but also an evaluative self-reflection upon the complete year and processes and experiences encountered. Of the 14 who became adult students, only five - M.5, F.10, F.16, F.32,

F.34 - commented that the year was a 'total success' in terms of the goals they had achieved, although most of the others were able to report 'some benefits' as having come from the experiences.

6.3 SCHOOL AWARDS

Two types of award - presented at the end of the year during prizegiving ceremonies - were available to the adult students: a memorial cup for 'Excellence in Sixth Form' by an adult student, and; general subject 'achievement award' certificates. Few of the adult students appeared aware of these awards until the end of the year. The two exceptions were M.5, who knew of the cup as a friend had received it the previous year, and F.10. In F.10's case, she acknowledged, after being awarded the memorial cup, that she had viewed it as an 'extra goal' from the outset:

...that was my two goals [for the year] - one, I would get the cup, and the other I would be Accredited. I never let it reflect back on me and think I'd be miserable if I didn't get the cup. But I was really proud to accept that. I feel that what I set out to do, I've gained. I've gained everything I wanted, really.

(F.10, Interview, 4.12.84)

The various awards, listed in Table 28, appeared to provide only a 'minor achievement' and certainly did not figure prominently in student accounts of the outcomes of their year at school. Only F.10 and F.34 were to express considerable personal satisfaction with their awards:

...that was really neat. I really felt I had achieved something.

(F.34, Interview, 4.12.84)

The other award recipients expressed some 'pleasure' but not great 'satisfaction' with these certificates, while M.5 reported that his award for Geography:

...just doesn't mean anything. See - I'm past the stage - if I was 17 or 18, it might help with a job - but I've

passed that stage now.

(M.5, Interview, 2.12.84)

TABLE 28
School Awards

<i>Presented At:</i>	<i>Award</i>	<i>Recipient</i>
Senior Prizegiving November 8.	Cup for 'Excellence in Sixth Form' from an Adult Student	F.10
	Adult Student Recognition Awards:	
	Geography	F.10
	History	F.24
	English	F.32
	Geography	M.5
Final School Assembly November 30.	Achievement Certificate: Alternate Mathematics	F.28 F.34

Overall, these awards did not appear to assume any great significance in the processes of becoming an adult student, although there was some discussion, during October, as to who was 'most likely' to receive the memorial cup.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The adult students enrolled at school with certain predetermined credential-based goals, usually directed towards a change in occupational status. The adult students also had personal goals for returning to school. The achievement of these two types of goals represents the 'outcomes' of the processes of becoming an adult student.

It is clear that individuals could attain certain of their personal goals without necessarily completing the processes of becoming an adult student. For instance, as an outcome of the self-evaluation of their return, individuals could arrive at a decision that the return to school was unlikely to provide sufficient 'benefits' and thereby determine that withdrawal represented the 'best

option'. This consideration of options saw a personal goal realised. The majority of those who did leave school were able to report the achievement of some personal goals. For those who remained, a variety of personal goals were held to have accrued from their return to school. Such personal goals, it was suggested, could be achieved independently of both becoming an adult student and of any credential-based goal achievement.

In the case of the credential-based goals, these also did not depend on an individual becoming an adult student in the sense of remaining at school. However, the focus of the preceding section has been upon those who did become adult students. Among these, there was considerable variation in terms of credential goal achievement and, consequently, in terms of changes of occupational status which could result. Accordingly, it could be suggested that becoming an adult student does not necessarily result in goal achievement, any more than it might for any other group of learners in an educational institution.

Finally, the school-based awards available to those who became adult students were not seen as significant 'achievements' by the majority of adult students.

This, then, completes the presentation and discussion of the data pertaining to the processes of becoming an adult student. As such, the discussion has moved 'full circle' from opening with a consideration of the 'reasons' these individuals returned to school, through the effects of the various sources of influence upon them, to an examination of the 'achievement' of their various goals. It is appropriate at this point to bring the present chapter to a 'closure' with an overview of the processes of becoming an adult student.

Becoming An Adult Student: An Overview Of The Processes

Becoming an adult student is an ongoing, complex, dynamic, and multidimensional process, occurring within the everyday world of adult students, and involving the interplay of biographical, contextual, and interactional factors.

As the adult students entered school, they encountered educational roles, formats, and activities, specific to the institution and setting. In order to meet the demands posed by schooling, the students became integrated into the overall school culture. Here the adult student was involved in a complex process of learning knowledge, behaviours, and expectations appropriate to participation within the social and academic life of the classroom situation.

At the same time, in the processes of establishing an adult student subculture, the adult students interacted and negotiated with others in the social context to establish a set of differentiated roles, rights, obligations, intentions and actions.

While certain similarities existed in terms of general 'characteristics' of the adult students, each student was different. Becoming an adult student was found to be an individualistic process influenced by the definitions and interpretations of the social situation imposed by the particular student. In short, adult students were individually active and participatory in the processes of becoming.

Becoming an adult student was also an interactive process. The data presented illustrated that the sources of influence upon the adult students were many, varied, and again individualistic. The Dean, classroom teachers, pupils, and others outside the school context influenced, and interacted with, the students. During such interactions, it was evident that becoming an adult student was not a

neutral enterprise but rather one which involved a distribution and application of 'power' to define and delimit the course and nature of these relationships.

While becoming an adult student involved the concept of 'process', this is not to be taken as suggesting a notion of 'continuity' and 'consistency'. As the preceding discussion has illustrated, the process of becoming an adult student was individualistic, political, and, furthermore, episodic in that it revolved around events and incidents experienced by the particular adult student. Such episodes, it was shown, varied in type, intensity, duration, and outcome.

The following chapter, then, seeks to draw together these facets of the processes of becoming an adult student and to comment upon their theoretical significance.

CHAPTER FIVE

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT

The present chapter discusses the theoretical elaboration of the processes of becoming an adult student. First, an outline is provided of the approach adopted and its general relationships to the literature. The next section presents an overview of the data, as a background to the development of a particular theoretical model. This model is then related to the literature as the discussion focusses upon the notions and elaborations of the processes of becoming. The chapter concludes with the derivation of propositional statements about the processes of becoming an adult student.

In Chapter One, it was shown that there is a dearth of literature pertaining to adult students in secondary schools. The literature which does exist is primarily from the perspective of teachers and school administrators and heavily psychological in orientation. Furthermore, this literature tends to be either purely descriptive, reporting one particular author's personal experiences of adult students in a school, or prescriptive advocating specific 'strategies' which might be adopted to more 'successfully cope' with adult students in the school context. This literature also lacks any depth of substantive 'evidence' and would appear somewhat akin to the 'cook book' philosophy of providing superficial accounts and prescriptions directed towards a 'recipe' of 'success' in 'managing' adult students within the secondary school.

In short, much of the available literature provides little more than generalised and superficial accounts of the experiences encountered by adult students as they return to the secondary school.

This observation confirms Purvis' (1976) view about research in the general field of adult education:

Just as in sociology empirical research was dominated by a positivistic approach...and sought quantification through techniques such as the questionnaire, the [one-off] interview, various forms of statistical analyses etc., so in adult education we find a similar methodological approach... But whereas sociologists are now seriously questioning the sterility of the separation between theory and research and the appropriateness of the types of investigation that are used in the natural sciences for the social world, few adult educationalists have debated these issues. The adult educationalist still tends to locate research in the positivist tradition... .

(Purvis, 1976, p.16)

In short, then, there exists a number of deficiencies in past accounts of adult students in the secondary school, resulting in a fragmented and incomplete picture of their experiences with few attempts being directed towards provision of explanatory concepts which might elaborate the processes of becoming an adult student. Furthermore, similar concerns may be expressed regarding the general literature addressing 'adult education', rendering it also unsuitable as a source of insights into the processes of becoming an adult student.

This dearth of prior research, however, does not leave the investigator in a *tabula rasa* state in seeking to develop an understanding of the processes and experiences encountered by students as they return to secondary school. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) state:

....the researcher does not approach reality as a tabula rasa - [s/he] must have a perspective [so as to] see relevant data and abstract significant categories from [it].

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.3)

The perspectives and approaches underpinning the present investigation, and which were discussed in previous chapters, were broadly categorised as 'symbolic interactionism'. It is now appropriate to indicate how this theoretical orientation impacted on the analysis of the data.

APPROACHING THE DATA: THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

In terms of a view of the 'purpose' to be served by theory, the statement by Nagel (1969, p.10) that it should provide a "...more or less systematic analysis of a set of related concepts" in order to elaborate and clarify the situation under investigation was adopted as a guiding principle. From this, as Yinger (1978) elaborates, the intentions are that theoretical elaboration of data:

...should (1) provide modes of conceptualization for describing and explaining behaviour, (2) provide categories and hypotheses clear enough to be verified in present and future research, and (3) be readily understandable by researchers of any viewpoint, by students, and by lay-persons and practitioners.

(Yinger, 1978, p.11)

Taking this as providing a generalised direction towards which the research should seek to move, the author considered that theoretical explanations are required to both 'fit' and 'work', as Glaser and Strauss (1967) elaborate. It was this which predisposed the researcher towards the broad categorisation of providing 'generative' theorizing grounded in the data as the more appropriate form of theoretical development in the present context. This particular approach clearly dovetails with the broadly categorised symbolic interactionism underpinning the research. With a focus upon the everyday 'worlds' of a group of people as constructors of their own actions and meanings, any elaboration must proceed from the data generated within the social setting (see, Woods, 1979, 1983).

At the same time, the position was also taken that such theoretical elaboration should, as Woods (1985b) argues, be 'cumulative'. It was in this sense that the approach adopted was, as previously described, held to fit between what Woods (1983, 1985b) distinguishes as 'Stage I' and 'Stage II' research and theory development. In this context, it was noted that Stage I was primarily concerned with the descriptive 'mapping' of the field, while Stage II sought to determine linkages with previously 'grounded' concepts, categories, and theoretical constructs. While a central thrust of this investigation was directed towards the 'descriptive'

processes considered the 'strength' of field research methodologies, awareness of the numerous recent studies employing such methods to educational settings exerted considerable influence. Like Delamont (1981), there was some concern that pure description of the 'all too familiar' aspects of schooling would contribute little to either developing understanding of the processes of becoming an adult student or the necessary production of analytic, and possibly predictive, conceptual constructs.

Accordingly, the present investigation was undertaken with a two-fold purpose in terms of envisaged 'outcomes' likely to accrue from data gathering and analysis. First, it attempted to provide for the 'mapping' of an as yet 'uncharted' area of an educational context, linking the research to the 'Stage I' level. Second, it also developed 'theoretical elaborations' of the influences and interrelationships operating on the processes of becoming an adult student. In so doing, it was considered that such elaborations should, wherever appropriate, utilise conceptual structures previously grounded in other research contexts. It is this perception which represents the author's 'interpretations' of the suggestions made by Woods (1983, 1985b) that ethnographic theory construction should progress towards the development of a 'Stage II' level.

These intentions and perceptions, then, underpinned the gathering and analysis of the data during the present research. As such, throughout the study procedures of 'theoretical sampling' and 'constant comparative analysis' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) were applied to the collection and elaboration of the data. The following section provides a summation of the data gathered during the investigation, prior to the consideration of its theoretical significance.

THE PROCESSES OF BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT: A DATA SUMMATION

Before embarking upon this discussion, it appears appropriate to remind the reader that the research sought to focus upon the processes of becoming an adult student. Accordingly:

Theoretical coverage requires only theoretical sampling of that segment of all behavior needed to generate an explanatory theory of a process. The analyst does not need representative coverage of all behavior.

