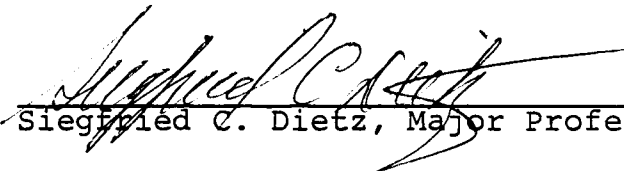


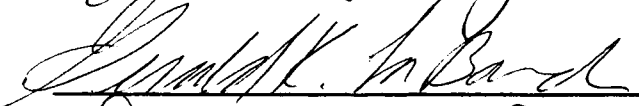
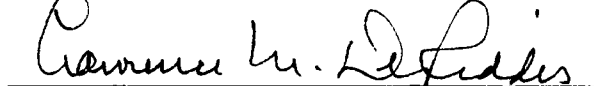
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Thomas R. Ayers entitled "A Study of University of Tennessee, Knoxville Evening School Student Attrition from Fall Quarter, 1980, through Fall Quarter, 1981." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Psychology and Guidance.


Siegfried C. Dietz, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:


The Graduate School

A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
EVENING SCHOOL STUDENT ATTRITION FROM FALL
QUARTER, 1980, THROUGH FALL QUARTER, 1981

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Thomas R. Ayers
August 1983

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Harriet.
There is none better.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to identify and investigate specific causes of attrition in a selected group of Evening School undergraduates. Students who failed to register through the Evening School for four consecutive quarters following Fall Quarter, 1980, were considered for this study. A total of 281 subjects participated.

An appropriately designed questionnaire was used in conjunction with telephone interviews. Six interviewers were trained to conduct the survey. Each subject contacted was asked specifically why he/she discontinued attending the Evening School. Demographic data of age, marital status, college affiliation and University longevity were compared with reasons for discontinuing. Subjects were also asked if specific academic related reasons contributed to their discontinuance. The Chi Square test was used to measure significance.

The findings indicated by the present study include:

All subjects were able to, without any difficulty, identify a specific reason for their discontinuance.

The academic related reasons presented in the questionnaire were not considered to be major contributing factors toward discontinuance by the subjects.

Single and married subjects expressed different reasons for their discontinuance.

College affiliation and age had no major effect on reasons for discontinuance.

Subjects with one year or less University longevity discontinued at an abnormally high rate when compared to other subjects.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Higher education may be on the threshold of a new era. Census data is projecting a substantial decrease in the number of 18-22 year-old college age students. The post war baby boom is rippling through the population. Projected increases for the next eight years point to the 25-44 age group. There also has been concern for the diminishing returns of a college education. Bowen (1977) felt that as more people require a college education, the value of that education diminishes. This could lead to an over supply of college educated people for a limited number of preferred positions. Yet, there has been a desire to make a college education available to every American. Enrollments in the 1960's and 1970's surged to new highs. In light of this trend, two relevant questions might be asked. First, is there an excess of college graduates? Second, are they finding it difficult to acquire the positions they hoped a college degree would have made accessible? If the above questions are true, then a college degree is not the passport to a better life it was once thought to be. In addition, the cost of acquiring a college degree has changed drastically. Inflation over the past five years has caused tuition to rise at a phenomenal rate.

The federal government has also adopted a more austere policy in relation to higher education. Fewer federal dollars are available for institutional grants, and funding for student grants and loans is diminishing. Higher education may, in fact, be facing a new era of challenging times.

A continuing decline in number of students will eventually have an effect on institutions of higher education. Private institutions, with their gifts and endowments, still heavily rely on student fees to make up a significant portion of their budget. Public institutions are funded by student credit hours generated. Fewer students generate fewer credit hours. In either case, the financial base of the institution may be severely crippled. If that happens, the likelihood of maintaining a high quality academic program, providing public service, and encouraging fundamental research could diminish. One goal, then, would be to maintain a faculty student ratio that will maximize the teaching learning opportunity.

The options for maintaining an optimum student body are limited. Recruitment is a possibility, but the 18 year-old pool is diminishing. Therefore, recruitment could be directed toward the older student. This age group is projected to increase significantly in number. Retention is another option. There has always been concern about attrition in higher education. A great

deal of research has been conducted to establish its causes and remedies (Astin, 1975; Astin, 1977; Cope and Hannah, 1975; Kowalski, 1977; Pantages and Creedon, 1978; Tinto, 1975). The third possibility is a combination of the other two. New students should be recruited. The door to higher education should be open to those who wish to enter. Retention should be of utmost concern. Students who choose higher education should be provided with the kind of support that will encourage and assist them to reach their educational goals. This study is directed at the retention phase of the higher education process.

Statement of the Problem

Two recent studies have been completed on retention of adult students at major universities (Deldin, 1980; Dicken, 1981). Both of these studies utilized written questionnaires. Deldin's study incorporated 23 personal interviews along with the questionnaire format. However, although these studies were extensive, voids still exist in demographic data and circumstances surrounding attrition. Therefore, this study, in an effort to further explore the drop-out problem, utilized personal contact with a drop-out population to examine the following issues:

1. Exploration of reasons for selection of college and major.

2. Investigation of academic reasons for attrition such as: course content, instruction, advising, university bureaucracy, program length and study skills.

3. Examination of selected demographic data in attrition. Such data includes age, marital status, college affiliation and University longevity.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Career incentives will be the predominant reason for selection of a college and major by the drop-out population.

Hypothesis 2: The drop-out population will identify unexpected course content as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 3: The drop-out population will identify disappointment with instruction as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 4: The drop-out population will identify lack of academic advising as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 5: The drop-out population will identify unsatisfactory service from University support personnel as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 6: The drop-out population will identify time and effort in completing their educational goal as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 7: The drop-out population will identify lack of study skills as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

Hypothesis 8: The drop-out population will vary significantly by age and reasons for non-continuation.

Hypothesis 9: The drop-out population will vary significantly by marital status and reasons for non-continuation.

Hypothesis 10: The drop-out population will vary significantly by college affiliation and reasons for non-continuation.

Hypothesis 11: The drop-out population will vary significantly by prior University attendance and reasons for non-continuation.

Rationale

Some researchers see the increasing number of adults entering higher education as the wave of the future. Projections of adult enrollments are high. Cagiano, Geisler and Wilcox (1977) reported that the number of students between the ages of 25 and 30 increased by 72% between 1970 and 1975. Students from the same age group seeking degrees grew 35% between 1970 and 1973 (Bishop, 1977). The number of women enrolling in colleges and universities has also increased dramatically. Between 1974 and 1979 enrollments of women over 35 increased 66.8%. During the

same period, enrollments of women 25 through 34 increased 58.7% (Magarrell, 1981).

While projections are optimistic, not all researchers see a trend. Centra (1980) felt that the adult student population has peaked. Certainly, the number of veterans attending under the G.I. Bill has dropped. A stagnant economy and a tight job-market for certain majors provide less incentive for potential students. The increased demand for skilled workers with a technical education is syphoning off some potential degree candidates. Many adult students have family and job responsibilities which results in part-time study and possibly eight years or longer to complete an undergraduate program. The future may be too uncertain to embark on such a commitment. Finally, the financial burden of attending colleges and universities has increased to such an extent that it may be pricing itself out of the students' budget. Thus, the potential for new students may exist, but whether or not they materialize is speculation.

Although new techniques for marketing higher education to adults are popular, emphasis on retention may be more critical. The effects of attrition on institutions of higher education has already been mentioned. The effect on students can be more dramatic. Astin (1977) suggested that students who drop out delay occupational

entry and mobility. Inability to achieve desired educational goals, disappointment experienced by student, family or friends and the lost opportunity to acquire additional intellectual skills and competence are all factors associated with dropping out. Astin (1977) also says, "From a national perspective, dropping out represents a loss of talent and a waste of limited educational resources" (p. 260).

If efforts are to be made to curb the number of drop-outs, identification of reasons for dropping out must be more closely scrutinized. Only then can proper corrective measures be initiated. This proposed study utilizes telephone interviews with the drop-out population to determine reasons for non-continuation. It also categorizes the drop-out population by academic affiliation and selected demographic data.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

Career Incentives. Preparation for an initial career choice, an enhancement of present job status or preparation for career transition.

College Affiliation. College to which a student has been admitted.

Drop-Out. Any undergraduate Evening School student who registered Fall Quarter, 1980, but not again through Fall Quarter, 1981.

Evening School Students. Undergraduate students who register and pay fees through the Evening School. They may be full- or part-time students and their ages range from 18-64. Students in this category may be referred to, in the literature, as non-traditional students or adult students.

Day School Students. Undergraduate students who register and pay their fees through day school. They are usually full-time students and their age may range from 18-24. Students in this category may be referred to, in the literature, as traditional or full-time students.

Unclassified Student. An undergraduate Evening School student with no college affiliation.

Limitations

This study included all undergraduate students who registered with the Evening School Fall Quarter, 1980, but not again through Fall Quarter, 1981. Therefore, the following factors may provide limitations to the study: (1) variety of reasons for initial enrollment, (2) extent of participation in previous educational experiences, (3) age spread of participants and (4) the percentage of drop-out population who participated.

Assumptions

The assumptions are as follows:

1. It is assumed that registration "cross over" by day school students is not a factor. Steps have been taken to minimize this form of contamination.
2. It is assumed that the questionnaire is free of biases unwittingly injected by its author.
3. It is assumed that the interviewers refrained from response interpretation of open-ended questions.
4. It is assumed that responses by the subjects are both sincere and unbiased.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provides background information on enrollment trends in higher education and their implications. It also includes a statement of the problem, proposed hypotheses, the rationale for studying the problem, definition of terms relevant to the study, limitations and assumptions of the study and its organizational structure.

Chapter II presents a review of relevant literature.

Chapter III provides a description of the methodology used to develop and carry out the study.

Chapter IV presents and discusses the collected data.