(Glaser, 1978, pp.111-112)

It is in accepting this view advocated by Glaser (1978) that the following account presents a summary of the data elaborated in the preceding chapter. The intention is to focus explicitly on the notion of 'process' as derived and developed from the foregoing presentation of the supporting and illustrative data.

The adult students enrolled at school with certain predetermined credential-based goals directed, generally, towards a change in occupational status. Furthermore, the adult students reported a variety of individualistic personal goals as their justification for returning to school. Accordingly, the 'status passage' (Glaser and Strauss, 1971) embarked upon by these returning students was premised on the basis that occupational and personal change were likely goal-directed outcomes. In short, both occupational - or status - mobility and personal factors determined this re-entry to the school situation, and were perceived by the students as being of at least equal importance as rationales for their decision.

While the decision to return to school may have been taken some time prior to actual enrolment, it was the act of enrolling at school which is held to have initiated the processes of becoming an adult student. Two overarching processes were identified in the present research context - integration and differentiation.

Once entry to the school context was obtained, the individual was inducted, over time, into the school and 'pupil' culture. This has been termed the process of integration.

Integration into the overall school culture occurred as an outcome of a variety of interrelated and interdependent factors. For instance, students' 'familiarity' with the school environment, their 'similarity' of dress with senior pupils, and their equivalence of status, particularly in the classroom, all served to integrate the

adult students. The processes of integration were influenced by the Dean and Classroom Teachers. The Dean sought to place adult students in senior classes reflecting a general perception among the staff that pupils at this level were most 'similar' to adult students in a number of characteristics, thereby 'easing' integration. In the classroom context, the teachers gave emphasis to the 'appropriate' role relationship being one of teacher/student, rather than adult/adult. Such a relationship appeared to be generally 'accepted' by the adult students and was acknowledged through their adoption of a formal form of address in most references to, and interactions with, their teachers. Through these integrative processes adult students came to 'adopt' an equivalent status to that of the pupils as the 'most appropriate' in this context. One outcome was that the adult students became 'identified', and responded to, as 'part of the class', occupying a similar position and role to that of the school-aged pupils within the classroom relationships and interactions.

Becoming an adult student, then, involved a process which saw the students coming to be 'identified' by themselves, teachers, and pupils as 'members' of the school culture. This integration was a complex process, involving the learning of knowledge, behaviours and expectations appropriate to participation in the social context. In order to meet the demands posed by formal schooling, the adult student must become 'part' of the culture of the school. It was also an interactive process for it was evident that the students were constructing their own personal definitions of the situation as they became integrated.

In the process of establishing an adult student subculture, the adult students interacted and negotiated with others in the social context to establish a set of differentiated roles, rights, obligations, intentions and actions. This process of differentiation, like that of integration, was initiated at enrolment with the attribution of adult student status. In accordance with general policies and practices determined by the Principal, and in recognition of the personal characteristics and background of the individual, the status of 'adult student' was conferred and reinforced by the Dean of Adult Students. Becoming an adult student, however, also required that processes of self-identification with the status

occur, to the extent that these could override school definitions and attributions. The differentiation of the adult student subculture developed through school policies and practices which served to establish the 'adult student' as a person with a different status and subject to different expectations, treatments, rules, and regulations, than applied to the school-aged pupils. The 'boundaries' between the two groups were further enhanced by the nature and form of their interactions and relationships. While this dichotomy of grouping and status was most overt in the situation of the Adult Commonroom, it also permeated relationships and interactions between the adult students and both teachers and pupils, within and outside the classroom situation.

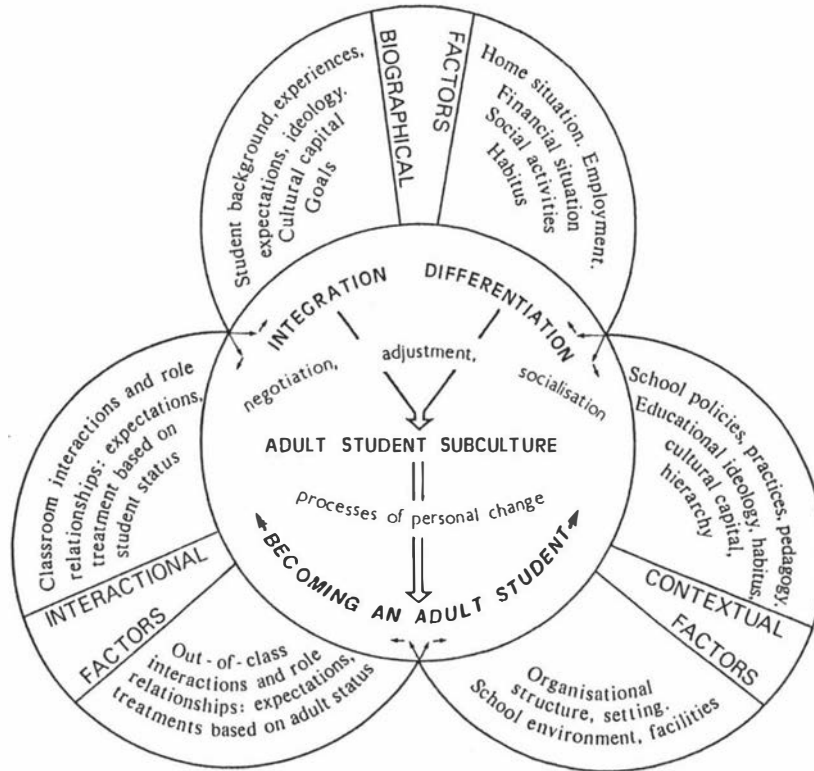
Another characteristic of the subculture was its fluidity: it was not a fixed entity in time or space, but continuously being 'created' through the actions and interactions of the constitutive members who gave it both existence and form. The dynamics of this subculture in operation involved the adult student in processes of rationalization whereby they continually sought to evaluate their return to school and their status. These evaluations reflected the nexus between the 'adult' component - background, experiences, external life and commitments, and goals - and the 'student' component deriving from membership of the school as an institution. The outcome of such a process saw the students evaluate whether or not continue with their return to school, or at least to consider the form their commitment to school would take.

Becoming an adult student was not a process limited to conditions derived solely from the school context. In short, becoming and remaining an adult student appeared to require the 'successful management' of individual financial situations, schooling commitments, and external commitments in terms of both occupation and relationships with family and friends. For those who did not succeed at this form of personal management, or whose circumstances were beyond their control, a withdrawal from school became the only option available.

In a very real way, becoming an adult student is an ongoing process, complex and dynamic, and multidimensional, involving the

interplay of biographical, contextual, and interactional factors. This is represented diagrammatically in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6
Becoming An Adult Student:
A Model of Processes



THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE

As Figure 6 shows, there is the ongoing interaction between biographical, contextual and interactive factors involved in the processes of becoming an adult student. This figure exhibits a number of similarities to other models which have sought to indicate the processes whereby the individual 'becomes' part of a social context. For instance, in an analysis of 'coping strategies', Pollard (1982) placed emphasis upon the subjective meaning of coping and derived a model giving recognition to the intersection of a number of

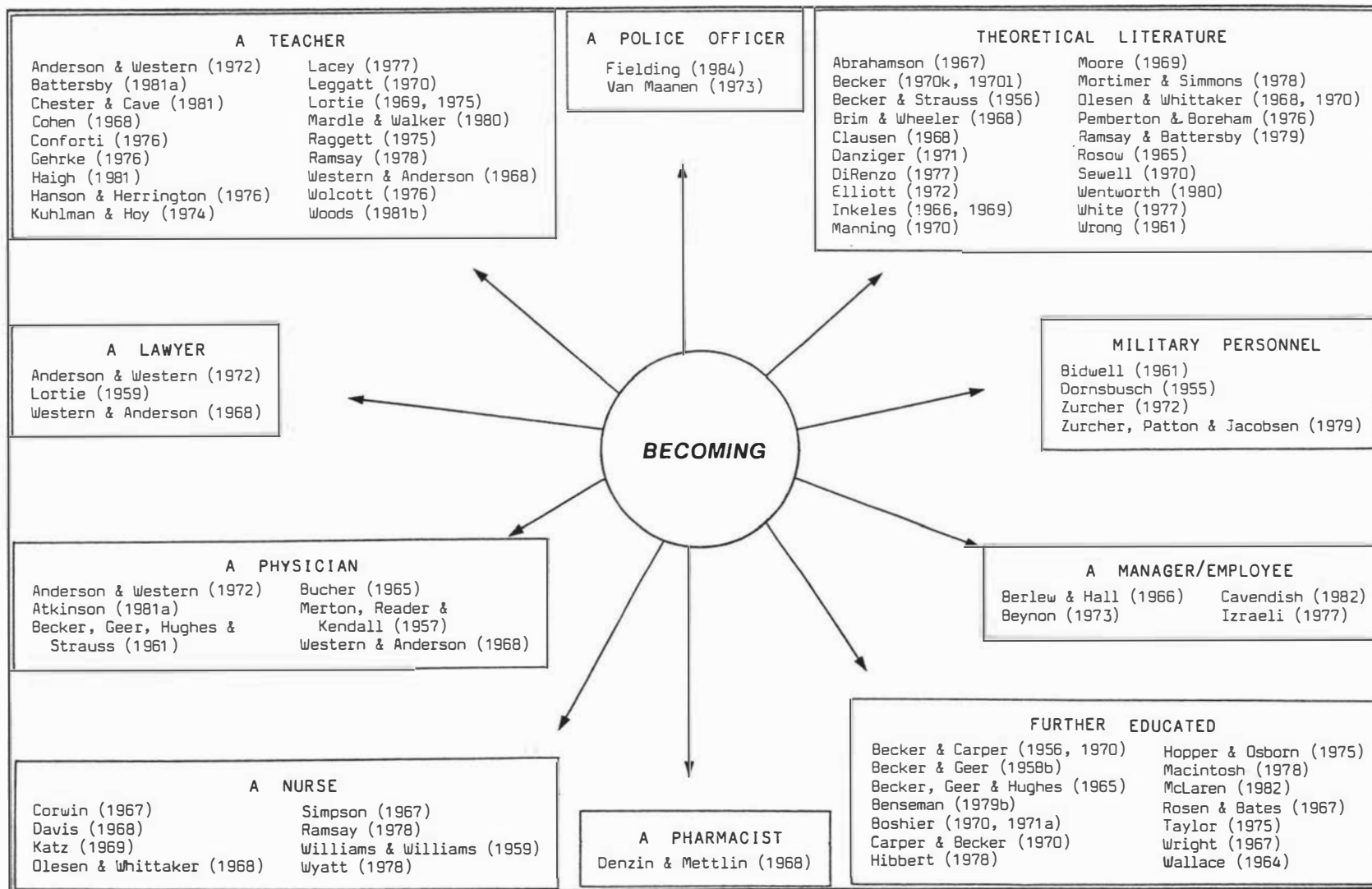
influences, including teacher and pupil biography, institutional factors, social structure, interactional processes, and context. It is in recognition of this similarity that the present research is held to provide a further stage in the development and 'mapping' of the influences and interrelationships as the individual 'becomes' part of an ongoing social structure, and hence related to the processes of theory development outlined by Woods (1983, 1985b). The particular purpose, then, of the theoretical elaboration of the data becomes one of seeking to provide new concepts, formulations, and dimensions, of suggesting alternative patterns of relationships, and to develop further the models of the processes so far established. Although not implying any inherent 'superiority' of development, theory elaboration becomes part of an ongoing cumulative 'refinement' seeking also to stimulate further examination of the tentative concepts and typologies derived from any investigation.