Chapter V offers a summary of the data, findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Organization of the Literature Review

The literature review is divided into seven sections. Section one identified adult students. Section two describes the motivational factors which promote their participation. In section three, drop-out research is divided to coincide with recent trends in higher education. Evolvment of the adult student and attrition is reviewed in section four. Section five addresses the topic of increased enrollments and attrition. Retrenchment and attrition is considered in section six. Section seven offers a summary.

The Adult Student

In order to better understand why adult students drop out, it first seems appropriate to know who they are and why they attend. Cross (1982) said that the majority of adult students come from working class backgrounds and are usually first generation college students. She also contended that they are better educated and hold better jobs, in general, than others their age. They choose education as a route to raising themselves to a higher socio-economic level. They are "upwardly mobile."

The majority of these students are women (Magarrell, 1981). According to Centra (1980), women are taking advantage of the economic rewards of a college education. He mentioned, also, that societal changes have made it more acceptable for women to pursue careers outside the home. Although some adult students attend full-time, most of them go to school part-time (Harrington, 1977). Education, though important, often has to be ranked below family and occupation.

Motivational Factors

Adults choose to participate in educational experiences for a variety of reasons. Career transition is just one of those reasons. Arbeiter, Aslanian, Schmerbeck and Brickell (1978) suggested that education provides the opportunity to acquire expertise so that a person may change careers or advance in a present career. This same research revealed that 36% of the adults with educational aspirations attend colleges and universities. The Carnegie Commission on Nontraditional Study (1973) indicated that students most often identify enhancement of vocational skills as the reason for pursuing additional education. Education may also be viewed as a way out of dead-end jobs (Harrington, 1977). Cross (1982) echoed the career change or job improvement reasons for attending.

Occupational improvement, then, must be considered as a major motivational factor.

The desire to complete an interrupted college education or interest in specific subject areas both rank high on the list of why adults say they attended colleges and universities. For example, full-time traditional age college students who left school to marry or for financial reasons may return later as adult students. Some students may return because they wish to take courses that are of interest to them. A study completed at Eastern Illinois University showed that after career related reasons, students said they came back to the university for self fulfillment reasons. Rawlins and Davies (1981) suggested that many adults are interested in lifetime goals and self enrichment through learning. Others may want to take only one specific course or series of courses. Avakian (1982) said that adults often just need to upgrade present skills, and specific courses provide that opportunity.

A change in family status may be one of the reasons enrollments of women have surged over the last decade. Reehling (1980) reported that between 1972 and 1977 the number of women students 25 years old and over increased by 106%. Reasons for this increase are fairly obvious. The death of a spouse or divorce, for example, may force a homemaker to acquire additional occupational skills.

Financially, she may have no choice. Education, then, could provide the training she needs. Or, that same loss may generate a desire to escape the emptiness by indulging in a pursuit of studies previously only imagined. Children growing up and leaving home often allows mothers free time to explore educational options. Again, whether the reason be economic or self fulfillment, educational institutions can generate the opportunities.

Some researchers have tried to classify learners so as to best predict their needs. Cyril Houle (1961) developed a typology that is still regarded highly. Cross (1982), for example, referred to his work as ". . . the single most influential motivational study today" (p. 83). Houle, in his research, identified three specific groups who participate in educational experiences. The first group is goal oriented. These students have clear cut objectives and are dedicated to achieving them. They often develop a rigid plan and may become frustrated if forced to deviate from that plan. For example, a cancellation or scheduling adjustment of a particular course may generate high anxiety in goal oriented students. An accumulation of such frustrations may result in abandonment of the goal. The second group of learners described by Houle includes the activity oriented learners. They do not take courses to develop a skill or achieve some educational goal. They participate for the activity

and not for the content. Reasons for attending classes may be to escape boredom or loneliness, to make new friends or just because they enjoy being involved in the educational process. These learners are particularly difficult to track. They may drop in or out from quarter to quarter. Since content is not their goal, programming provides little holding power. The third group is the learning oriented group. This group of learners seeks knowledge for its own sake. They constantly are participating in educational experiences. When it comes to education, it seems the more they get, the more they want. Learning oriented students usually participate on a regular basis, but not necessarily in the same program. They may take a credit course at a university one quarter and take a non-credit course at the Y.M.C.A. the next quarter. Tracking learning oriented students is also difficult. They drop in and out randomly.

Houle's typology was mentioned first because it prompted studies by others as to why adults participate. Boshier (1973) developed a theoretical model of participation and drop-out by adult students. He proposed that adult students could be classified as growth motivated or deficiency motivated. The difference is that the growth motivated students are more autonomous or inner directive. Knowles (1970) might call them self directed learners. They have achieved an intra/self congruence

which promotes congruence between them and their educational environment. The deficiency motivated students develop an intra/self incongruence. They attend not out of desire but because of external pressures. This condition leads to self/other incongruence and can promote dissatisfaction with the educational environment. Boshier, therefore, suggested that internal psychological determinants play a major role in participation by adult students.

More recently, other researchers have attempted to identify why adults participate in continuing education. Morstain and Smart (1977) developed a typology of adult learners by examining individual motivational profiles. Their findings indicated that individuals within a particular motivational group exhibit a fairly wide range of demographic characteristics. Therefore, it may be unwise, when working with adult students, to group them solely on the demographic data. Peters and Boshier (1976) have attempted to tie participation to Moslow's hierarchy. They classified students as life-chance or life-space motivated. Students referred to as life-chance are attempting to satisfy lower basic needs. Life-space participants are closer to being self-actualizing persons and are attempting to expand their life space.

Grabowski (1976) felt that career preparation or change is the strongest motivating factor for adult students. He also contended that the longer individuals spend in the same career, the less likely they will pursue further education. Those motivated toward education, however, may become frustrated by obstacles. Grabowski identified these obstacles as originating from the individual, from course content or from the social environment. Those generated by the individual may be lack of knowledge about course offering, lack of self confidence or time restrictions. Those obstacles stemming from course content could be inappropriate scheduling or lack of prerequisite knowledge. Finally, obstacles from the social environment might include family responsibilities, inadequate transportation or conflicting work hours. Any of the obstacles mentioned above may discourage potential adult students from starting but may also encourage present students to discontinue.

Stages of Drop-out Research

A review of the literature indicates that adult students drop out of higher education for a multitude and for multiple reasons. Research findings are often contradictory and confusing. What proves to be significant in some studies fails to generate a trend in others. Even terminology is misleading. Lea, Sedlacek and Stewart

(1979) reported that the term "drop-out" itself carries different connotations in different studies. At times, students are considered drop-outs if they fail to enroll each term until they graduate. Others are considered to be drop-outs even though they continue their education at other institutions. Some students are referred to as stop-outs instead of drop-outs since the possibility exists that they may someday resume their studies.

In order to provide organization of past research involving attrition (drop-out) of adult students, the remaining literature review will be divided into three time frames and a summary. Part one reviews attrition research through 1969. This was a period when adult students, often part-time, were beginning to materialize in greater numbers. The second part carries through the seventies when higher education was overwhelmed with enrollments of both traditional and non-traditional students. Part three reviews current research on adult student attrition in light of declining enrollments.

Evolverment and Attrition

In 1964 Verner and Davis prepared a review of research on drop-outs and completions by adult students. Their work carried back to 1928 and considered 30 individual studies. Most involved adult high school programs, but a few were evening college programs. Love (1949) conducted

a study of evening college students. His data were collected from school records and his results were startling. Of those evening college students following a course of study, 90% would not complete that study. Carey (1953) also performed a study of evening college students. He used questionnaires and personal interviews. The results clearly identified school related reasons for students dropping out. Verner and Davis, however, found a trend. In earlier studies, school related reasons were reported least by drop-outs. After 1950, school related reasons ranked first.

In their conclusion, Verner and Davis mentioned that although 26 specific factors have been identified and tested, the cumulative results are inconclusive. They do theorize, however, that ". . . people who do not normally participate in the on-going organized life of a community are more apt to discontinue attendance in adult education" (p. 173).

A research study completed by Houle (1964) took a different approach to the drop-out problem. Instead of looking at why people drop out, Houle tried to determine why some stay. What differences exist between persisters and drop-outs? Persisters, he found, were often able to overcome "obstacles to study." When he categorized these obstacles, he found that many were related to the learning process. With this evidence, he proposed that many times

adults drop out simply because they forgot or never knew how to learn. Adults who were never very successful in primary or secondary school cannot be expected to find college course less demanding. Likewise, adults who have been away from school for a number of years may need some pointers on test taking, time management and study skills. Houle felt that this mastery of such skills may be a key to retard dropping out. Students should be provided with reassurance that they can successfully acquire good learning skills and the institution and its faculty have the obligation to help develop these skills.

Another project that considered drop-out as a function of academic ability was completed by Zahn (1964). Her work compared academic climate in credit and non-credit university extension courses. She found that low academic ability students, even though their motivation level is high when courses start, drop out of credit courses but persist in non-credit courses. The academic climate to which she refers is an interaction between student academic ability and motivation and course elements. Examples of course elements may be either students' inability to perceive, in advance, requirements of course content or of a subconscious modification of academic atmosphere by faculty in non-credit classes. As a result of her findings, she advocates a pre-counseling

service that will help low academic achievers select appropriate courses.

As research continued in the sixties, results failed to identify consistent causes of attrition. Some variables, although not always significant, did however generate notice. In one of the larger attrition studies, Knox and Sjogren (1965) collected data from seven cooperating institutions of higher education that included a sample size of 4562 adult students. The summary statement from their research includes the following remarks:

These findings indicate that there are multiple reasons for the withdrawal problem and that because of the costs of drop-out to both student and institution, adult educators should use multiple solutions: selection and emphasis on study skills in relation to learning ability, counseling and alternate learning methods in relation to job and family changes, and better teaching and administrative arrangements in relation to experience in the program.

Interestingly enough, the recommendations relate to causes of attrition in the studies of Zahn, Houle and Verner and Davis mentioned previously. Therefore, it seems, these variables deserve consideration in continued drop-out research.

Increased Enrollments and Attrition

During the 1970's, enrollments in higher education reached new heights. The emphasis was on recruitment. Books and seminars suggested new marketing techniques to

entice potential adult students. The problem of attrition, however, still remained.

Boshier (1972) developed a drop-out prediction scale. By using two separate forms administered to the same group and a discrepancy scoring technique, he hoped to predict potential drop-outs. Once identified, they could be watched for signs that drop-out was about to occur and be counseled into persistence. Continuing his work, Boshier (1973) developed a theoretical model of educational participation and drop-out. He suggested that internal psychological determinants lead to dropping out. People who enroll for "deficiency" motives experience self/other incongruence which promotes dissatisfaction with the educational environment. For example, students who enroll to satisfy external pressure, i.e. family expectations, career obligations or social commitments, may be deficiency motivated. Therefore, when variables such as transportation difficulties, age, class size, instructor personality or course requirements exist, they may trigger drop-out. Boshier, utilizing his model at three institutions, determined that people enrolled for deficiency motives were significantly more inclined to drop-out.

Like Boshier, other researchers were concerned about attrition of adult students. In a study that emphasized participation rather than attrition, Morstain

and Smart (1974) stressed two trends then current. First, like traditional college student enrollments, adult college student enrollments were increasing rapidly. Second, unlike traditional college students, adult college students offer greater diversity of background, orientation and goals. These trends, in a subtle way, may suggest why adults discontinue their educational participation. For example, the diversity mentioned above may mean that adult students cannot be categorized or processed as traditional age college students. Their needs are unique and if not met, they will cease to participate. Therefore, it may be assumed that college or university related reasons could promote drop-out.

As in the sixties, lack of or inadequate counseling/advising received considerable attention. Pantages and Creedon (1978), in a review of college attrition studies, identified sound counseling programs as a key to retention. In their comments they said, "By far, the majority of the recommendations for reducing attrition have been concerned with enlarging the role and scope of counseling services for students following enrollment" (p. 89).

Muskat (1979), in an article on attrition and educational expectations, said that sound academic counseling and planning is essential to student retention. One of her concerns was inadequate dissemination of academic information. Because the "academic system" operates by

many deadlines, rules and regulations, it is paramount that students be aware of their implications. Muskat said that the following academic service is essential:

A systematized information network to deliver short-range information, course offerings, educational opportunities, degree programs and requirements, general education requirements, prerequisites, educational policies, regulations and administrative procedures must be available and highly visible to students.

Adult students are particularly vulnerable to inadequate or lack of relevant information. They may only be on campus one or two evenings a week and do not have the opportunity to become better acquainted with academia. This could result in failure to mesh with the academic system and eventual discontinuation. Lack of adequate advising/counseling must, therefore, be considered as a potential cause of drop-out.

Tinto (1975) saw social integration as another factor in reducing attrition. This social integration, according to Tinto, can occur through informal peer group associations or interaction with faculty and administrative personnel within the college. These activities promote social communication and a sense of belonging. Tinto said "Other things being equal, social integration should increase the likelihood that the person will remain in college" (p. 107). Astin (1977) likewise believed in the importance of involvement in campus activities. When referring to commuter students, he said, "The strong

association between involvement and persistence suggests that any programs that involve commuters more in campus life will have a positive effect on persistence" (p. 133). With these comments in mind, it must be remembered that adult students, because of outside commitments, often exclude themselves from these opportunities. In doing so, they may also increase their chances of dropping out.

If involvement, as suggested above, promotes retention, then college affiliation could have an effect on the drop-out rate. Cope and Hannah (1975) said they found no consistent evidence of one college major producing better retention rates than another. Interestingly enough, they make no mention of unclassified students. These students would have no college affiliation and therefore no major. It seems that being a part of a program would provide the opportunity for greater involvement. For example, a student within the College of Business Administration majoring in accounting would no doubt attend classes with other accounting majors. Also, more than likely, he/she would take more than one course from the same faculty member. Therefore, the opportunity for social integration should increase. Tinto (1975) thought it would. He said that student interaction with faculty appears to be more important in the student's major than in other areas. Assuming this to be true, unclassified students would not be availed of the same opportunity.

College affiliation, then, may be a drop-out variable worth investigating.

In reference to academic institutions, two other factors may be related to the drop-out rate. One is restrictive regulations and institutional policies. The second is insensitivity of faculty to adult student needs. Both are addressed by Harrington (1977) in his book on adult education. According to Harrington, adult students often face unrealistic restrictions when they attend colleges and universities. Rules and regulations laid down by faculty members, administrators and governing boards are geared toward the full-time day school students and are inflexible. Adult students find themselves filling out irrelevant forms, meeting unnecessary requirements and being told to contact campus offices that maintain limited operating hours. This kind of treatment can only generate negativism toward the system.

Most adult students, because of commitment to full-time jobs, attend evening classes. Again, according to Harrington, the faculty who teach these evening classes are not always enthusiastic about their assignments. Junior faculty and graduate students often teach evening classes while distinguished faculty teach only during the day. Evening classes carry a connotation of being an "academic Siberia." And, evening students are often thought of as being "second class students." Yet, these same

students bring to the classroom unique characteristics. Some, because of real life experiences, challenge faculty about course content and resent anything but enthusiastic response. Others, already exhausted from a day on the job, have to force themselves to stay awake. Some faculty, however, see evening students as a challenge and express genuine concern and a desire to provide exceptional learning opportunities. In spite of their commitment, teaching evening classes usually affords them gulped meals, fatigue and inadequate salaries. Consequently, the negative factors present in evening classes justify consideration of faculty as a key to attrition.

Student longevity has, also, been tied to attrition. Studies by Baumgart and Johnstone (1977) and Pantages and Creedon (1978) report that attrition rates are higher for students in their first or early years of study. Truesdell (1975), measuring drop-out by age group, showed that 18-24 year olds withdrew at a significantly higher rate than any other group. Usually when students begin educational programs, they do so with the expectation of completing them. Intentions are good. What, then, causes abnormal attrition rates in newer students? Pre-course counseling, mentioned earlier, might be one cause. Another may be lack of a full understanding of what is involved in earning an undergraduate degree. Under present conditions, it will take 8-10 years of part-time study. Most adult

students are part-time. A decline in motivation, adjustments in personal commitments or improper programming can extend that time frame. Miller (1978) said that college and university administrators can make a contribution to student success through careful program planning. Flexible scheduling and course sequencing will promote matriculation. Tinto (1975), in his synthesis of drop-out research, said that previous studies show both goal and institutional commitment increases as a function of nearness to completion of the degree program. Student longevity and drop-out rates, therefore, may merit continued investigation.

The cost of attending colleges and universities has also been targeted as a cause for attrition of adult students. Two financial situations have generated concern. The first is inequitable tuition increases. Harrington (1977) condemned institutions of higher education for unfair tuition charges. He said that often part-time students pay a higher credit hour rate than full-time students. For example, if a tuition increase goes into effect, it may raise the credit hour rate without affecting the maximum tuition rate. Or, the increase may be a higher percentage on the credit hour rate than it is on the maximum fee rate. Since most adult students are part-time, the increase may be significant enough to justify discontinuance. In fact, Miller (1978) reported

that financial concern is one of the overriding factors in attrition. The second point alluded to above concerns financial aid. Scholarships and educational loans or grants are almost nonexistent for part-time students. Invariably in order to qualify, a student must be attending full-time. It is true that most part-time students have full-time jobs. But, it is also true that they have "full-time" financial obligations. Cost certainly must be considered when identifying causes for attrition.

In the seventies, colleges and universities were experiencing a rapid increase in enrollments of adult students. These students were considered unique and a great deal of effort went into studies of how to recruit them. Other than Boshier's research in 1972 and 1973, not a great deal of theoretical work was done on adult student attrition. Attrition studies were closely allied with identifying adult student needs. The significant thing to note, however, is that many of the reasons identified as causing attrition in the sixties were again identified in the seventies. Bhalngor (1975), in his study of adult students at Concordia University in Canada, conceded that students drop-out for multiple causes. In reporting his findings, he verifies the work of Knox and Sjogren (1965).

Retrenchment and Attrition

The concern over attrition is likely to intensify during the decade of the eighties. Enrollments are beginning to drop. Perhaps many of the adults who desired to enter colleges or universities have done so. Now the emphasis must be on keeping them.

Research results emerging from this decade are not far different from years past. Bauer (1980) sees a lack of faculty-student interaction as a key factor in causing attrition. He believed that: 1. Faculty often see part-time adult students as academically inferior when compared to traditional students. 2. Because they do not declare a major, adult students are thought not to be serious about education. 3. Adult students with their pragmatic approach ". . . infuriate faculty who value learning for learning's sake" (p. 236). 4. Adult students question lecture content as being irrelevant and not in line with the real world. As stated earlier, Harrington (1977) reported some of the same concerns.

Because of the difficulty of determining just when a student becomes a drop-out, Avakian, MacKinney and Allen (1982) investigated enrollments of new and transfer students at an urban university. Their results showed that many students do not seek degrees and, therefore, may leave because they have satisfied their educational goals.

Secondly, they found, the use of advising and provisions for assistance in basic skill building and study habits showed a slight increase in retention of new students. As reported earlier, Houle (1964) also suggested the need to teach study skills and courses in basic mathematics, English and reading as a way to reduce attrition of adult students.

Dicken (1981) performed a research study where he compared adult persisters and non-persisters at the University of Cincinnati. Using a mail questionnaire, he attempted to determine characteristics that might predict each group. His questionnaire used the personal variables of age, sex, marital status, race and health to determine differences. He, also, examined high school G.P.A., extent of family educational background, finances, job related issues and academic goals. His results showed that no one factor stands out above the rest as the cause of attrition. Multiple reasons exist, and he suggested multiple solutions be enacted. This is somewhat similar to the conclusion drawn by Knox and Sjogren (1965).