On the basis of the data and the model developed in Figure 6, it is therefore the notions of individualism, manifestations of power, the episodic nature of experiences, integration, and differentiation, which are of theoretical significance and which require examination. In other words, elaboration is required of the manner in which situational adjustment, socialisatory episodes, political activities and relationships, within an individualised process all contribute towards the person becoming an adult student.

Faced with the dearth of a substantive body of literature detailing processes of becoming an adult student in secondary school, and the characteristics of the sample rendering much of the school-based literature somewhat inappropriate, the author turned initially to the 'socialisation' literature as a framework within which to locate the present study. Although a subject of investigation for only some two or three decades (for instance, Becker, 1952; Becker and Carper, 1956; Becker and Strauss, 1956), it is apparent that a considerable body of literature has addressed the general area of 'adult socialisation'. In particular, a plethora of studies and literature has addressed aspects of the processes of 'becoming' from a perspective focussing upon aspects of 'professional socialisation', a selection from which is provided in Figure 7 within a classificatory scheme proposed by Battersby (1981a) and Ramsay and Battersby (1979).

FIGURE 7

Some Research and Literature on the Processes of Becoming



In the present situation, it is possible to follow the pattern established by other researchers (for instance, Battersby, 1981a; Olesen and Whittaker, 1968, 1970; Ramsay and Battersby, 1979; Wentworth, 1980) and indicate some general concerns with aspects of this extensive literature.

First, it is apparent that something of a dichotomy exists within this literature which, as Ramsay and Battersby (1979) note, sees

...Merton versus Becker, structural functionalism versus symbolic interactionism, and positivistic research versus participant observation.... [and] these dichotomies have limited the powerfulness of professional socialization research.

(Ramsay and Battersby, 1979, p.2)

Moreover, they further report that the term 'socialisation' has become 'over-psychologized' leading to definitions which, in many instances, refer to processes of acculturation and/or enculturation. Often, as Olesen and Whittaker (1968) remark, the view is given of the 'students' approaching the institution in a *tabula rasa* condition, all similar in terms of background and characteristics, devoid of interests or effects from outside the institution, who are then 'processed' by the system into the final product of the 'professional' upon graduation at which point further development ceases. In this context, definitions of 'socialisation' abound, and usually include reference to the process by which people gradually acquire attitudes, values, and ways of behaving appropriate to their future status (for instance, Cohen, L., 1968). Izraeli (1977) and others argue that such a view assumes a 'monolithic' and consensual socialisatory institution and ignores the interactive and ongoing aspects of professional development. In turn, this theoretical model which views socialisation as being the acquisition of 'appropriate' modes of conduct through processes of learning and conditioning, tends to focus more upon the 'outcomes' of the process inferring that it produces people who conform "...with little recognition that the practices to which individuals may be socialised could be inadequate, undesirable or deleterious" (Battersby, 1981a, p.12).

In other words, as Wrong (1961) and Wentworth (1980) suggest, such a perspective supports the 'over-socialised' view of adult

development which emphasises the deterministic influences of socialisatory institutions upon passive, submissive, individuals where:

The socialized condition was what made a person acceptable to, or in recent times, useful for society. The socialized person is the functional person, one easily compatible with a tidy deterministic explanation of behaviour.

(Wentworth, 1980, p.39)

While much of the foregoing relates more specifically to those researches adopting a structural-functionalist perspective, similar critiques have been directed towards the symbolic interactionist approach to professional socialisation (see, Battersby, 1981a; Ramsay and Battersby, 1979; Wentworth, 1980). Indeed, with a view of 'socialisation' as an 'over-arching process', the symbolic interactionist approach similarly results in role learning to produce the situational adjustment of the individual to the context of the particular profession. This, according to Wentworth (1980), leads to an 'under-socialised' view of the individual and a situational specificity to the processes involved. Furthermore, Wentworth also argues that this approach has neglected the 'ongoing' aspects of socialisation as well as those pertaining to the historical structures of society and processes of internalisation.

In short, critiques of the literature pertaining to professional socialisation contend that:

Theory and research on [professional] socialisation can...be seen to be deficient on a number of counts. Generally, past studies have been methodologically and/or conceptually inadequate. Moreover, theory-building research has been largely unproductive, and in some respects divorced from the reality it seeks to explain.

(Battersby, 1981a, p.14)

Indeed:

Present-day theories [of socialisation] allow no logical connection to mistakes, failures, misunderstandings, personal preference, balking or simple refusal to be an eager learner. For that matter, an active and eager learner is not a real possibility.

(Wentworth, 1980, p.40)

The alternative proposed, and the perspective underpinning the present research, is for the development of investigations into aspects of socialisation to proceed along lines similar to those suggested by Olesen and Whittaker (1968, 1970), Ramsay and Battersby (1979), and Wentworth (1980). Here, it is argued, cognizance needs to be given to Schutz's (1973) notion of 'multiple realities' and the extent to which individuals experience these as they 'grow into' their circumstances. Such a view allows emphasis to be given to the interaction of a variety of processes - occurring simultaneously and/or concurrently - as a person enters any situation and 'grows into' an occupation, or social context. Moreover, the adoption of such a perspective presupposes that it should be derived from an examination of the everyday world of the participants with an accounting for changes and development as well as those of interactional and contextual effects. In turn, it must also provide for the intentionality, reflectivity and autonomy of each subject (Schutz, 1970, 1971, 1973). Such an approach then allows the researcher to focus on the processes rather than remaining, as Ramsay and Battersby (1979, p.2) state, "...shackled by the chains of their parent theories".

It was from considerations of these critiques of the literature on professional socialisation that the present researcher determined to adopt the term 'becoming' rather than 'socialisation'. This, it was contended, avoided the inherent difficulties apparent within the use of the term 'socialisation' while emphasising the 'processes' and 'development' as individuals 'adapt to' their situations. As such, 'becoming' appeared to provide a separation from the ambiguity of the term 'socialisation', as well as giving a parsimony of terminology, which Wentworth's (1980) apparently similar term of 'socialisation-as-interaction' does not.

Accordingly, while the outcomes from the present study may be located within the general literature on 'professional socialisation', this location and selection is subjected to the constraints apparent in the comprehensive critiques briefly reported above. Furthermore, there remains that extent to which the group in the present investigation diverge from those forming the substantive subject of the literature on 'professional socialisation'. For

instance, in the research reporting the processes of 'becoming a teacher' (see Figure 7) there is some implication of 'forward' and 'on-going' development characterising this change in status. In the present context, while some were 'continuing' their schooling, others were 'returning' to a status they had left some years ago. At one point, the researcher coined the phrase 'regressive socialisation' to refer to the processes whereby the 'adult' was 'returned' to the status of 'school pupil' again. For such reasons, then, use of the literature on professional socialisation needed to be 'filtered' in order to provide for the differences in the nature and context of the present research. While 'adults' are the focus, they are encountering a process which sees them 'returning' to a context, status, and 'role', at least akin to that they held previously when themselves school-aged 'pupils'.

Finally, at this point, it appears appropriate to restate a caveat imposed upon the present research by the 'situational constraints'. There are aspects undoubtedly influencing the processes of becoming an adult student that were beyond the resources of the project to investigate. The point has to be acknowledged that the researcher was unable to follow the students into every aspect of their everyday lives. For instance, the ongoing interactions within the classroom context could be held to be an important influence upon becoming an adult student, as perhaps could be relationships outside the school context. These influences are not denied within the present research, however, as indicated in Chapter Two, access to such situations was beyond the resources of the author, hence reliance has been placed upon accounts provided by the teachers and adult students without the 'benefits' of observational strategies. Perhaps, then, further investigation might wish to examine the significance of these aspects of the processes of 'becoming' an adult student.

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT: ELABORATION OF THE PROCESSES

Inherent within the descriptive presentation of the data are a number of aspects of the processes of becoming an adult student which provide a further refutation of the deterministic, uni-directional, approach to explanations of socialisatory processes. At this point,

utilising the three factors identified in Figure 6 as organizational labels, it is intended to develop explanatory concepts derived from the literature to provide further elaboration of the contributions made to the processes of becoming an adult student. In so doing, however, it must be recalled that this does represent an 'artificial separation' of the elements of an interdependent and interactive system, or that:

There are numerous problems of chronology, transition points, and inter-subject consistency which inevitably play havoc with almost any [separated] model of a complexly articulated social process.

(Davis, 1968, p.241)

1. Biographical Factors

The adult students had enrolled seeking credentials as an avenue to occupational mobility. In line with Freire's (1972) concept of 'banking education', the acquisition of a credential is held by these students to improve one's 'market potential' where education is commonly viewed as leading to social mobility (Connell et al, 1982). Certainly, there does appear at least general support within the data for the view that lifespan and societal changes contributed to the 'need', or 'desire', for further learning and credentials (see, Mortimer and Simmons, 1978), for the majority of the adult students. Each of the adult students did have certain valued goals or end-states which guided their selection of means from among all of those available to them. Edgar (1974) aptly sums up the importance of these types of goals and end-states:

For example, the waitress who wants a better job because she values money or security or higher status, may choose to forgo wages while she acquires the necessary training or education. Her actions cannot be explained solely in terms of her past experience, her present 'equipment for competence', but must be seen in the context of her present versus her desired or valued self-image - how she wants to be seen and to see herself despite the objective limitations facing her.

(Edgar, 1974, pp.10-11)

It is this credentialism which distinguishes the return of adult students to secondary school from other forms of adult education (see, Purvis, 1976). While the occupational changes sought in the majority of cases were directed to what Etzioni (1969) terms the 'semi-professions' - teaching and nursing in particular - there were also three cases where entry to the 'higher status profession' of medical practitioner formed the long-term goal. However, in these cases, two were already qualified nurses, one with a degree, and the third was married to a veterinary student who completed his course during the year. Overall, the change in occupational directions sought by the adult students represented a move upwards in status position, and generally upwards from family of origin and, in some cases, from partner and/or close friends (see Appendix D).

The perception that such 'change' in occupational status was attainable through returning to education formed part of the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) these adult students brought with them to the school context. As such, this reflects the notion advanced by Olesen and Whittaker (1968) that the student does not arrive at the institution with a 'clean slate' devoid of prior experiences. In short, adult students bring with them a body of knowledge, understandings, style of self-presentation, language usage, and ideologies which may be grouped together as constituting their cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This cultural capital becomes embodied in the individual as a particular 'lifestyle' (Harker, 1985) or habitus which initially shapes the perceptions, thinking, appreciation, and actions (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) as the adult students entered the school. It was as an outcome of these 'attributes' that the adult students 'arrived' at school with an initial set of predispositions towards the experience which directly influenced their integration. Furthermore, this habitus contributed towards not only the induction of the adult student, but may be considered as part of their differentiation (see, Olesen and Whittaker, 1968) from those who do not take this option of returning to secondary school.

This pursuit of credentials in a 'second-chance' education is given particular emphasis within the literature addressing adult students in New Zealand secondary schools (for instance, Department of

Education, 1976b), however the data indicated that this formed only part of the rationale for returning. At least equal importance was attached by the adult students to personal goals as guiding their return to school, with many citing these as 'more desirable' outcomes than the achievement of credentials. In accounting for the reasons for these adults returning to school, then, there would appear to be a need for greater recognition of these personal goals. This would appear to be particularly important if the adult student programme is to counter with any effect the 'cooling out' process which has led to many pupils 'failing' to pass through the selection and sorting aspects attributed to formal schooling. An examination of the background of a number of those in the present research illustrates that prior education had often been viewed as 'unsuccessful' and the student reported leaving with a 'sense of failure'. This provides a further factor distinguishing adult students in secondary school from those in 'continuing education' where, as Benseman (1979a) reports, the majority are those who had met with at least some 'success' in their prior schooling. The view of adult students as having been 'unsuccessful' in their former schooling is also substantiated through the literature (see Chapter One). On this basis, there would appear some justification for emphasising that credential attainment is not necessarily the only outcome of schooling. As the present sample illustrated, personal goals can be achieved independently of credentials, and may be 'more important'. This is not to presume, however, that such a shift in emphasis will negate the dominant ideology of schooling which tends to equate 'success' with examination-based qualifications. In addition, it is not being argued that personal goals alone, without changes in structure and practice (see, Harker, 1982), will lead to equity of access or outcome within formal schooling. What is being argued is that greater recognition needs to be given to the variety of individualised personal goals within explanations of the reasons why people undertake education, and in terms of the educational outcomes they hope to attain. In other words, a focus upon credential-based goals alone does not convey the multiplicity of factors which may determine an individual's involvement as a student in an educational institution.

Related to the personal background of the adult students, and apparent throughout the data, was the notion that these were

individuals, different in terms of their characteristics and experiences (see, Olesen and Whittaker, 1968). These differences were also manifest in the variations among sets of contingencies and possible solutions available to the adult students as they sought to 'manage' their return to school. This parallels the notions of 'situation' and 'context' related to the concept of 'latent culture' developed by Becker and Geer (1960), which also provides an explanatory category for elaborating the formation of groupings within the overall adult student subculture, particularly evident in the initial stages of the year. In short, each student was both the product and producer of 'multiple realities' (Schutz, 1973), and a personal habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This individualised aspect of the processes of becoming an adult student was also evident within that part of the model (Figure 6) reporting contextual factors.

2. Contextual Factors

As with any organisation, the school does not exist in a social and cultural vacuum, but is a product of the history and social context within which it is located. The physical structure of the school itself influences the relationships between those interacting in the system (Stebbins, 1976, 1981). For instance, the structure of the classroom directly influences the form of interaction and relationships possible, and can directly contribute to conveying a variety of ideologies and rituals held by members of staff (Edwards and Furlong, 1978). In turn, the interpretation placed upon the context will be directly influenced by previous experiences and socialisation (see, Woods, 1983) of all those involved. Certainly, the data from the present study clearly indicated that the processes of integration of the adult students were influenced by their expectations derived from prior schooling that the context would be at least 'similar'.

On the other hand - and a factor contributing to processes of differentiation - the adult student commonroom provided a 'back region' (Woods, 1983, p.6) where many of the behaviours illustrated by Goffman (1969) were evident:

...reciprocal first-naming, cooperative decision-making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, smoking, ... 'sloppy' sitting and standing posture, use of dialect or sub-standard speech, mumbling and shouting, playful aggressivity and kidding.

(Goffman, 1969, p.129)

It was here, and through such actions and behaviours, that the adult students relaxed and took 'time out' from the processes and outcomes of integration. Furthermore, the commonroom provided a necessary situation for defining adult student status and privacy was strictly adhered to and enforced, in much the same manner as was the staffroom for teachers (see, Hammersley, 1981; Woods, 1979).

The context, however, is not limited to the physical structures alone. Rather, it includes the complex of ideologies, cultural capital, hierarchy, power relationships, pedagogy and school policies and practices (see Figure 6). It is not proposed to detail all of these multiplicity of factors, but rather to focus on the process of 'adjustment' to the context evident within the overall processes of becoming an adult student.

In the original formulations of the notion of 'situational adjustment' (Becker, 1970k, 1970l) it was contended that as adults move in and out of social groups they learn various strategies of survival and, in certain instances, 'become' the type of person the situation demands. As Lacey (1977) notes, Becker has firmly fixed the individual in terms of situational determinism. The alternative perspective proposed by Lacey was a threefold classification which provided for a wider range of individual responses to the situation. In turn, as a further rejection of Becker's deterministic account and as a refinement of Lacey's classification, Battersby and Koh (1980) developed a threefold typology of situational adjustment explicitly providing for processes of personal change. In this, it is noted that processes of personal change occur IF an individual desires to continue in a situation and both knows and conveys the required performances. The three types of situational adjustment distinguished are, to paraphrase Battersby and Koh (1980), as follows:

1: Internalised adjustment: if the individual complies

with situational demands and accepts them as personally beneficial.

2: Involuntary adjustment: the individual accepts, and automatically and/or unknowingly complies with situational demands.

3: Tactical adjustment: the individual strategically complies with situational demands but has reservations about them.

(Adapted from, Battersby and Koh, 1980, p.7)

In the present context, becoming an adult student has been defined in terms of requiring the individual to 'desire' participation - in the sense of undertaking the return - and that of continuing in the situation. To do so, it can then be indicated that the individual demonstrated processes of personal change commensurate with each of these three forms of situational adjustment. For instance, the adult students were consciously aware of the need to 'perform' in external examinations in order to derive their credential-based goals, and made efforts to 'work hard' in order to attain them. However, this is not to suggest that the 'adjustment' of the student in such an instance 'fitted' the 'ideal model' of the school which appeared to be one of 'consistent' goal-directed behaviour. Rather, the individual adult students formed their own interpretation of a 'sufficient' effort in order to maintain eligibility for examination entry, and possibly 'success'. The notion of 'involuntary adjustment' was clearly indicated by the manner in which adult students 'adopted' the use of a formal form of address for their classroom teachers and accepted this 'unconsciously' and in what can be seen as a 'rejection' of the normal form of adult:adult relationship. The 'definition of the situation', then, becomes one where 'agreement' was reached giving priority to honouring the formal teacher/student relationship, at least in the classroom context (see, Woods, 1980b). The situation 'demanded' that teachers be addressed 'formally', particularly by the school-aged pupils, and the adult students complied with the same pattern. This 'requirement' of formal means of address may be linked to the notion of teacher 'survival strategies' (Woods, 1979, 1983) where the 'professional' standing of the teacher must be 'acknowledged' by those in a 'lower' position in the hierarchy. Further evidence of this 'strategy' was also evident in the comments placed by teachers on the adult student school reports and in their

summative statements during interviews as they reported perceptions of the individual student (see, Woods, 1979). In this sense, it is not only the adult students who exhibited 'adjustments' to the situation, but equally teachers and pupils. All those within the interaction system, then, adopt various 'strategies' in order to continue in the situation. Finally, tactical adjustment would appear to be the appropriate descriptor for both certain aspects and the overall process of becoming an adult student. Certainly, while the adult students were 'prepared' to 'accept' the definitions of the situation imposed by teachers in terms of 'appropriate' classroom relationships as being 'teacher/student', many reported reservations about the treatments. Similarly, the adult students reported 'behaving like' the pupils in order to gain 'acceptance', yet noted that this only 'applied' in the classroom context. Overall, the adult students adhered to the 'demands' placed upon them to 'become' part of the school culture, with the tactical adjustments manifesting themselves in terms of their self-determination of attendance patterns, self-evaluation of their return to school, and the variety of individualistic responses to the both school culture and adult student subculture. Accordingly, while tactically adjusting to the school situation in order to attain their goals, they reported private reservations (Battersby and Koh, 1980; Olesen and Whittaker, 1968) about accepting and adhering to the requirements of schooling. Some of these reservations were manifested in the processes of self-determination of individual commitments to school while others were apparent in the criticisms certain students expressed regarding school policies and teacher practices. Tactical adjustment, in this sense, would appear closely related to Birksted's (1976) account where:

Adolescents...did not see school as an organisational principle of their lives. They evaluated the usefulness to them of exams in terms of their occupation plans for the future. This evaluation governed their perception of the usefulness of school and their performance at school.

(Birksted, 1976, p.74)

In this analysis, Birksted (1976) illustrates the notion of 'adaptation strategies' as do a number of other writers discussing sub-cultural formation in the schooling context (for instance Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Willis, 1977). The form of situational adjustment advanced in the present context would appear to

encompass similar strategies, yet also provide for the fact evident in the data that all adult students reported processes of self-evaluation of their return to school. In turn, this appears to suggest an explanatory category which provides for the fact that even those who are 'supportive' of the formal system may also evaluate their experiences. Whereas some of the explanations of adaptation strategies (for instance, Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970) imply a rather bifurcated typology of 'pro-' and 'anti-school' groups, the present model provides for the individual variations evident within any sub-cultural group (see, Ball, 1981; Hammersley and Turner, 1980). Certainly, the adult students did not display the 'rejection' of the normative structure of schooling held to characterise 'anti-school' groups, nor the 'acceptance' implied for the 'pro-school' groups, rather:

In general terms, however, few pupils at this [later] stage in their school careers see their commitment to school totally in terms of a normative identification with the school culture. Many more tend to view school calculatively, as a provider of negotiable qualifications, and some reject both the values of the school culture and its products.

(Ball, 1981, p.121)

The adult students constituting the present sample did not see their time at school as 'the central organising principle' of their lives, in much the same manner as pupils discussed by Ball (1981) and Birksted (1976). The data illustrated that the adult students determined a 'compromise' which allowed them to 'manage' both school and external commitments, with the later often being accorded prominence. As such, this may be contrasted with the school-based ideology which places particular emphasis upon the 'need' for continuous effort directed towards goals, and associated implications of allocation of prominence to school requirements, apparent within some of the comments regarding attendance patterns made by Dean and teachers in the research context.

The sociological notion of situational adjustment developed here, then, appears to provide a means of coalescing the attributes of adaptational strategies with the need to provide for individual responses and construction of their 'multiple realities' (see,

Hammersley, 1980a; Woods, 1983). In other words, becoming an adult student is not merely the recognition of this status by the school, but also the individual's recognition, or 'internalization' (Davis, 1968; Olesen and Whittaker, 1968), of their position and resulting projections and actions premised upon this status.

3. Interactional Factors

An integral component within the notion of situational adjustment is that the individual must make some form of 'commitment' if wishing to continue in the social situation. In this context, the view is taken that such commitment involves the 'realization' that:

There is profit in his remaining there and a deficit associated with leaving. Continuance is accompanied by 'sacrifice' and 'investment' processes. As a price of membership, members give up something, make sacrifices, which in turn increases commitment. So does investment, which promises future gain in the organization.

(Woods, 1979, p.143)

Such a commitment to the situation was clearly evident in the processes of self-evaluation of the return to school carried out by all adult students. Those who did not remain at school - the 'drop-outs' - were unable to accommodate the requirements of both school and external commitments, and gave precedence to their lives outside of school. The adult students, however, even when faced with difficulties, were able to rationalise and justify their return as leading to 'likely benefits' which were held to outweigh 'costs', a process akin to the notion of 'side-bets' (Becker, 1970j). The longer they remained at school, and the more time invested in their return, the greater was the commitment to remaining and completing the processes as they sought their particular goals (see, Woods, 1979). These commitments, and situational adjustments, were primarily the outcome of personalised interactions between the individual and their situation - although this is not to discount the influence others had upon such processes.

However, within the individual nature of situational adjustments it is also clearly evident that the adult student subculture was

established as a distinct, and differentiated, group in the school context as an outcome of interactional factors. As such, the derivation of the subculture also incorporated aspects of commitment to continuation in the social system, while the nexus of the subculture in operation represented the point of confluence between contributory factors and processes of integration, differentiation, and those individualised responses to the social situation. In this, the formation and continuation of the group demonstrated characteristics of sub-cultural derivation described in other social situations, including those of pupil groups. As Woods (1983) notes:

Despite the variability in pupil cultures and individuals' adaptations to them, it is possible to detect some common themes...which bear a remarkable resemblance to the themes...detected in teacher culture - status, competence and relationships.