Reehling (1980) conducted a longitudinal study of adult women college students. Using a questionnaire and personal interviews, she collected data from 323 women, over 30 years old, who were attending community colleges. The educational goal planned by most participants was a bachelor's degree followed by those who wanted only to

take a few courses and those wanting an associate degree. In a six year follow-up, she found that 24.5% of the women dropped out within the same academic year of their initial interview. Of the 75.5% that continued, only 45.6% reached the education level they had initially predicted. Those that predicted completion of a bachelor's degree fared worse. Only 36.5% of them reached their projected six year goal. Reehling contends that women have a better retention rate than they have reaching their educational goals. This may be true to a point. Sooner or later, however, the frustration of failing to reach one's goal may make it seem unrealistic. When that happens, the goal may lose priority and never be accomplished.

One of the most recent and comprehensive studies of adult student attrition was carried on by Deldin (1980) at Michigan State University. Her study combined a questionnaire and personal interviews with adult students who voluntarily withdrew during fall term 1979. Her questionnaire covered demographic information and internal and external factors which may have led to discontinuance. She received responses from a total of 135 drop-outs. Twenty-three of these respondents also participated in a personal interview. The students selected for this study were over 25 years of age and the independent variables she used were sex, age group, marital status and number of children. The sample included both graduate and undergraduate students.

Using Chi Square, Deldin considered the following dependent variables as causes for withdrawal: 1. academic reasons; 2. financial reasons; 3. employment reasons and 4. personal reasons. Each of these categories were then separated into more specific reasons. Under academic reasons, students identified the following: 1. need a temporary break from studies; 2. inadequate study habits; 3. lack of interest. The major employment reason was conflict between job and studies. The top reason under finances was not having enough money to attend school. "Too time consuming" and "interfered with home responsibilities" ranked first and second under personal reasons.

Deldin's study goes into detail by expanding the categories mentioned above and also reports interesting demographic information. One of its major shortcomings, however, is that it considers drop-out students in one semester.

Summary

In review, one must again look to the changing times in higher education. Adult undergraduate students through the sixties were just beginning to make their presence known. Until this time, the number of those taking classes part-time and in the evening was insignificant. For the most part, colleges and universities treated them as "step children" and provided minimal

servies. Adult students did, however, initiate interest among some educators (Houle, 1964; Knox and Sjogren, 1965), who wanted to know who these students were, why they came and why they left. Researchers determined that support services for these students were almost non-existent. No advising was available, no remedial programs existed to prepare them for college work, they were forced to work through a bureaucracy designed for full-time day school students, faculty were not always cognizant of their needs and auxiliary services, such as book stores and cafeterias, were not open when these students were on campus. Consensus seemed to be that, although personal reasons would always contribute to attrition, the indifference shown toward adult students by colleges and universities was responsible for frustration that alone or when added to personal hardships "triggered" dropping out. Therefore, most of the recommendations generated by attrition studies encouraged acceptance of adults as legitimate students and advocated expansion of support services for their use.

With the seventies came a rapid increase in the number of adult students attending colleges and universities. During this same period, the number of full-time day school students grew at a similar rate. Colleges and universities were hard pressed to meet student demands. Resources were taxed to the limit. Added to this was the

fact that a time of accountability prevailed. Taxpayers questioned budgets at public institutions of higher education. High inflation rates were also taking their toll. Colleges and universities were forced to cut back and set priorities. Their first priority was to serve the traditional student body. Meanwhile, it seemed that for every adult student that dropped out, a new one enrolled. Emphasis was on recruitment and little effort was placed on retention. Adult education program directors and administrators were constantly requesting the services of academic departments. When these services were not available, they pressed for adjunct faculty and permission to offer a variety of non-traditional programs.

Although a surplus of students existed, some educators expressed concern over the number of adult students who were dropping out. Had these students completed their educational goal or did they simply cease attending? Some researchers (Boshier, 1973; Truesdell, 1975) devised models by which they might be able to predict drop-outs among adult students. Others synthesized previous research (Tinto, 1975; Pantages and Creedon, 1978) in an effort to isolate contributing factors to attrition. Surveys were taken and recommendations were made. Except for predictive studies, some of the same results were derived. The drop-out phenomenon cannot be attached to

any one single reason. Students discontinue for a variety of reasons and for multiple reasons.

The decade of the eighties is predicted to provide still more change for higher education. The number of traditional college age students is diminishing. Even adult student enrollments are showing signs of leveling off or turning downward. The rapid growth period is over. Yet, this may be the precise time that adult students receive recognition. In order to bolster enrollments, colleges and universities may begin to provide the services long recommended to accommodate adult students. Emphasis is on retention. Efforts continue to seek causes and cures for attrition. Dicken (1981) compared persisters and non-persisters. Deldin (1980) carried out an in-depth study with drop-outs. Reehling (1980) performed a longitudinal study with adult women students. Each of these works provided valuable information. Many of their recommendations have been presented by other researchers, yet some are unique. In any case, no one study will solve the problem of attrition. Each, however, can provide background data for new studies that utilize different methods, variables and populations.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter provides an explanation of the procedures used in the study. Topics covered are selection of subjects, instrument design, selection and training of interviewers, collection of data and method for analysis of the data.

Subjects

Subjects consisted of students who registered through the Evening School, as undergraduate students, Fall Quarter, 1980, but failed to register through the Evening School in any of the four ensuing quarters. This included Summer Quarter. Subjects from this group were identified as the drop-out population.

The total number of Evening School undergraduate students varies from quarter to quarter. A high of approximately 2100 and a low of about 1900 per quarter constitute a normal population range for an academic year. Five consecutive quarters were used in this study in order to purge the sample of students who routinely take courses one quarter per year. The number of undergraduates who registered Fall Quarter, 1980, was 2086.

It is not unusual for traditional day school students to register one or more quarters through the Evening School. Therefore, in order to remove any contamination from "registration crossover" by day students and identify only students who traditionally register through the Evening School, the following groups were eliminated from the drop-out population:

1. Those students who registered for December, 1980, and December, 1981 mini-terms. Because of the intensity and scheduling of mini-term classes, adult students rarely participate.

2. Students who listed no phone number.

3. Students who listed a home phone number with a 974 prefix. This prefix is exclusively used by the University, and few, if any, Evening School students reside in University on-campus housing.

4. Students living in University off-campus housing. Likewise, few, if any, Evening School students reside in University off-campus housing.

5. Students participating in the nursing certificate programs. These students, because of the nature of their program, do not qualify as part of the drop-out population.

Upon examining registration records of Fall Quarter, 1980, through Fall Quarter, 1981, it was determined that 665 undergraduate students qualified as the drop-out population.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed to accomplish four objectives. First, and paramount, it was designed to identify why Evening School students drop out; second, to determine why they select certain colleges and majors; third, to investigate the effect of prior University attendance on attrition; and fourth, to provide a critique of the Evening School by the drop-out population. All four objectives, although directed at a specific population within a specific institution, generated information that could be universally helpful in solving the attrition problem.

Questionnaire items were designed to extract specific information from respondents in a non-threatening manner. Since the term drop-out often carries a negative connotation, that term was not used in the questionnaire. Items were kept short and precise (Jacobs, 1974; Payne, 1973). Language used in each question was clear and simple (Jacobs, 1974). The questionnaire was kept short in order to hold the respondent's attention.

The format followed a sequence that promotes the collection of relevant information and "eased" the respondent toward the primary emphasis of the questionnaire. The opening statement identified the caller and requested cooperation. The purpose of the first question,

which asked the subject to identify his/her college and major, was to provide general information and determine if the subjects were aware of their actual status.

Question two, in pursuing reasons for the choice of college and major, builds from question one and was included to determine what goals subjects had in mind when they identified a college and major. Questions three and four, by asking for negative and positive aspects of the Evening School, served multiple purposes. They were included to retrieve information about the Evening School and to provide an indication as to why the respondent dropped out. By requesting positive and negative information, they helped maintain questionnaire neutrality. The inclusion of a hypothetical "friend" in question three and four was intended to shunt people's reluctance to criticize (Jacobs, 1974). The information generated by question five, which asked subjects how long they had attended the University, was intended to identify whether University longevity produced an abnormal pattern of drop-outs.

All items prior to question six excluded any association with dropping out. It was assumed that the respondent now felt comfortable with the interview and would not perceive questions six, seven and eight in a negative light. Question six was very specific in its request for reason of discontinuance. Many researchers have, however,

determined that multiple reasons exist for dropping out (Knox and Sjogren, 1965; Bhalngor, 1975; Dicken, 1981). Therefore, question seven was included to: first, provide another opportunity for the respondent to explore why he/she dropped out; second, provide the respondent with a list of reasons that might not readily come to mind; and third, investigate specific academic related causes for attrition.

The selection of options included in question seven was derived from previous research regarding major contributing factors in adult student attrition. Zahn (1964) was concerned that adult students sign up for courses or programs only to find they were not prepared academically. Both Harrington (1977) and Bauer (1980) expressed negative comments regarding faculty who taught in the evening. Pantages and Creedon (1978) and Muskat (1979) suggested that some form of academic counseling was critical. Without such an opportunity, either formal or informal, adult students could not matriculate effectively. Tied closely to their findings is the theory of association. Adult students would be more likely to continue attending if they had established relationships within the system. Tinto (1975) referred to this concept as "social integration." Morstain and Smart (1974) and Harrington (1977) have condemned institutions of higher education for their inflexibility concerning adult students. Lack of suitable

office hours, rigid regulations and non-existent student services were mentioned by them as promoting adult student attrition. Time and effort was included in question seven because of its reference by previous researchers.