(Woods, 1983, p.96)

The notion of status in the present context has been taken in a broader sense than the attribution of 'place' within a group hierarchy of relationships. Here, status incorporated the definition of what it meant to be an 'adult student' and it was illustrated that this required that individuals, possibly in contradiction to peers and others, see themselves as occupying this status within the school. Where this was not the case, the individual did not 'become' an adult student. Yet, there was also clear evidence that adult student status involved the 'competition and comparison' with others held to be integral components of status differentiations both within and between groups (see, D.Hargreaves, 1967, 1980; Willis, 1977; Woods, 1979, 1983). Similarly, the situation of the Adult Commonroom, and the clear differentiations established there, illustrated the way in which friendship and relationship patterns were held to be important in forming the adult student subculture (Woods, 1979, 1983).

The processes of becoming an adult student, and those of integration and differentiation, were also influenced by the actions of the teachers and not solely through the interactions within the adult student subculture. For instance, the processes of integration were influenced by the area of subject choices and class level allocation (see, Ball, 1981). Subject choices were premised on a variety of factors including student background and educative

experiences, pedagogical orientations, school-based philosophies and ideologies, and student goals, and directly influenced by teacher actions, particularly the Dean of Adult Students (see, Woods, 1979). While initial consideration was given to the view that part of the ideological assumptions governing subject choice recommendations were a gender-stereotyped view of 'appropriate' subjects, little substantive evidence was available to support the thesis. The Dean, in advising the predominantly female population, directed them towards the 'humanities' and away from mathematics and physical sciences. This was premised on the basis that the former required 'less background' knowledge and expertise than did the sciences, and therefore were more 'appropriate' for a group with considerable 'gaps' between present and prior educational experiences. On a number of occasions, the Dean spoke firmly against sex-role stereotyping, and accompanying attitudes, although on its own this does not deny some form of 'hidden agenda' within school ideology that the 'humanities' were more 'suitable' for these women students. The outcomes of subject choice advice, however, remained the same whatever philosophy or ideology underpinned the guidance offered by the Dean. In other words:

...teachers 'mediate', choosing the arena, making the rules and providing most of the equipment (including the pupil's own view of himself) for the game of subject choice. For them, the game is to guide pupils into the right channels to get the bell of examination results to ring. The criteria they use are past achievement and future potential.

(Woods, 1979, p.61)

In the present context, the 'game' did appear to relate to the notion of 'examination success' as the Dean frequently cited this as a 'reason' for a particular option, even where the subject did not necessarily relate to the proposed career direction. Similarly within the literature (see Chapter One), specific mention is made of the point that adult students have a 'high rate' of examination achievement, further illustrating the dominant ideology of credentialism as the 'measure' of 'success' within educational institutions.

A further aspect of integration influenced by teacher actions involved the fact that the teachers adopted a perspective which held

that the adult student was 'part' of the class, should therefore be 'treated' in similar manner to the pupils and would be expected to adhere to the notions of 'appropriate' teacher/student relationships. On the other hand, integration was also influenced by both contextual effects and the perceptions and actions of the adult students. For instance, the similarity of dress standards, familiarity of the school environment, and broad expectations accruing from prior schooling experiences also brought the adult student towards 'acceptance' of the overall school culture, thereby promoting integration.

Differentiation of the adult student subculture also proceeded from teacher and student actions, as well as general contextual effects and individual backgrounds and external conditions. However, perhaps the greatest difference between this and Lacey's (1970) concept of 'polarization' is that the formation of the differentiated adult student subculture did not necessarily result in the 'anti-group' opposed to the school culture (see, Ball, 1981). Rather, it provided a means of distinguishing and separating the adult students from the pupils in processes of self-identification with a particular status. In turn, and derived from this status differentiation, were the expectations held by both teachers and students which gave recognition to the different treatments, requirements, and commitments of adult students as contrasted with the school-aged pupils. It was in this process of differentiation that the teachers located their expectations of adult students in terms of greater 'enthusiasm', 'effort', and 'academic achievement'. Therefore, in contrast to Lacey's (1970) categorization, the separation of the groups has been taken here as occurring as part of the sub-culture formation and not part of the 'school culture' in operation. While certain aspects of the negotiated rules, regulations, and obligations, may be considered to run counter to the ideology of the school-dominated culture, this does not necessarily imply that the adult student sub-culture was 'anti' the school as an institutional system, although particular individuals did express considerable dissatisfaction with school policies and practices. The point that the sub-culture in action incorporated those 'self-directed' strategies where individuals evaluated whether or not to continue at school, or at least considered the form of their commitment to school, does illustrate certain aspects of the sub-cultural responses discussed by such as

Lacey (1970) and others (for instance, Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977). At the same time, it was evident that there remained the extent to which each of these 'negotiations' was undertaken in a context where 'control' was exerted by school staff. For instance, while an adult student might decide not to attend school, the teacher retained the right to determine whether or not this attendance fell within 'acceptable' parameters. In other words, to paraphrase Woods (1980d), the teachers held more power, the student/teacher relationships were variable, and the interests of the negotiating parties differed in many instances.

It is from the consideration of the way in which power was manifest in the many negotiations (Glaser and Strauss, 1965; Maines, 1977) within the social context that understanding of the processes of becoming an adult student requires an elaboration of the sociological notion of 'power'. For the present context Lukes' (1974) concept of power is used:

To put the matter sharply, A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. Indeed, is not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have - that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?

(Lukes, 1974, p.23)

In this sense, then, the exercise of power may be held to incorporate a variety of influences, including prior experiences and background as well as effects within present schooling, which brought the adult student to adopt the basic ideologies of the educational system. Certainly, in order to continue in the situation, it was a requirement that the adult student 'accept' and 'adopt' a degree of 'conformity' to the overall school culture (see, Layder, 1982). There is also the sense in which the overall processes of schooling represents the outcomes of power as the people involved in the social system have their habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) influenced by the explicit rules and recipes of the institutionalised paradigm of 'schooling'. This paradigm assumes a position of dominance exerting hegemonic control (Gramsci, 1971) and prevents, or at least precludes effective, grievances of both teachers and students

...by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial.

(Lukes, 1974, p.24)

From this process people are brought to view that it is in their 'real interests' to see the situation in a particular way. Certainly, it was evident that the adult students were strongly predisposed towards a particular form of relationship which placed the 'teacher' on a 'higher' level within a hierarchy, and in turn determined the 'appropriate' form of interactions. So pervasive is the dominant ideology of schooling that such relationships were not seen as 'problematic' by the adult students, clearly illustrating the notion of power as defined by Lukes (1974). Indeed, it was only in situations of conflict that the teaching staff acted overtly to exercise their power to define the situation.

On the other hand, this does not assume a simple deterministic relationship. Throughout the conceptualisation of the processes of becoming an adult student there is the perspective that it is a dialectical relationship where perhaps:

Teachers set the scene, make the ground rules, state the aims - basically to transform the pupil by new knowledge; while the pupil is forced to operate on the teacher's ground and by his rules, compensating only by force of numbers and certain resilient properties of their background culture.

(Woods, 1983, p.12)

In the processes of negotiation, the individual student also exercised power and control over the business of becoming an adult student. This was readily apparent in those situations where conflict between student and teacher occurred, but also manifest in the processes whereby students provided their own definitions of the situation. The students were active participants in their own education: they made choices to meet the demands of schooling, to deal with external commitments, and to work out situations of their own creation (see, Olesen and Whittaker, 1968). These were evident where the adult students were required to 'identify' with the status, determine their own attendance patterns and level of commitment to school, and in that

they could decide to withdraw from the school. Such negotiations, and the extent to which they involved activities along a continuum from 'agreement' by all parties to 'conflict', represent the outcomes of various strategies adopted by those in social interaction to 'ensure' that 'survival' is possible (Woods, 1983). The teachers within the school readily accepted many aspects of these negotiated outcomes of the processes of becoming an adult student. For instance, the teachers 'expected' the adult students to be 'often absent', and made accommodations on this basis in which, as Woods (1983, p.129) notes, "... each side's interests may be maximized". In acting upon this expectation that adult students would be frequently absent, teachers were willing to overlook these when considering eligibility for examination entry, and thereby to 'work the system' (Goffman, 1968).

These negotiations, and ongoing interactions, involving the individualised dimensions of becoming an adult student also illustrate a further, significant aspect of the process. While the teachers held certain typifications of the 'adult student' - as 'highly motivated', 'enthusiastic', 'goal directed', and 'hard working' - it was evident that considerable variation existed on all these dimensions, and that the teachers and students were fully aware of this fact. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to account for this variability and to provide for the notion of 'multiple realities'. In so doing the possibility of establishing a 'role' of adult student becomes problematic. Indeed, 'role' in this context becomes a 'redundant concept', thus giving weight to Davies' (1979) contention that:

... 'roles', defined usually in terms of 'sets of expectations attached to a social position', have connotations of being static, deterministic, implying a consensus view of society. A role 'incumbent' who 'occupies' a position does not do justice to the flickering complexity of human interaction, the multiple realities which make up the hundreds of miniature dramas of our daily lives.

(Davies, 1979, p.67)

The alternative notion is to adopt the perspective of 'personal scripts' (Davies, 1979) where this is

...a social construction of reality, a limit on our actions but 'which allows us to elevate routines,

regularities and mere behavioural sequences in such a way that we can assert superiority over the everyday world' (Cohen and Taylor, 1976). A script is the imposition of our identity on the scene as we view it. Scripts can cover the range of individual or group expression, from a master script through to one-liners, while allowing for the reflexive self as audience when no other is present. Scripts can become a 'career' projection; or they can be temporary... . A script analysis then allows for a range of interpretations of personal identity and social context, while indicating the salience of the joint cast who push forward the passage of the play. A person's repertoire of acts and statuses originates in and is validated by the social group; but the concept of scripts differs from socialisation in that it implies the individual's ability to write and rewrite his own lines; to perform differently in different plays, in public and in private, or to take different roles within the same play; to ad lib; to forget.

(Davies, 1979, p.67)

At the structural level, then, the adult student is operating within a general framework of a 'student' typescript - and perhaps others such as 'adult', 'gender', and 'class'. Within this framework, individuals develop their own personal 'scripts' in interactions with others and with the general context. These then govern their actions in the social setting. This concept of a script clearly provides for the individualistic components of becoming an adult student, and the variability of actions, behaviours, and responses to the situation.

While the preceding discussion has focussed more specifically upon a theoretical elaboration of becoming an adult student, there remains the point that such a separation between these theoretical constructs and the data has been undertaken for analytical purposes. It now remains to elaborate upon the notion of processes of personal change (see Figure 6) as the individual 'learnt' to become an adult student. This occurs as an outcome of the interplay and interaction between those factors and conceptual structures most recently described. As such, the process involved a marked change in status, 'role', expectations, and treatments, all of which were imposed upon, and influenced by, prior experiences and background of those undergoing it, while also being directly contributed to by a variety of contextual and interactional influences. These changes required individuals to meet 'new problems', commitments, and situations, and

to develop strategies, adjustments, negotiations, relationships, and interactions while undergoing processes of personal change (see also, Woods, 1983). Such changes have been described as forming a 'status passage' (Glaser and Strauss, 1971).

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT: A STATUS PASSAGE

In their description of the properties of a status passage, Glaser and Strauss (1971, p.3) note that it is frequently viewed as being "...regularized, scheduled, and prescribed". However, they further suggest (see also, Woods, 1983) that it may also be characterised by variations in being: desirable or undesirable; voluntary or involuntary; inevitable or not; reversible to irreversible; repeatable to nonrepeatable; the features may, or not, be clear, with one's perceptions being possibly inaccurate, while control over them can range from complete to negligible; the passage may be undertaken alone, or with others, although both awareness and ability to communicate the notions and aspects of the passage may be variable. Finally, the passage also involves:

...an initial reconnoitering phase, when those problematic elements of the passage are being worked out - what it constitutes, who else is involved, its duration, its relevance to one's own concerns, the space for manoeuvre, and so on; and when knowledge about how previous crossers of the passage coped, and similarities in one's own previous experience brought to bear.

(Woods, 1983, p.165)

On the basis of the data presented in the preceding chapter, and summarised in the present one, it is argued that becoming an adult student is just such a status passage. Accordingly, it is now proposed to identify those features of the overall process which illustrate the properties elaborated by both Glaser and Strauss (1971) and Woods (1983).

From the outset, it is evident that becoming an adult student is part of a multiplicity of status passages concurrently engaged in by the individual. As such, this included properties of "...priority,

support, competition and interdependence" (Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p.142) between these various passages. This aspect was particularly evident in the issues of 'dropping out' and the determination of individual attendance levels. For instance, among those who left school, a factor contributing to this decision was the assignment of greater priority to passages other than becoming an adult student. Similarly, the interdependent status passage of 'life outside school', and its accompanying relationships, could exert pressure through requiring resources of time and effort which resulted in the reassessment of priorities and decisions to be absent from school. This process of assigning priorities to a multiple set of passages involves the continual re-articulation of commitments to particular directions, or the 'self-evaluation' of the return to school described in the data.

Becoming an adult student in itself represented a 'change in direction'. It was characterised by an initial stage of 'anticipation' (Woods, 1983) where students reported anxiety, excitement, and expectations regarding their forthcoming experiences. They expressed 'concern' over their status in the school, how they would 'fit in', and how they would be 'treated' by teachers and school-aged pupils. This stage was directly influenced by prior schooling experiences and personal background - or habitus - of the individual student. The duration of this anticipatory stage was in turn affected by the nature of prior schooling experiences, and the period of time between the two situations. In short, the more negatively prior schooling was perceived, and the longer the time lapse between the two experiences, the greater the duration of the anticipatory stage, and the higher the levels of 'anxiety'.

However, at least initially in all cases, the passage of becoming an adult student was embarked upon as a 'desirable' enterprise, generally directed towards 'reversing' a prior status passage in the sense that:

Schools give [qualifications] to open doors with certification and to help shore up the nonreversibility of a job or career.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p.18)

To become an adult student required that this state of 'desirability' remained for the year. Where it did not, where the 'passagee' could no longer see the pursuit in terms of 'worthwhile goals', the only alternative was to withdraw from school. This represents the situation where:

Sometimes a passagee enters a passage believing it desirable but discovers that neither the passage nor its goal is desirable. One source of this mistaken entry is lack of knowledge about, or criteria by which to evaluate the passage beforehand; meanwhile, a push into passage is provided by general values that indicate the desirability of passage.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p.106)

In this context, students reported having returned to school in pursuit of credentials to access particular occupations, but having been 'unaware' of what returning as an adult student would involve beyond the level of general perceptions. The concept of 'passage termination', then, provides an explanatory construct within which can be located the elaboration of the process of withdrawal of adult students from school. The notion of termination of passage - where desirability is no longer held to apply - not only includes situations where this process may occur mutually, without any form of 'conflict', but also provides for the elucidation of conflict situations:

As a passagee becomes hooked into a progressively undesirable passage, [their] tendency is to fix responsibility, perhaps to seek retribution for damages and to find a way to break out of the passage. [Their] passage may also become progressively undesirable for an [agency], who may then wish to get rid of this particular passagee to avoid blame and damages to [its] own reputation.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p.108)

One aspect of maintaining levels of desirability involves the processes of 'negotiation' and 'integration' into the school culture as previously elaborated. This represents part of the 'adaptation' (Woods, 1983) phase of the passage, the other part being the formation and actions of the adult student subculture. In this context, the adult students sought to determine the 'rules, roles, routines, and norms' of the situation, aided by the processes of integration and differentiation where the Dean, teachers, and school-aged pupils

informed them of their 'rights, obligations, and expectations' governing the nature of the passage. As the passage was mutually desirable to both agent and passagee, negotiations proceeded within a perspective directed towards compromise (Glaser and Strauss, 1971). For instance, the adult student was able to determine a 'preferred' level of attendance which allowed maintenance of eligibility for goals, yet provided for the allocation and distribution of resources of time and effort between school and external commitments. There were limitations upon this, set primarily by the school as the 'stronger power' or 'legitimator' of the passage. In situations where a 'compromise' was not attainable, the school staff held the power to 'define and delimit' the situation and acceptable actions and activities.

The negotiation aspect not only incorporates the notions of power discussed previously but also represents the situational adjustments where both parties to the passage seek to exert 'control' over the processes of becoming an adult student. The processes whereby the students sought to determine their own levels of commitments, to school and external contexts, represent the application of 'oppositional strategies', or perhaps 'resistance' (Giroux, 1983b), to definitions of the situation imposed by the school.

The school, as an institution, held the responsibility for determining and legitimating at least the temporal aspects of the status passage of becoming an adult student. In particular, structural conditions set the passage within the school and the form of interactions, relationships, pedagogy, and ideologies inherent in this context. The staff also sought to act as 'legitimators' of access to the status of adult student, and indeed to undertake responsibility for the ascription of the status to particular individuals. While this succeeded to the extent that school policy determined 'who' could become an adult student, the process of becoming an adult student required the individual to 'identify' with the status and act accordingly. Where this latter condition did not apply, the individual did not become an adult student.

Yet, in terms of duration and scheduling, the institutional organisation and structures of the school were of direct influence

upon the processes of becoming an adult student. It was the school situation which determined that becoming an adult student required at least a full year at the school, and that the credential-based goals were only accessible at the end of the year. Within this, however, there were variations of scheduling which created difficulties, and some conflict, for both the school and adult students. This was particularly evident in the situation involving timetable changes. While becoming an adult student involved the necessity of being able to plan and predict commitments within a time schedule, the temporal changes of the timetable proved disruptive and a source of problems to the adult students (Glaser and Strauss, 1971).

As this discussion has illustrated, the adult students exerted some elements of control over their passage. In so doing they:

...clearly showed the discrepancy between the reality supported by the faculty and their educational ideology and the reality shaped by the students' common-sense world, between what the school expected from the student and what the student was able and willing to incorporate and project in [their] emerging...identity. Legitimate power rested with the faculty and the sole path of becoming...was defined by all involved as...learning what the school had to teach. It was the business of the students, given [their] aspirations...not only to become, but also to convince the faculty that they were becoming.

(Olesen and Whittaker, 1968, p.150)

While it is possible to generalise to the group of adult students as undergoing a status passage, the data and discussion clearly indicate that the individual component must be given due recognition. This is possible by placing some emphasis upon the notion of 'socialisatory episodes' (Battersby, 1981a). In this, the observation is that the process of becoming an adult student for each of them was episodic in that it revolved around incidents and events they experienced. For instance, F.16 was involved in a conflict with her Biology teacher over remarks he made, while F.11 encountered difficulties with her husband. In both instances, the student spoke at length with the researcher about the influence these particular events had on them. There were also socialisatory episodes of different types: F.30's experiences of being equated as 'one with the pupils'; M.15's 'disciplining' by his Economics teacher; and, the actions of a group in placing M.16's motorbike in the toilet.

Not only did these and other episodes vary in type, but they also differed in intensity, duration and outcome. Some episodes, for instance, lasted only a short period, but produced intense socialising experiences (e.g., the encounter between F.15 and the Principal). Others were extended over prolonged periods, and also varied in intensity, such as M.6's 'counselling' by the Dean and other staff. Furthermore, socialisatory episodes experienced by some adult students appeared to be similar, and yet resulted in different outcomes. A case in point is provided by the observation that both F.10 and F.15 reported some difficulties in coping with the amount of homework in Geography. Whereas F.10 interpreted this as a 'challenge' to be overcome, F.15 saw it as severely detracting from her external relationships subsequently dropping the subject, a preliminary condition contributing to her eventual withdrawal from school.

These socialisatory episodes correspond closely with the idea of 'multiple realities' (Schutz, 1973) and indicate the importance of providing for the individual component in the processes of becoming an adult student, a situation not well encompassed within the notions of status passage (see, Woods, 1983).

Accordingly, as Battersby (1981a) suggests, deriving a 'formal theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) for such processes of 'becoming' is made all the more problematic, thought not impracticable and certainly not undesirable, by the fact that:

...socialisation is a dynamic, ongoing and complex process. Because of this, and due to its individualistic, political and episodic characteristics...it may prove a difficult task to discover precise, quantitatively validated factual knowledge on which to base a formal theory about the process... .

(Battersby, 1981a, p.172)

This does not preclude the derivation of propositional statements pertaining to the processes of becoming an adult student. Such statements, it is held, then provide for the fulfilment of the generalised intentions that 'theory' should lend itself to an indication of basis for policy and practice, and for the understanding of the process for those concerned and involved. In turn, the subsequent examination and refinement of such statements - either in

further field contexts, or as part of comparative investigations- followed by the synthesis of models, then the fieldwork 'testing' of these, all becomes part of the ongoing and cumulative process of theory development advocated by Woods (1983, 1985b), a viewpoint he has recently reaffirmed (see, Woods, 1987). It is towards such development, and 'application', aspects of the processes of becoming an adult student that the final section of the present chapter is directed.

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT: PROPOSITIONAL STATEMENTS ON THE PROCESS

Becoming an adult student is a complex, ongoing, and interactive process occurring in the everyday world of the students as they return to school. The following statements pertain to the process, and reflect the data and derivation from that of the model represented in Figure 6.

1. Adult students return to school:
 - 1.1 seeking credential-based goals directed towards a change in occupational status,
 - 1.2 but give at least equal prominence to a variety of individualized personal goals reflecting perceptions of self-image and self-esteem.
 - 1.3 with a variety of prior expectations and experiences, including:
 - 1.3.1 a perception of prior schooling as not having provided credentials, knowledge, or experiences required for a change in occupational status.
 - 1.3.2 a predisposition that a return to school will involve a 'similar' context and forms of relationships as did prior schooling.
 - 1.4 with limited knowledge or access to available information concerning subject content or its applicability for chosen career directions.
 - 1.5 The return to school involves:

1.5.1 males who are generally younger, single, and resident with parents, compared with the older, married, females resident in their own homes.

1.5.2 for full-time students, a financial dependency upon others, and frequently a requirement to undertake part-time work.

1.5.3 for part-time students, a flexibility of occupational commitments allowing for attendance at school at irregular times.

1.5.4 changes in the patterns of personal and social interactions and relationships outside the school context.

2. These goals, background, and predispositions impinge upon the processes of entering the school where adult students are:

2.1 directed towards the humanities, and away from mathematics and physical sciences.

2.2 placed in senior level classes.

2.3 grouped together with particular, selected, teachers.

3. School policy is determined by the Principal and:

3.1 this policy sets the parameters for definitions of who may become an adult student, however

3.2 becoming an adult student requires a self-identification with adult student status, a process which may contradict school definitions and attributions.

4. Admission to the school initiates processes of integration through which the adult student becomes part of the overall school culture. This process is continued by:

4.1 the Dean providing support and encouragement to adult students.