Truesdell (1975), Baumgart and Johnstone (1977), Miller (1978) and Reehling (1980) have all published research findings that identify either time or program requirements as a possible contributing factor to adult student attrition. Houle (1964) felt that a lack of study skills would eventually frustrate many adult students and promote attrition.

The final question, number eight, was included as an opportunity for respondents to present secondary reasons for their decision to drop out.

Selection and Training of Interviewers

Since an attempt was made to contact the entire drop-out population, six persons were selected to conduct telephone interviews. Each of these persons possessed considerable experience working with adult students, and all were familiar with Evening School procedures. Two had Master of Science degrees in Adult Education. All six interviewers met with the researcher to discuss the project in depth and to examine the questionnaire.

The two with academic backgrounds in adult education were selected to perform a pilot study to determine

the appropriateness of the questionnaire. Following the pilot study, the researcher and two interviewers met to discuss the feasibility of the questionnaire and reactions from respondents. Appropriate changes in the questionnaire were made.

Another meeting was held with all interviewers to discuss the results of the pilot study. At this time all were advised of their responsibility. Before contacting any subjects, each interviewer was instructed to call the other five and follow the questionnaire format. Each person called was to critique all five callers on performance. The interviewers met again to discuss needed revision of telephone techniques.

Collection of Data

A pilot study involving 50 subjects from the drop-out population was performed. Ten subjects were randomly selected from each of the following five categories: College of Business Administration, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts and unclassified (no college affiliation). Each of these categories provided the greatest number of subjects (Table 1). Therefore, depletion of the other categories would not be sacrificed on the pilot study. Fifty questionnaires were prepared with a subject's name and phone number on each (Appendix A). Each of the two

TABLE 1

Students Who Registered through the Evening School
(Time Frame--Fall 1980 through Fall 1981)

	Students Who Registered Fall Quarter 1980	Non-Returning Students
Agriculture	45	8
Architecture	10	5
Business	480	141
Communications	36	15
Education	324	81
Engineering	232	62
Home Economics	48	15
Liberal Arts	518	170
Nursing	44	18
Unclassified	<u>349</u>	<u>150</u>
	2086	665

callers selected to perform the pilot study were given 25 persons to contact. They were instructed, after introducing themselves to the respondent, to read the questionnaire and record the appropriate responses. A total of 26 subjects were contacted. The other 24, for various reasons, could not be reached. Those subjects selected for the pilot study were excluded from the final study. The thrust of the pilot study was to evaluate the merit of the questionnaire. Therefore, the callers were asked to critique each call.

Following the pilot study, a meeting between the two callers and the researcher was held to discuss the merits and fallacies of the questionnaire. Four changes to the questionnaire were implemented. They were:

1. Specific introductory remarks were provided. Subjects must understand at the beginning of the call its purpose and origin.
2. The questions were reworded using simpler terms.
3. The questions were shortened.
4. The questionnaire was expanded by asking the subjects their perception of the Evening School.

A revised questionnaire was prepared (Appendix B). A total of 615 were reproduced. The name and phone number of one of the subjects was written on the top of each questionnaire. The questionnaires were randomly dispensed to all six callers. Three callers received 102 and three received 103. Each was instructed to make five attempts

to reach every subject. These attempts were to be made at different times of the day so as to increase chances of finding the subjects at home. Callers were also told to sequence question seven in a rotating order so that the same order of options were not offered all respondents (Appendix B). All responses were recorded directly on the questionnaire.

A total of 296 subjects were reached. Of this number, 15 declined opportunity to participate. From the completed surveys, the researcher randomly selected three from each caller. Those 18 were again contacted by the researcher to verify responses. Without exception, each caller had provided accurate information.

Analysis of the Data

Information collected in this study was descriptive in nature. Therefore, some of the data were presented in a high to low ranking order after being categorized. Frequency tables were prepared on all 11 hypotheses and Chi squares were calculated on hypotheses 2 through 11. The Chi Square test is a recommended procedure for testing hypotheses where subjects fall into specific categories (Siegel, 1956; Huck, Corimer and Bounds, 1974).

Reasons for selection of a college and major were combined into 11 categories and ranked by preference. Request for negative aspects of the Evening School netted

325 responses broken into 35 categories by the interviewers. The researcher reduced the number of categories to nine. Positive remarks about the Evening School totaled 453 and divided into 27 categories. Again, the researcher combined this group into six categories. The attempt to elicit additional contributing factors that promoted drop-out of subjects provided 281 responses with 20 categories. These 20 were reduced to three by the researcher.

Frequency tables and Chi squares were provided in the six options available in question seven. Previous research had indicated that each option might be a major contributing factor to attrition. Frequency tables and Chi squares were also provided on expressed reasons for dropping out and the demographic data of age, college affiliation, marital status and University longevity.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The data and their analyses were divided into four sections. Section one involved an investigation of preliminary data and the first hypothesis. Presentation of the data related to the second through the seventh hypotheses are presented next. Data from the eighth through the eleventh hypotheses made up the third section. Section four examined secondary reasons for discontinuance.

Choice of College and Major

When asked why they chose the college and major they had identified, the subjects responded as shown in Table 2.

HYPOTHESIS 1: Career incentives will be the predominant reason for selection of a college and major by the drop-out population.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that career incentives would be the predominant reason for selection of a college and major. The results of categorizing subject responses proved this hypothesis to be true. By summing up the first and the fourth reasons listed in Table 2, it was seen that

TABLE 2

Reason for Choice of College and Major

Reason	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
For job improvement	86	30.6
Interest in subject matter	77	27.4
No particular reason	31	11.0
New job possibilities	26	9.3
Previous course work in that area	20	7.1
Other	11	3.9
Seemed the best choice	10	3.6
Wanted specific courses	7	2.5
Not really sure	7	2.5
Temporary (a place to begin)	4	1.4
Aptitude test results	<u>2</u>	<u>0.7</u>
	281	100.0

112 out of 281 subjects or 39.9% identified "job improvement" or "new job possibilities" as their reason for selection of college and major. Since the purpose of a university curriculum is progression toward a degree rather than skill training, it was assumed that the subjects mentioned above had a long range commitment in mind when they started.

Negative and Positive Aspects of the Evening School

When asked what bad or negative things they would tell a friend about the Evening School, subjects made 325 responses. These responses are presented in Table 3.

Table 4 provides a consolidation of the negative aspects listed in Table 3. A total of nine new categories were formed. The "reduced category listing" number indicates which aspects fall into each new category.

When asked what good or positive things they would tell a friend about the Evening School, subjects made 453 responses. This was 128 more than negative responses. Interestingly enough, people who dropped out had more good than bad to say about the Evening School. This may be an indication that academic related reasons are not the cause for this attrition. The reported positive aspects are listed in Table 5.

Table 6 provides a consolidation of the positive aspects listed in Table 5. A total of six new categories

TABLE 3
Negative Aspects of Evening School

Negative Aspects	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing
None	81	1
Parking as a problem	45	2
*Scheduling (courses needed not offered)	52	3
Takes too long to get a degree in the evening	8	3
*Unable to get a degree in the evening	5	3
Hard to get in some classes (fill up too quickly)	4	3
Classes get cancelled	2	3
Poor instructors (in general)	8	4
Poor instructors (too many graduate students teaching)	8	4
Poor instructors (not qualified)	4	4
Poor instructors (foreign-- could not understand)	3	4
Hard to reach instructors out of class	3	4
Classes last too long	26	5
Inconvenient class times	8	5
Classes too large and impersonal	6	5

TABLE 3 (continued)

Negative Aspects	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing
Not enough time in labs	3	5
Computer lab time is hectic	2	5
Takes too long to commute to classes	5	6
Hard to find time to study when you work	4	6
Hard to find the classes (large campus)	2	6
Get home too late	1	6
Have to give up evenings	1	6
Campus is not safe at night	11	7
Registration is a hassle	4	7
Inadequate facilities	1	7
Hard to obtain I.D. cards	1	7
Hard to buy books	1	7
No place open at night to eat on campus	1	7
Poor advising (in general)	3	8
Hard to get in touch with advisors	3	8
No tutorial help available in evenings	1	8
Other (miscellaneous responses)	<u>18</u>	9
	325	

*All degree programs are not offered through the Evening School.

TABLE 4

Consolidated Negative Aspects of Evening School

New Category (Negative Aspects)	Number of References (Total)	Reduced Category Listing Numbers from Table 3
None	81	1
Parking	45	2
Scheduling problems	71	3
Quality of instructors	26	4
Class inconveniences	45	5
Personal inconveniences	13	6
University inconveniences	19	7
Advising (lack of)	7	8
Other (miscellaneous)	<u>18</u>	9
	325	

TABLE 5

Positive Aspects of Evening School

Positive Aspects	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing
None	32	1
Can work and still get an education	21	2
Good class scheduling	15	2
Time to study between classes	2	2
Wide range of course offerings	8	2
Short summer sessions	3	2
Longer sessions mean meeting only once a week	12	2
Courses scheduled off campus	4	2
Prefer to go to school in the evening rather than the day	12	2
Classes meet at convenient hours	12	2
Teachers interested in students (more personal attention)	41	3
Good professors and instructors	57	3
Small classes (more individual instruction)	36	3
Variety of ages in classes (students mature)	20	4
Relaxed class atmosphere	30	4
More serious students	16	4
Good classes (interaction)	19	4
Not a lot of busy work	5	4
Easy classes (accommodating to re-entry students)	13	4
Enjoyable classes	16	4
Good programs offered	3	5
Parking (plenty available)	17	5
Registration (easy and convenient)	24	5
Low cost	1	5
Evening School personnel helpful and accommodating	15	5
Publications (Beacon, Prism, etc.)	1	5
Other (miscellaneous responses)	18	6
	453	

TABLE 6

Consolidated Positive Aspects of Evening School

New Category (Positive Aspects)	Number of References (Total)	Reduced Category Listing Number From Table 5
None	32	1
Scheduling	89	2
Quality of instructors	134	3
Positive class comments	119	4
Positive University comments	61	5
Other (miscellaneous)	<u>18</u>	6
	453	

were formed. The "reduced category listing" indicates which aspects fall into each new category.