4.2 the familiarity, based on prior experiences and expectations, of the school environment and the similarity of appearances between adult students and school-aged pupils.

4.3 adult students perceiving themselves as occupying a status position equivalent to the pupils, and acting accordingly.

4.4 adult students adopting a formal form of address when referring to classroom teachers.

4.5 teacher expectations and pedagogy placing emphasis upon the adult students as 'part' of the class in terms of interactions and relationships.

4.6 teacher comments on adult student school reports being written in the third person.

5. At the same time, initiated by the attribution of, and self-identification with, adult student status, the student is differentiated as a member of a separate adult student subculture. This process of differentiation is continued through:

5.1 the Dean emphasising that adult students are not expected to adhere to the same attendance requirements as the pupils, despite the contradictory strategies to ensure more regular attendance.

5.2 the Dean, and classroom teachers, engaging in an adult to adult interaction with adult students outside the classroom context.

5.3 the adult students being provided with access to information regarding school events, practices, and policies not available to the pupils.

5.4 adult students being accorded a differentiated status and not being involved in aspects of the ongoing pupil culture, including:

5.4.1 sporting, social, and cultural events, as well as those group activities of class and school meetings such as assemblies.

5.4.2 lacking access to school-based information.

5.4.3 being more affected by timetable changes than are the pupils.

5.4.4 being differentiated from the pupils in terms of school-based achievement awards.

5.5 the relationships and interactions between adult students and pupils placing an emphasis upon differences and being limited to in-class contexts.

5.6 the classroom teachers holding differentiated expectations, and applying different practices, to the adult students evident in:

5.6.1 classroom contributions and treatments.

5.6.2 attendance expectations.

5.7 the nature, and form, of adult student/teacher conflict situations and their outcomes.

5.8 the Adult Student Commonroom providing an 'adult only' context.

6. These processes of integration and differentiation incorporate those of negotiation, adjustment, and socialisation, and their nexus is the development of the adult student subculture.
7. The subculture in operation is exemplified in processes which involve the adult student in:
 - 7.1 processes of rationalising their return and subject choices, making any necessary adjustments in terms of their predispositions, backgrounds, and commitments.
 - 7.2 a self-evaluation of their return in terms of likely 'costs' and 'benefits'.
 - 7.3 deriving an acceptable personal compromise between school and external commitments.
8. Becoming, and remaining, an adult student requires the attainment of a 'balance' between external and school commitments and relationships. The process, therefore, is ongoing, interactive, and developmental in that it incorporates personal change.
9. Becoming an adult student is not the attribution of the status by the school, but the outcome of a multidimensional interaction between individualized biographical, interactional, and contextual factors.
10. Adult students 'measure' the 'success' of the processes of becoming in terms of their achievement of initial, personal, and credential-based goals.

With the establishment of these theoretical elaborations of the processes of becoming an adult student, and the derivation of the propositional statements, this chapter concludes with a brief, summary statement of the foregoing discussion.

SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter has been to present a theoretical elaboration of the processes of becoming an adult student. In meeting this objective, a model was derived from the data to clarify the major, overriding factors which impinged upon these students'

experiences as they underwent the processes of becoming during their year at school. The factors from this model were then elaborated and examined in terms of the literature in order to indicate tentative conceptual categories and typologies which could provide a basis for explanations of the processes of becoming an adult student. In this context, particular emphasis was placed upon notions of situational adjustment, socialisatory episodes, political activities and relationships and the accompanying concept of 'power', 'multiple realities', and the individualistic nature of the processes as the students 'adapted to' their situations in undergoing the 'status passage' of becoming an adult student.

Within the perspective of this theoretical elaboration, this chapter was concluded with the presentation of a number of propositional statements, derived from the data, on the processes of becoming an adult student. As such, these may be seen to provide a set of generalisable, suggestive, hypotheses regarding the situations and influences experienced by adult students in secondary school. In turn, these statements could form the basis for considerations of policy and practice pertaining to adult admissions to secondary school, as well as indicating areas for future directions in research and theory development.

The discussions initiated in this chapter are continued in the following, concluding section to the report of this investigation. Here, final consideration will be given to the notions established in the foregoing theoretical elaboration, of the linkages to other areas of the literature addressing notions of 'processes', and the implications of the present study for future directions in terms of policy, practice, research, and theory development.

CONCLUSION

The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be only the beginning.

(Ivy Baker Priest)

In Chapter One, it was reported that a decade of adult student admissions to secondary schools had seen a growth in their numbers, yet little beyond superficial commentary on the nature of their experiences. The present investigation was undertaken as the preliminary stage in providing a data base detailing the adult student experience in a secondary school. As is the case (Ball, 1981) with most field research approaches to data collection, this study was not embarked upon with a pre-specified set of hypotheses to test nor a rigidly predetermined research design. Rather, it proceeded with general issues in view from which were derived two priorities, namely:

1. To focus on the experiences and processes of becoming an adult student in secondary school; and, while so doing,
2. To elaborate upon the application of field research techniques within an educational setting.

The research was conducted with a particular approach to the collection and analysis of the data, commensurate with the priorities and objectives. In seeking to provide an holistic account of the day-to-day experiences of the sample of adult students, the field research strategy of participant observation, supplemented by other techniques, was utilised. These approaches were located within a broadly categorised framework of symbolic interactionism, while analysis involved the implementation of 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) processes. The combination of these provided the theoretical and analytical framework through which attention to certain events in the field could be directed, while allowing for this process to be

derived from the situation rather than being 'imposed' by pre-specified structures. In short, the field approach and grounded theory strategies provided the basis for the examination and elaboration of the social and cultural 'landscape' with which the present research was concerned.

It is this 'mapping' of the social context which forms one of the strengths of the field research approach adopted for this investigation (see, Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). A further advantage is derived from the presentation of such an extensive 'descriptive' account in that the data remains available for alternative, or at least further, analysis (Woods, 1979). This is particularly important when the study is directed towards providing a preliminary examination of a situation not previously subject to research scrutiny. The research reported here is just such a case. It is embryonic in form with no claims made to have exhausted all available avenues of exploration nor the data itself (see, Ball, 1981). The contribution is in the provision of an initial data base which seeks to shed light on the processes of becoming an adult student. The data and its theoretical elaborations are not the climax, but rather provide a primer for further development. This notion of 'theory as process' (Battersby, 1981a) is in keeping with the views elaborated by Woods (1983, 1985b) and Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.79) where 'theory' should be a "...springboard or stepping stone" in generating a spiral of development and elaboration.

These points, however, were not the only outcomes to be derived from the investigation. It is the purpose of the next three sections to discuss further contributions in terms of: The Research; The Processes of Becoming; and, Implications for Future Directions.

THE RESEARCH

Although this has been a study of a group of adult students where the bulk of data was gathered by participant observation, other strategies were adopted at least partly in order to place the students and events in a broader social context. This was held (see Chapter Three) to represent something of a 'departure' from the 'classic' (for

instance, Blumer, 1969) symbolic interactionist approach and align the study more closely with that of Burgess (1982b, 1983) and Woods (1979). As Banks (1978) suggests, too narrow a focus may result in the constraints acting upon schools and their members being taken for granted or overlooked.

As outlined in Chapter One, the development of adult admissions to secondary school was part of a wider reorganization of the New Zealand educational system. While legislation was enacted to provide access for returning adult students, this was not accompanied by changes in school structure nor provisions in terms of buildings and other facilities. It was the responsibility of the individual school, for instance, to provide an Adult Student Commonroom, extra classroom accommodation, textbooks, or any other material or structural requirements for adult students. Furthermore, from the inception of the policy of admitting adult students, there was an implicit assumption that they would be situated within the ongoing classroom context and relationships. This led to the formulation of policy and practice within an existing structural and ideological context, factors which the data has illustrated as directly impinging upon the processes of becoming an adult student. These broader historical and social contexts are incorporated in the model (Figure 6) through the notion of 'structural factors' (see also, Pollard, 1982). Becoming an adult student, then, is not merely the outcome of internal interactions but part of a broader set of relationships within both the school and external context.

The notion of 'historical antecedents' was then extended to encompass the development of the particular methodology. This, in turn, formed part of the overall intention and priority of documenting the 'processes' of the research itself through the provision of an autobiographical component to the report (Burgess, 1984c). While certainly not implying that the experiences encountered were unique, it is suggested that further developments of the methodology can only be assisted by the open discussion of issues which emerge during the conduct of an inquiry. This is particularly the case within field research approaches where the researcher is the 'main instrument' (Burgess, 1982b) leading to a highly individualised methodology (see, Woods, 1985b), although one in which numerous 'common features' become

apparent from an examination of the historical developments. Accordingly, researchers who follow may gain some support or insight from the discussion of methodological problems, pitfalls, dilemmas, and 'discoveries' which are likely to be faced in the field (Battersby, 1981a; Burgess, 1984c; Voss, 1966). Such accounts also provide for the indication of the possible effects the researcher may have exerted upon the field relationships through both presence and interactions. For instance, the advantages of the fieldworker being accepted by the subjects is well documented in the literature (see, Gans, 1982; Gold, 1958), and one of the 'pay-offs' of such acceptance in this study was the array and detail of the data collected. Nevertheless, there were unintended consequences that developed in the field between the researcher and adult students, which have been documented as part of the ongoing autobiographical component to the report. This process, then, serves to acknowledge the recommendation advanced in the literature (see, Battersby, 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; McCall and Simmons, 1968; Zigarmi and Zigarmi, 1978) that an integral part of reporting field research is the consideration of effects and influences which might derive from the researcher's field relationships and interactions. While such autobiographical accounts have not been without their critics (see, Urry, 1985), and may leave the author open to some 'torture' (Burgess, 1985b), it is only through such provisions that development of the methodology can occur and the cycle of 'wheel reinvention' can be interrupted.

Through seeking to consider the wider social and historical context, the provision of an ongoing autobiographical account, the combination between the descriptive account and the adoption of grounded theory analytic strategies, the present study sought to make a number of contributions to the development of the research methodology and the form of its reporting. A further group of contributions are seen to derive from the notion of the 'processes of becoming an adult student', and it is to these that discussion now turns.

BECOMING AN ADULT STUDENT

Being an Adult Student: The Descriptive Context

The approach adopted in seeking to elaborate upon the processes of becoming an adult student has aligned itself with the notions of 'substantive theory' developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), where the outcomes

...can give participants in a situation a broader guide to what they already tend to do, and perhaps help them to be more effective in doing it.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.248)

In this context, the research was directed explicitly towards the provision of an initial preliminary documentation of the processes of becoming an adult student. At least in part, this was undertaken in light of the dearth of literature detailing the adult student experience in secondary school. As discussed in Chapter One, this prior literature is dominated by media accounts, one-off interviews, and teacher perspectives, providing little depth or perception as to the processes of becoming an adult student. Through the adoption of the particular methodology of field research strategies, it is possible to 'tap into' these processes and experiences of everyday activities (Woods, 1983) to an extent not evident in the existing literature. The methodology thus provides the detailed account from which may proceed both the 'challenging' of prior conceptions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) and the development of foundations for policy and practice.

While there is some debate concerning the situational specificity of field research approaches, it has been argued that the adoption of particular methodological and analytical strategies allow the derivation of generalizable statements from such descriptive data (see, Battersby and Ramsay, 1979; Woods, 1979). As applied in the present research, these include: the application of a longitudinal approach; seeking to determine the intentionality, reflectivity and autonomy of each subject (Schutz, 1973) by 'immersion' (Giddens, 1976) in the social context; the use of 'multiple strategies' (Burgess,

1982g) to gather and 'verify' the data; a self-reflection upon the conduct of the inquiry; movement beyond description to an explanatory analysis; and, the notion that the research is concerned with active subjects involved in the creation of the processes (see, Battersby and Ramsay, 1979).