The subjects were not limited on the number of responses they could make, so comparing data is not appropriate. Yet, the request for both positive and negative information has provided interesting results. First, 81 subjects had nothing negative to say about the Evening School. This compared with only 32 subjects who made no positive comments about it. Some items were identified as negative by some subjects and as positive by others. For example, 45 subjects saw parking as a problem while 17 saw it in a positive way. Negative responses regarding scheduling totaled 71, while it was regarded as positive by 89 others. Perhaps the biggest spread is over quality of instructors. On the negative side, 26 subjects referred to instructor shortcomings. On the other hand, 134 subjects indicated positive reactions to instructors.

- HYPOTHESIS 2: The drop-out population will identify unexpected course content as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if unexpected course content was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Course Content Was Not What You Expected

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	265	94.3
Yes	<u>16</u>	<u>5.7</u>
	281	100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between unexpected course content and attrition. Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Although their intentions are good, students often register for course work they are unable to master, find uninteresting or unsuitable to their needs. Previous research on adult student attrition (Zahn, 1964) suggested that unexpected content was a major factor contributing to attrition. It was not true in this study. Data on page 67 revealed that only three subjects identified inappropriate course content as the reason they dropped out. In addition, according to Table 7, only 5.7% of the population considered it a contributing factor to their decision to discontinue.

HYPOTHESIS 3: The drop-out population will identify disappointment with instruction as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if disappointment with instruction was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8
Disappointment With Instruction

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	237	84.3
Yes	<u>44</u>	<u>15.7</u>
	281	100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between instruction and attrition. Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

Harrington (1977) and Bauer (1980) suggested that lack of dedicated faculty was a possible cause of adult student attrition. Tables 4 and 6 indicated that

quality of instruction was not a problem for Evening School students. Only 26 subjects voiced complaints about instructors (Table 4) while 134 responded positively toward instructors (Table 6). Four of 281 subjects said they stopped attending because they did not care for a particular instructor (page 67). In addition, only 15.7% of the subjects contacted reported that inadequate instruction was a contributing factor toward their decision to discontinue. Therefore, the data suggested that a large majority of Evening School students were not dropping out because of quality of instruction.

HYPOTHESIS 4: The drop-out population will identify lack of academic advising as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if lack of academic advising was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9
Lack of Academic Advising

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	246	87.5
Yes	<u>35</u>	<u>12.5</u>
	281	100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between lack of academic advising and attrition. Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

As shown above, the data collected in this study revealed that academic advising was not a key factor contributing to drop-out. Seven subjects volunteered negative comments regarding advising in Table 3. Only one subject reported they stopped attending because of no advising (see page 67). When asked if no help planning an educational program (advising) was a contributing factor in their decision to discontinue, 12.5% answered affirmatively (Table 9).

Yet, Pantages and Creedon (1978), Muskat (1979) and Tinto (1975) felt advising was a major factor in maintaining retention. Since it is not required, Evening School students are either receiving adequate advising from Evening School advisors, faculty and other students, or they are unaware that its absence is creating a problem for them. In any case, they did not identify it.

HYPOTHESIS 5: The drop-out population will identify unsatisfactory service from University support personnel as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if unsatisfactory service from University staff was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 10.

TABLE 10
Unsatisfactory Service from University Staff

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	273	97.2
Yes	<u>8</u>	<u>2.8</u>
	281	100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between unsatisfactory service from University staff and attrition. Hypothesis 5 was rejected.

Studies by Morstain and Smart (1974) and Harrington (1977) indicated that unreasonable and restrictive institutional policies coupled with insensitive staff promote attrition of adult students. The subjects contacted in this study, as shown in Table 10, overwhelmingly rejected this hypothesis. Out of 281

respondents, a mere 8 or 2.8% indicated unsatisfactory service as a contributing factor to non-continuation. Likewise in Table 3 (p. 51), only four subjects saw registration as a hassle while "inadequate facilities," "hard to obtain I.D. cards," "hard to buy books" and "no place open at night to eat on campus" were mentioned once each. On the other hand, in Table 5 (p. 54) 24 subjects commented that registration was "easy and convenient" and 15 pointed out that Evening School personnel were "helpful and accommodating." Two subjects identified "hassle" with their academic unit as the reason they dropped out (see page 67).

HYPOTHESIS 6: The drop-out population will identify time and effort in completing their educational goals as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if too much time or effort required to reach educational goals was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 11.

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between time or effort required to complete one's educational goals and attrition. Hypothesis 6 was rejected.

TABLE 11

Too Much Time or Effort Required to Reach Educational Goals

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	196	69.8
Yes	<u>85</u>	<u>30.2</u>
	281	100.0

Although the results from this hypothesis were not significant, they were in the anticipated direction. As shown by the data in Table 11, 30.2% of the subjects suggested too much time or effort was required to reach their educational goals. Reasons for discontinuance provided on page 67 indicated that 27 subjects dropped out because of time commitment. One subject specifically identified "too long to get a degree" as the reason for dropping out. Eight subjects referred to length of time required to get a degree in Table 3 (p. 51).

Recent research by Baumgart and Johnstone (1977), Truesdell (1975), Miller (1978) and Reehling (1980) showed that the amount of time and/or effort required to complete an educational program, even though intentions were initially good, had an effect on retention. Since the University curriculum is designed to progress toward an

undergraduate degree, adult students seeking a degree are faced with an 8- to 10-year commitment. This time frame is based on the assumption that adult students generally take only one or two courses per quarter. Their career, family and personal responsibilities have a restrictive effect on their educational opportunities. Therefore, when subjects identified such reasons as "work load too heavy," "academic problems," "unsure of educational goals" and "lack of interest" in the data on page 67, they may have, at least in part, been referring to the time and effort commitment.

HYPOTHESIS 7: The drop-out population will identify lack of study skills as a significant contributing factor to non-continuation.

When asked if a lack of study skills was a contributing factor to their discontinuance, most subjects responded negatively. Results are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12
Lack of Study Skills

	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
No	239	85.1
Yes	<u>42</u>	<u>14.9</u>
	281	100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between lack of study skills and attrition. Hypothesis 7 was rejected.

Houle (1961) suggested that lack of study skills often frustrated adult students when they attempted college level courses and therefore contributed to their attrition. He went so far as to recommend that colleges and universities be responsible for providing study skill courses for all adult students. Yet, in this study, only 14.9% of the subjects said that lack of study skills was a contributing factor in their decision to discontinue. No subject identified lack of study skills as the one reason for discontinuing.

Summary of Hypotheses 2 Through 7

Hypotheses 2 through 7 showed no significance between suggested academic related reasons and attrition. The observed value never approached the expected value. The hypothesis that generated the most positive responses concerned required time and effort to reach educational goals. Almost one-third of the subjects (30.2%) indicated that it was a contributing factor toward their dropping out. That may represent desire to acquire a degree rather than take a few specific courses. If that was the case, perhaps better scheduling of courses, along with personal contact and continuing support from Evening

School staff might prove valuable. The hypothesis that generated the least positive responses concerned dissatisfaction with University staff. Only 2.8% of the subjects indicated that unsatisfactory service was a contributing factor toward their dropping out.

Stated Reason for Discontinuance

Demographic variables and stated reasons for discontinuance are provided in this section. As a preliminary step, the stated reasons are presented and then categorized in Tables 13 and 14.

HYPOTHESIS 8: The drop-out population will vary significantly by age and reasons for non-continuation.

The variable age was measured against the stated reason for discontinuance to determine if it was significant. The drop-out population was divided into five age groups. They were: 18-21, 22-25, 26-29, 30-33, and older than 33. According to Cross (1982), "In almost all surveys, both interest and participation in education start to decline in the early 30's . . . (p. 57). On this basis, the number of categories and spread within each was kept small. The results are presented in Table 15.

TABLE 13

Expressed Reasons for Discontinuance

Reason	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing
Work schedule conflicts	39	1
Work load too heavy	11	1
Do not have time	22	2
Not enough time for job, school and family	5	2
Take too long to get a degree	1	3
*Could not get courses needed in a particular college to finish a degree in Evening School	22	3
Not enough variety of classes	4	3
Inconvenient	3	4
Too far to drive	4	4
Do not like to go at night	2	4
Dissatisfied with course content	3	4
Personal reasons (general)	17	4
Had a baby	12	4
Poor health	4	4
Cost	13	5
Did not like a particular instructor	4	5
Parking	1	5
Lack of advising	1	5
Safety at night	1	5
Hassle from academic unit	2	5
Academic problems	1	6
Unsure of educational goals	9	6
Lack of interest	16	6
Went on to take day classes	23	7
Graduated	15	7
Completed specific course(s) needed or desired	28	7
Transferred to another school	7	7
VA benefits ran out	2	8
Moved	3	8
World's Fair too close to campus	1	8
	281	

*All degree programs are not offered through the Evening School.