For the present context, acknowledging that further research is required to both examine and expand the data base, there are certain points which emerge from the descriptive data which at least suggest some implications in terms of the prior literature and the derivation of policy and practice. At this point, it is proposed to outline some of these, with further elaboration being provided in Appendix K.

One aspect of the experience reported in the media accounts and other prior literature (Chapter One), which receives further substantiation from this study, is the considerable influence exerted by financial circumstances on the processes of becoming an adult student. The dependency upon others for financial support, and the frequent need to hold down a part-time job, were factors directly contributing to difficulties encountered in terms of school commitments and external relationships. In many cases, financial circumstances were a factor impinging upon a decision to withdraw from school. Other points reported in the existing literature received less support from the present investigation. For instance, the prior literature places particular emphasis on the 'adult student' as 'highly motivated', 'enthusiastic', and 'achieving good examination results'. The data on student attendance rates and examination outcomes expose such claims as optimistic generalizations. In short, some of the adult students did fit such a description, others did not. What is readily apparent throughout the data is that adult students are highly individualistic on all 'characteristics' representing a 'range' along a continuum of 'types'. Similarly, while the existing literature reports 'credentials' as the 'main reason' for adult students returning to school, a number of individualised reasons were shown to guide the decision with at least equal importance being attached to a variety of personal goals. Finally, the prior accounts convey an impression of an 'easy, fruitful, adjustment' on the part of teachers and pupils to the presence of adult students in the school and classroom, with such students also 'readily adjusting' after some

'initial' concerns. Here again, the data presented in Chapter Four has illustrated that the issue is considerably more complex, and variable, than encompassed by such generalised statements. In summation, then, while the prior literature does address some aspects of the experiences of adult students, it does not convey the complex, ongoing, and individualistic nature of such a multifaceted and dynamic process.

The extensive descriptive account of the adult student experiences contained in the present report provides a basis for greater depth of understanding for all those involved. Accordingly, a contribution has been made through the provision of this initial data base which, along with the propositional statements reported in Chapter Five, could be utilised by school staff, adult students, and policy-makers, to derive information pertaining to the nature of adult student experiences in a secondary school as well as for the formulation of policy and practice. However, the central focus of the present investigation has been upon the notion of 'processes' and it is to this that discussion now turns.

Becoming an Adult Student: The Notion of Processes

At the same time as providing an extensive, yet preliminary, documentation of the experiences of these adult students as they returned to secondary school, the study also sought to elaborate the notion of the 'processes of becoming' an adult student. In this context, the research was conducted with a view towards contributing to the 'cumulative' effects of theory development characterised as 'Stage 2' by Woods (1983, 1985b). This has occurred through the derivation and examination of a model of these process of becoming an adult student in light of other models, and their appropriate categories and typologies, developed in other contexts.

The examination of the processes of becoming an adult student demonstrated a number of 'linkages', and provided further substantiation, to the notions of 'pupil orientations' to school elaborated by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), Woods (1979), and Ball (1981). At the same time, there were evident 'extensions' suggested, particularly in the processes of formation of the adult student

subculture and where integration and differentiation did not necessarily produce an 'anti-' and 'pro-school' grouping (see, Ball, 1981). Subcultural formation, then, is a complex process, produced by and producing idiosyncratic responses to the situation.

The study also illustrated linkages to other areas of 'processes' such as those established by Battersby (1981a) in his consideration of 'becoming' a teacher, as well as those discussing 'strategies' of 'adaptation' (A. Hargreaves, 1978; Lacey, 1977; Pollard, 1982; Woods, 1979, 1980a, 1980c). In short, the elaboration of the processes of becoming an adult student provided in Chapter Five lends support to the view that there appear to be 'common processes' across different contexts. This leads to the suggestion that, as part of the 'cumulative' effects of theory development (Battersby, 1981a; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Woods, 1983, 1985b), further examination of such 'linkages' is warranted.

This, of course, does not exhaust the extent of comparisons between the present study and other research findings, which indicate further 'contributions' which may be derived. For instance, the concept of negotiation elaborated here provides further examples and substantiation to the study by Woods (1979), as both adult students and teachers 'worked out' a set of 'standards' on the basis of their interactions. At the same time, it was also evident that the school staff held greater 'power' to define what was acceptable, and thereby to set the 'limits'. In addition, the actions of the classroom teachers in their 'responses to' and 'treatment of' the adult students exhibit a number of similarities to those discussed in other contexts. The teachers saw the adult students as 'different' and portrayed this through stereotypes of them being 'highly motivated' and 'more likely' to attain credential 'success' than the school-aged pupils. This influenced pedagogy with teachers reporting drawing upon adult student experiences and knowledge in the classroom context, as well as having placed emphasis upon 'content' and 'effort' so as not to 'waste the time' of the adult students. Furthermore, the teachers also perceived a 'major contribution' in terms of 'classroom control' to accrue from the presence of 'other adults' in the room. Yet, the teachers also responded to the adult student in the classroom as being 'similar' to the pupils. In this situation, the teachers may be seen as 'acting'

in accordance with "...traditional conceptions and practices" (Ball, 1981, p.286) which govern the nature and form of classroom interactions and relationships. These, in turn, received recognition in the derivation of the model (Figure 6) of the factors influencing the processes of becoming an adult student.

In summation, the findings from the present research lend further insight and substantiation to the detail of the processes and experiences of social action within an educational environment.

It is also possible to derive other implications from the theoretical elaboration of the data provided in Chapter Five.

One such implication arising from this study is that the process of becoming an adult student is not an ordered, determined process, proceeding from the attribution by school staff of the status of 'adult student' upon a *tabula rasa* individual. This provides further substantiation for the view of Battersby (1981a, p.170) that "...lock-step, input/output theories" of socialisatory processes must be rejected. Similarly, the overall implications for theoretical development derived from the present research indicate linkages to those established by Battersby (1981a) in relation to the processes of becoming a teacher. In short, it is suggested that theories of such processes may need to give greater cognizance to the following notions:

1. Becoming an adult student is a highly individualistic process, influenced by the idiosyncratic manner in which people define and interpret reality.
2. The individual is an active participant in the processes of becoming an adult student.
3. In addition to these individualised effects upon the processes of becoming an adult student, the sources of influence are many, varied, and different for each student.
4. As an interplay of these varied influences, becoming an adult student is not a neutral enterprise but a political activity, requiring that consideration be given to the notion of 'power'.
5. The processes of becoming an adult student are episodic, revolving

around incidents and events the students experienced. These episodes varied in type, duration, and intensity.

6. Becoming an adult student, then, is a dynamic, ongoing, and complex process, occurring in the everyday world of the individual student. It involves the interplay between biographical, interactional, and contextual factors.

The foregoing discussion has indicated those areas in which the present research is considered to have made 'contributions' or 'extensions' to the field, both methodologically and in terms of the development of a model of the processes of becoming an adult student. It now remains to speculate briefly upon some implications this might hold for future research and theory development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS

While aspects of the foregoing comments should be regarded as speculative and suggestive, there is a basis for recommending areas for follow-up research that may be derived from the present investigation.

The account of the processes and experiences of becoming an adult student has been reported as being initial and preliminary, and certainly is not held as representing the 'final product'. There is an evident need to extend the data base through further indepth investigations of adult students in secondary schools. These might focus upon issues such as:

1. The detailed examination of classroom interactions and relationships, as well as the influences upon the processes of becoming an adult student located externally to the school.
2. The interactions between adult students and those with whom they come in contact - pupils, teachers, and others - particularly in terms of power relationships.
3. The individualistic nature of the processes of becoming an adult and the differences between paths for individuals.

While these three issues reflect more specifically the notions of the processes of becoming an adult student, it is also possible to raise some tentative recommendations derived from the actual experiences of the research sample. However, first it appears appropriate to acknowledge that this is an initial data base and, furthermore, it may be somewhat 'context bound'. On the other hand, supportive evidence for such suggestions was to be found in the literature (Chapter One), and in the particular research strategies (Chapter Two) adopted (see, Battersby and Ramsay, 1979; Woods, 1979). In view of the potential 'restrictions', these recommendations are stated at this point and elaborated upon in Appendix K:

Recommendation 1: That adult students returning to secondary school receive financial assistance at a level commensurate with their needs to enable them to continue with their studies.

Recommendation 2: (a) That adult students be regarded in the same manner as school-aged pupils for the determination of financial grants to provide the necessary facilities and materials.

(b) That consideration be given to the establishment, and Government support, of creche facilities at secondary schools presently attracting adult students.

Recommendation 3: That school policy and practice must take into account the school's adult student clientele.

As well as the suggestion that each of these recommendations requires further debate, consideration and research, they do raise a series of general questions deserving of follow-up study, such as:

1. Would financial assistance increase access to school and the retention of adult students?
2. What would be the consequences of equating adult student populations in a school with the pupil roll when allocating resources? Would the provision of a creche increase access to the school for adult students, and have 'pay-offs' for the pupils as well?
3. What effects would accrue from changes in policy and practice undertaken in consideration of the adult student perspective and experiences?

Overall, a number of issues and questions have been raised which deserve follow-up study. Such research might profitably consider the implications for methodology discussed in the present context. For instance, the need to develop more fully the analytic strategies advanced in the present study so as to combine effectively the salient features of field research approaches and 'grounded theory' forms of analysis to provide the basis for elaborating the 'social and cultural landscape'. This would require, as an integral component in the development of methodology, the full documentation of the research processes themselves.

Finally, in terms of the development of 'formal theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) this study suggests that attention be directed towards the notions of 'common processes' across a variety of social contexts. The research reported here lends further substance to the views of Battersby (1981a), Pollard (1982) and Woods (1979) that there are evident similarities between a variety of processes and such 'linkages' require further examination as part of the cumulative development of theory (Woods, 1985b).

IN CONCLUSION

This study has sought to fulfil two aims: to provide an indepth and systematic view of a group of adult students' experiences during the processes of becoming an adult student; and, while so doing, elaborate upon the application of field research strategies within an educational context.

In meeting these aims, the first chapters presented an account of the historical context leading to adult admissions to secondary school, the existing literature discussing their experiences, and the processes of the development and implementation of methodological and analytical strategies. An extensive descriptive account of the everyday experiences of the adult students in the school was then provided, and elaborated upon during the development of a particular model of the processes of becoming an adult student.

The study has made a contribution in providing an indepth insight into the experiences of adult students in a secondary school; in developing a theoretical elaboration of these processes; by suggesting starting points for further research and theory development; and, in exploring the 'problems, pitfalls and discoveries' which emerged during the application of the particular research strategies.

Throughout this report, and as possibly the major outcome to be derived from the present investigation, is the notion of research as 'process' rather than as a static entity. From the presentation of the development of methodological and analytical strategies, the provision of an ongoing autobiographical component, the detailing of the everyday world of adult students, and the linkages established between processes of becoming across a variety of contexts, this study has offered a series of 'generative' approaches, concepts and constructs. These do not represent the 'end point' but are precursors which may prove a profitable foundation for further elaboration and development.

The present volume is completed by a bibliography of the research and literature that was consulted during the conduct of the study. A second volume provides biographical information on the sample of adult students chosen for this research, some case study details of particular events, copies of the questionnaires and interview schedules that were used, a consideration of the historical antecedents of the methodology and ethical issues, and some further elaboration of the recommendations derived from the investigation.

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