TABLE 14
Consolidated Reasons for Discontinuance

Reason	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing From Table 13
Conflict with job	50	1
Time conflicts	27	2
Scheduling problems	32	3
Personal inconveniences	45	4
University caused inconveniences	22	5
Personal motivations	26	6
Graduated or transferred	73	7
Other	<u>6</u>	8
	281	

TABLE 15
Drop-outs By Age

Reason for Discontinuing	18-21 Years		22-25 Years		26-29 Years		30-33 Years		Older Than 33 Years	
	Absolute	Frequency Relative (%)	Absolute	Frequency Relative (%)	Absolute	Frequency Relative (%)	Absolute	Frequency Relative (%)	Absolute	Frequency Relative (%)
Conflict with job	5	12.8	13	18.1	8	17.8	9	22.0	15	19.4
Time conflict	3	7.7	8	11.1	4	8.9	3	7.3	7	9.1
Scheduling problems	3	7.7	10	13.9	4	8.9	5	12.2	8	10.4
Personal inconvenience	1	2.6	10	13.9	11	24.4	9	22.0	14	18.2
University-caused inconvenience	3	7.7	4	5.5	7	15.6	3	7.3	5	6.5
Personal motivation	5	12.8	9	12.5	1	2.2	6	14.6	4	5.2
Graduated or transferred	16	41.0	18	25.0	10	22.2	4	9.7	23	29.9
Other	3	7.7	0	—	0	—	2	4.9	1	1.3
	39	100.0	72	100.0	45	100.0	41	100.0	77	100.0
Relative frequency/column		14.2		26.3		16.4		15.0		28.1 100.0

Subjects were not asked their age. The age variable was acquired from University records. In seven cases age information was not available. Therefore, a total of 274 rather than 281 responses were reported.

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between age of drop-out and stated reason for discontinuance. Hypothesis 8 was rejected.

The results of Table 15 showed that the greatest number of the drop-out population came from the 34 year old and older group. This is not necessarily in contradiction to what Cross (1982) stated. The oldest person contacted in this study was 64 years old. The age span of the last category, therefore, was 30 years. Although this category produced 77 subjects, it was interesting to note that the 22-25 year old category produced 72 subjects. The other three categories were relatively close, ranging from 39 in the 18-21 year old group to 45 in the 26-29 year old group.

The 18-21 year old group showed the highest number of subjects who graduated or transferred. A total of 16 out of 39 or 41% listed graduated or transferred as the reason they discontinued going to Evening School. Since adult students generally take more than 4 years to graduate, it must be assumed that these students transferred either

to day school or another institution, or completed specific courses they desired. Twenty-five percent of the 22-25 year old age group said they had transferred, graduated or completed specific course work and 29.9% of the 34 years or older group responded similarly. The 30-33 year old age group showed the lowest percentage of "graduated or transferred" at 9.8%.

Only one subject in 39 or 2.6% of the 18-21 year old age group listed personal inconvenience as the reason they discontinued. This jumped to 13.9% for the next lowest group which was the 22-25 year old group. The 26-29 year old group identified personal inconvenience most often at 24.4%. The habit of recent high school attendance and lack of restrictive family commitments, simply because of age, may be the reasons why the 18-21 year old age group failed to identify personal inconvenience.

HYPOTHESIS 9: The drop-out population will vary significantly by marital status and reasons for non-continuation.

The variable, marital status, was measured against the stated reason for discontinuance to determine if it was significant. The results are presented in Table 16.

TABLE 16

Drop-outs by Marital Status

Reason for Discontinuing	Marital Status			
	Single		Married	
	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)
Conflict with job	24	17.9	26	17.7
Time conflicts	16	11.9	11	7.5
Scheduling problems	12	9.0	20	13.6
Personal inconvenience	13	9.7	32	21.7
University-caused inconvenience	15	11.2	7	4.8
Personal motivation	14	10.4	12	8.2
Graduated or transferred	36	26.9	37	25.2
Other	4	3.0	2	1.3
	134	100.0	147	100.0
Relative frequency/column		47.7		52.3
				100.0

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was a significant difference at the 0.05 level between marital status and stated reasons for discontinuance. Hypothesis 9 could not be rejected.

The number of married versus single subjects contacted was reasonably close. Of 281 subjects, 134 or 47.7% were single while 147 or 52.3% were married. The reason "personal inconvenience" provided the largest spread between single and married subjects (Table 16). Only 9.7% of the single subjects listed personal inconvenience as the reason they discontinued while 21.7% of the married subjects listed it. Family obligations evidently created significantly more personal inconvenience, and they were serious enough to promote attrition. On the other hand, 11.2% of the single subjects identified University-caused inconvenience as the reason they stopped attending. This was countered by only 4.8% from the married subjects. It seemed, therefore, if married subjects could deal with personal difficulties, they were not deterred from attending by University-caused inconvenience.

The other reasons for discontinuing produced less of a spread. The categories of "conflict with job," "personal motivation" and "graduated or transferred" were very close. Time conflicts was identified by 11.9% of the single subjects and 7.5% by the married subjects

as a reason. The "scheduling problems" category generated only a 4.6% difference between single and married subjects.

The significance generated by this hypothesis centered on the differences between single and married subjects and the two reasons, personal and University-caused inconvenience. Personal inconvenience provides a dilemma for researchers attempting to reduce adult student attrition. Its most helpful attribute may be realizing its existence.

HYPOTHESIS 10: The drop-out population will vary significantly by college affiliation and reasons for non-continuation.

The variable, college affiliation, was measured against the stated reason for discontinuance to determine if it was significant. In three cases, subjects did not know their college or major. Therefore, a total of 278 rather than 281 responses were reported. No subjects from agriculture or architecture were included in the 281 contacted. The results are presented in Table 17.

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between college affiliation and stated reasons for discontinuance. Hypothesis 10 was rejected.

Of the data presented in Table 17, with the exception of the Unclassified, Communications and Nursing categories, "graduated or transferred" was most often given as the reason for discontinuing by the subjects contacted. All students must be affiliated with a college in order to graduate, hence, that "reason" should be low for the Unclassified category. Since the Communications category produced only five subjects, results presented were deceiving. For example, two subjects made up the highest category while one made up the lowest. Nursing, with 16 subjects, showed 18.7% graduated or transferred and 31.2% who identified personal inconvenience. Again, because of low number of subjects, the spread between these two categories was only two.

Conflict with job ranked high across all categories. It ranked second with Business, Liberal Arts and Unclassified, and it was third most often identified by Engineering and Education subjects.

Personal inconvenience was relatively consistent across all college affiliation categories with the exception of Nursing. Scheduling problems were identified by 20.6% of the Engineering subjects. Since only a limited number of engineering courses are available in the evening, that result was not surprising. From the data presented, it was concluded that college affiliation did not provide an explanation for attrition.

TABLE 17

Drop-outs by College Affiliation

Reason for Discontinuing	Business		Communications		Education		College Affiliation		Liberal Arts		Nursing		Unclassified	
	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)	Absolute	Relative (%)
Conflict with job	16	19.0	2	40.0	3	9.1	4	11.8	8	15.4	2	12.5	14	28.6
Time conflict	12	14.3	0		3	9.1	2	5.9	5	9.6	0		5	10.2
Scheduling problems	8	9.5	1	20.0	2	6.1	7	20.6	4	7.7	1	6.3	7	14.4
Personal inconvenience	14	16.7	1	20.0	4	12.1	5	14.7	7	13.5	5	31.2	8	16.3
University-caused inconvenience	4	4.8	0		1	3.0	3	8.8	7	13.5	4	25.0	2	4.1
Personal motivation	8	9.5	0		4	12.1	1	2.9	6	11.5	1	6.3	6	12.2
Graduated or transferred	21	25.0	1	20.0	15	45.5	10	29.4	14	26.9	3	18.7	6	12.2
Other	1	1.2	0		1	3.0	2	5.9	1	1.9	0		1	2.0
	84	100.0	5	100.0	33	100.0	34	100.0	52	100.0	16	100.0	49	100.0
relative frequency/column	30.2		1.8		11.9		12.2		18.7		5.8		17.6	

HYPOTHESIS 11: The drop-out population will vary significantly by prior University attendance and reasons for non-continuation.

The variable, University longevity, was measured against the stated reason for discontinuance to determine if it was significant. The results are presented in Table 18.

Utilizing the Chi Square test, there was a significant difference at the 0.05 level between University longevity and stated reason for discontinuance. Hypothesis 11 could not be rejected.

This hypothesis, possibly more than any other, produced usable data. First, and perhaps most important, 44.5% of the subjects contacted had been attending the University for 1 year or less. The drop-out rate was alarmingly high for that group. No one reason for discontinuance stood out well above the others for this group. The high was 19.2% for personal inconvenience and the low, excluding "other" category, was 6.4% for University-caused inconvenience.

Subjects who had attended the University from 1 to 2 years prior to Fall quarter 1980 made up only 15.7% of the drop-out population. This decreased to 7.1% for the subjects who had 2 to 3 years longevity with the University. The group making up the "more than 3 years" category jumped

TABLE 18
Drop-outs by University Longevity

[illegible]

to 32.7%. A portion of this increase was, without a doubt, due to graduation. The most frequently reported reason for discontinuing from this group was "graduated or transferred." It seems reasonable to believe that subjects who had attended the University for more than 3 years would have the highest graduation rate. That rate was 34.8%. The 1 year or less subjects had an 18.4% rate in the graduated or transferred category. Although this rate was high, it was still less than half the "more than 3 year group." Without question, an abnormally high number of drop-outs occurred with new students. The relatively homogenous distribution of reasons for discontinuance by this group suggested high vulnerability to attrition simply on the basis of University longevity.

Individual reasons within longevity groups provided some indication of the effect of University longevity on drop-outs. A problem existed in comparing data, however, since the group totals varied appreciably. The 1 to 2 years group identified graduated or transferred (at 31.8%) as the most common reason for discontinuing. That was followed by 22.8% for conflict with job. The least expressed reason reported by this group was 2.3% for scheduling problems.

The group with 2 to 3 years University longevity showed a 20% graduated or transferred rate. The most frequently reported reason for discontinuance by this

group was scheduling problems at 30%. Considering that subjects in this group may have needed upper division courses, which are less frequently offered in the evening, it is reasonable to understand the ranking of scheduling problems. It should be considered, however, that because of the group size, a difference of only two subjects produced a 10% change.

The last group, "more than 3 years," had the second highest number of subjects at 92. As mentioned previously, 32 (34.8%) of the subjects reported that they discontinued because of graduation or transfer. Conflict with job was second highest at 18.5% followed closely by personal inconvenience at 15.2%.

Summary of Hypotheses 8 through 11

The Chi Square test showed both hypotheses 9 and 11 to be significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the segregation that was produced within those two categories suggested further investigation.

Secondary Reasons for Discontinuing

The responses to question eight, secondary reasons for discontinuing, are presented and categorized in Tables 19 and 20. A total of 20 different responses were provided. Since the overwhelming majority fell into one

TABLE 19
Secondary Reasons for Dropping Out

Reason	Number of References	Reduced Category Listing
None	218	1
Cost	13	2
Did not offer course needed	9	2
Take too long to get a degree	2	2
Parking problems	3	2
Did not get a schedule of classes	1	2
Dissatisfied with instructor	1	2
Dissatisfied with course	1	2
Could not get help with courses	1	2
Too busy (no time)	9	3
Personal reasons	8	3
Commuting took too long	3	3
Lost interest	4	3
Switched to day classes	2	3
Unsure of educational goal	2	3
Switched schools	1	3
Time conflict with work	1	3
Worried about World's Fair effect on parking	1	3
Prefer day classes	<u>1</u>	3
	281	

TABLE 20

Consolidated Secondary Reasons for Dropping Out

New Category (Secondary Reasons)	Number of References (Total)	Reduced Category Listing Number From Table 19
None	218	1
University related reasons	31	2
Personal reasons	<u>32</u>	3
	281	

category, a grouping of only three final categories was prepared. Initial responses are presented in Table 19 and consolidated categories in Table 20. The data retrieved in question eight indicated that the subjects had previously expressed their reasons for discontinuing.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was performed to identify and investigate specific causes of attrition of a selected group of Evening School subjects. A telephone interview coupled with a specially prepared questionnaire was used to collect the data. The purpose of the questionnaire was threefold. First was to permit an exploration of reasons why the subjects selected particular colleges and majors. Second was to investigate if specific academic related reasons contributed to attrition. Third was to examine chosen demographic data and their relationship to attrition.

Telephone interviews utilizing the questionnaire were performed by six Evening School employees. Each interviewer received substantial training. Of the 615 possible subjects, 296 were contacted. Fifteen of those contacted declined to participate. Part one of the questionnaire provided information about the subjects' educational goals and perceptions of the Evening School. Part two determined whether reasons identified by previous researchers contributed to subjects' attrition (Houle, 1964; Zahn, 1964; Tinto, 1975; Truesdell, 1975; Baumgart

and Johnstone, 1977; Harrington, 1977; Miller, 1978; Pantages and Creedon, 1978; Muskat, 1979; Bauer, 1980; Reehling, 1980). Part three examined the effect of selected demographic data such as age, marital status, college affiliation and University longevity on attrition. Eleven hypotheses were constructed to evaluate the data generated by the questionnaire.

Findings

The principle findings of this research follow.

1. Career incentives were most often identified as reasons for selection of college and major.
2. Positive aspects of the Evening School generated more responses from subjects than did negative aspects. Therefore, detection of causes for attrition was limited.
3. No one academic related reason was significantly identified as a contributing cause of attrition. Time and effort required to reach an educational goal was, however, identified more often than any other.
4. Single and married subjects varied significantly in their expressed reasons for discontinuance.
5. Differences in University longevity proved to have significant effect on attrition. Subjects with one year or less University longevity dropped out at an abnormally high rate when compared to other subjects.

6. College affiliation and age had no significant effect on expressed reasons for discontinuance.

7. An overwhelming majority of the subjects (218 of 281) failed to identify secondary reasons for dropping out.

Conclusions

This study provided the following conclusions:

1. The subjects contacted were able to, without any difficulty, identify the reason they decided to discontinue attending the Evening School. No one contacted said he/she was not certain or did not know. It was assumed, therefore, that the decision to discontinue carried a degree of importance with the subjects.

2. Of the 281 subjects who participated, 73 or 25.9% indicated they discontinued because they had graduated, completed courses they were interested in, went to day school or transferred to another institution. Those subjects presented an optimistic picture. They have or are in the process of completing their immediate educational goals.

3. Although only 12.5% of the subjects contacted said that lack of academic advising was a contributing factor in their discontinuance, the drop-out dilemma presents unique situations that cloud the total picture. Just as the subjects that graduated or transferred

could hardly be classified as drop-outs, other issues, likewise, disguise the drop-out problem. For example, how can subjects determine the value of a service (advising) unless that service was guaranteed to each subject? The point is, if the subjects did not receive that already available service, how did they know that lack of that service did not affect their decision to discontinue? Tinto (1975), Pantages and Creedon (1978) and Muskat (1979) felt that advising was critical to matriculation. Tinto's (1975) "social integration" theorized that student interaction with faculty, support personnel, administrators and peers, as well as participation in semi-formal extracurricular activities, would influence how each evaluated the costs and benefits of attendance. If "social integration" took place with the subjects in this study, it was self generated.

4. The first hypothesis indicated that career incentives were the reason many subjects selected a college and major. Since the University provides a curriculum geared toward completion of a degree rather than providing skill training, anything less than graduation or transfer may be considered as failure of the subject to reach an academic goal.

5. The ninth hypothesis showed significance between single and married subjects and reason for discontinuance. Excluding the graduated or transferred category, married

subjects identified personal inconvenience as the primary reason why they discontinued. Single subjects identified University-caused inconvenience more often than married subjects (Table 16, p. 72).

6. The eleventh hypothesis indicated significance between University longevity and reason for discontinuance. The subjects with one year or less longevity dropped out at an abnormally high rate compared to other subjects. It should be mentioned, also, that no one reason in particular stood well in front of others as causing discontinuance (Table 18, p. 78).

7. A main conclusion to be considered is that although the subjects identified specifically why they discontinued, the solution to the attrition problem goes beyond simple remedies or "writing off" subjects who have restrictive family or career responsibilities. Researchers such as Knox and Sjogren (1965), Bhalngor (1975) and Dicken (1981) suggested adult students drop out for a variety of reasons. Perhaps it may be more accurate to say that they drop out for intermingled reasons.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations were offered:

1. Beginning Fall Quarter, 1983, all students with one year or less University longevity should be

divided among the Evening School advising staff. The individual advisor will contact each of his/her advisees, by phone or in person, three times per quarter for one academic year. The purpose of each contact will be to promote retention and to assist the student in identifying and solving problems which inhibit successful completion of educational goals.

2. Advisors should promote entry level courses, when appropriate, that will assist adult students in acquiring basic skills and in familiarizing themselves with the University. Two such courses are University Studies 1000 and Educational and Counseling Psychology 2210. Topics covered by these courses include: academic and career planning, values clarification, history of higher education, development of communication skills, enhancement of self concept, effective study methods and reading skills.

3. An Evening School student association should be formed and promoted. The emphasis of the association would be to provide opportunities for interaction among Evening School students and promotion of peer counseling.

4. A follow-up study should be conducted on the subjects identified in item one. The rate of attrition in this group should be determined and those that dropped out should be surveyed to determine if and how abortive action could have been taken.

5. A replication of this study might be performed at other public/urban universities to determine similarities and differences among adult student drop-outs.

6. A study similar to this research should be performed on a sample of Evening School persisters to identify what factors contribute to their retention and continuation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introductory remarks describing this study and a request for cooperation.

You registered with the Evening School Fall Quarter, 1980, but did not register again through Fall Quarter, 1981. Did any of the following reasons influence your decision to not continue taking classes?

- A. Course content not what you expected (read definition).
- B. Lack of adequate study skills (read definition).
- C. Attainment of education goals seemed unreasonable (read definition).
- D. Displeasure with instructor (read definition).
- E. No academic advising (read definition).
- F. Frustration with the University system (read definition).
- G. If none of the above reasons were applicable, why did you decide to discontinue taking courses through the Evening School?

Your college and major were _____.
Why did you choose them and were you satisfied with your choice:

How long had you been attending the Evening School before Fall Quarter, 1980?

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

The following is a list of definitions used in the questionnaire.

Course content not what you expected:

The material covered in the course(s) did not meet your expectations.

Lack of study skills:

You did not have the study skills you felt you needed to successfully handle the course work.

Attainment of educational goals seemed unreasonable:

Your initial educational goal seemed to be out of reach at the present time.

Displeasure with the instructor:

You felt that the instructor(s) did not responsibly perform his/her teaching obligation.

No academic advising:

You did not have the opportunity to talk to someone you felt knowledgeable enough to help you plan your educational program.

Frustration with the University system:

You experienced unsatisfactory service from some University personnel that influenced your decision to discontinue taking courses.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from The University of Tennessee Evening School. We are trying to identify some changes we might make so as to better serve our students. As a former student, would you be willing to answer a few questions for us?

1. What was your college and major? (Give example if needed.)

2. Why did you choose that college and major?

3. If you had a friend starting to attend the Evening School, what negative (bad) things would you tell him or her to expect?

4. What positive (good) things would you tell him or her to expect?

5. You last registered with the Evening School Fall Quarter, 1980. How long had you gone to U.T. before that quarter?

1 year or less
1 to 2 years
2 to 3 years
More than 3 years

6. Why did you discontinue taking courses with the Evening School from Fall 1980 through Fall 1981?
7. Did any of the following reasons influence your decision to stop taking courses?
 - a. The course work wasn't what you expected
 - b. You were disappointed with your instructor's teaching
 - c. No one at U.T. helped you plan your educational program
 - d. You received unsatisfactory service from University personnel
 - e. Your educational goal would take too much time or effort
 - f. Your study skills need to be upgraded
8. Were there any other reasons you decided to stop attending the Evening School?

Thank you for your participation. Goodbye.

VITA

Thomas R. Ayers was born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. He graduated from McKeesport High School in 1952. From 1952 to 1968 he worked as a technician for Westinghouse Research and U. S. Steel Research in Pennsylvania. In 1968 he was employed by the College of Engineering at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In 1975 he transferred to the Division of Continuing Education at the same institution where he is currently employed as an assistant director with the Evening School.

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