

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL /S OCIAL COSTS AND
BENEFITS

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This mixed-methods study was designed to investigate how adults who did not finish high school and are now enrolled in an adult basic education program integrated this educational program into their everyday lives. Its purpose was to analyze how such integration distinguished those who persisted in the program from those who withdrew within the first six weeks of participation. Expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 1998; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) suggested that students' perceptions of costs and benefits about returning to school would affect expectations and values about remaining in the program. Anticipated and perceived benefits and costs of returning to school were operationalized as goal content in accordance with the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987, Ford 1992). Using a goal content perspective, multiple goal theory (Ford, 1992; Wentzel, 2000) further framed students' participation in school as the coordination of personal/social goals.

Subjects were adults over the age of 25 in a self-paced, GED program, recruited from June 2003 to March 2004 by permission of the Department of Adult Education in a rural community college. Four interviews conducted at approximately 10-day to 2-week intervals revealed that while adults pursuing basic education typically returned to school with long-term expectations, they sustained participation in accordance with finding specific kinds of short-term benefits.

This study raised new considerations regarding the constructs of expectations and the subjective value of cost. Expectations may have distinct kinds of influence upon values when they are perceived as modifiable or not, and whether they are met or unmet. Not meeting negative expectations may influence values distinctly from meeting positive expectations. This study expanded upon the definition of the overall value of cost by considering how it is affected by short-term costs, and how the relationship between short-term benefits and short-term costs influences ability-related beliefs. The short-term benefits associated with persistence seemed less related to long-term expectations than to the experiential contexts that incurred perceptions of short-term costs. This finding highlights the cognitive nature of the costs that affect expectations and valuation. It also corroborates the claim from multiple goal theory (Ford, 1992; Wentzel, 2000) that goals must find compatibility with the personal and social contexts within which they are constructed in order to become stable within a person's overall goal framework.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF PERSONAL/SOCIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

by

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Some educators consider attrition to be the number one problem in adult basic education (ABE) programs, and the highest attrition typically occurs within the first three to five weeks of enrollment. Students who persist are frequently contrasted to students who withdraw not only by previous school experiences and educational practices, but also by differences between expectations and reality, and social integration. The bulk of literature on adult education addresses social integration as it occurs inside the classroom.

Yet, a number of qualitative studies since the mid-80's address factors external to the classroom that affect persistence within the crucial, three-to-five period that defines *early withdrawal*. These studies indicate that external influences are not merely financial and logistic in nature, but include personal and social factors. Difficulties of time management, feelings of self-consciousness, and regrets for sacrificing family time are experienced by students who persist as well as those who withdraw. The commonality of these difficulties raises the question of whether persistence and withdrawal can be distinguished by how students come to tolerate or accommodate such challenges.

Furthermore, the students' perspective can reveal a different logic about the meaning of withdrawal than educators and program administrators typically report. While ABE programs refer to withdrawal as "drop out," this study sought to illuminate issues related to repeated withdrawal by students who suspend attendance as part of a cycle of withdrawal and returning, which researchers call "stop out." The pursuit of education may not be in the best interests of every basic education student if on a personal/social level the costs are too high or the immediate benefits are unsatisfactory. On the other hand,

such costs may be tolerable within a series of short doses, which could be part of the underlying rationale for people who engage in regular stop out for incremental progress toward the GED.

Nature of the Study

I approached this study pragmatically, which Creswell (2002) and Patton (1990) define as problem-centered and consequence-oriented. These authors convey the importance of focusing on the research problem and then finding strategies to derive knowledge about it from a variety of methods. In accordance with this perspective, I deemed a mixed-methods design to be appropriate for my inquiry - that is, a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies, for the flexibility of capturing students' own meanings and the structure of measuring the preponderance of those meanings. What follows is my focus on the problem and how I derived my research strategy.

Essentially I saw the students' subjective experience at the center of the study – how they understood themselves and negotiated their everyday lives in returning to school. This view highlighted the emic (insider) versus etic (outsider) distinction that frames qualitative research. Students who withdraw may not devalue education per se, but only as it compares to other meanings within their systems of beliefs. My goal was to find the kinds of give and take that could make the pursuit of education more compatible with those systems. Finding this compatibility would uncover another layer of information than is currently available in addressing circumstantial obstacles to ABE like time or financial costs, transportation, child-care, etc., by including internal parameters with personal and social bases. Specifically, my study acknowledged that a student's reason(s) for withdrawal may not have been because she couldn't overcome a particular

obstacle, but that she chose not to, in light of concurrent priorities and perceived trade-offs.

This subjective experience of students' concurrent priorities and perceived trade-offs is what I wished to investigate. In order to describe these, I used a two-part theoretical framework: expectancy-value theory and multiple goal theory from a goal content perspective. Expectancy-value theory (Eccles-Parsons et al. 1983; Wigfield and Eccles, 1992, 2000) deems that benefits and costs are precursors to the expectations and values that determine a person's choice, effort, and persistence with a task. Research that utilizes the content aspect of goals (Ford, 1992; Wentzel, 2000) promotes discussion of what students are attempting to achieve within their coordination of multiple goals. Operationalizing benefits and costs with respect to goal content, as what students seek to achieve and to avoid, is one way to analyze priorities and trade-offs. I did not collect separate qualitative and quantitative data, as would a sequential study, but collected it at one time and then interpreted it both quantitatively and qualitatively in the results. This is, therefore, a concurrent, mixed-methods study.

For informants to negotiate their own meanings of benefits and costs, and for me to produce a qualitative description of benefits and costs that distinguished persistence from withdrawal, I clearly needed a qualitative approach to data collection with open-ended questions. What also lent the data to quantitative methods was that early withdrawal meant investigating a short-term event, six weeks, across a broad number of informants, almost two dozen, interviewed up to four times each (these criteria will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3). This number of informants suggested a large and diverse number of benefits and costs. To make these manageable, informants' responses

were nested within a predetermined set of code categories as a template, a taxonomy designed to cover the full range of content within people's goals. This was the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992), details of which will be discussed in the next two chapters. In addition, numeric assessment would sharply identify preponderances of different types of benefits and costs, which equated to subsets of goals within the taxonomy. Furthermore, retrospective ratings of interest could be correlated to attendance patterns and the number of benefits that had been qualitatively derived. In summary, analyses were both qualitative, to describe the relationship of specific benefits and costs to persistence and withdrawal, and quantitative, to measure the preponderance of goal subsets and the correlation of interest to attendance and perceived benefits.

Purpose of the Study

In an effort to shed light on early withdrawal from ABE programs, this concurrent, mixed-methods study investigated the benefits and costs that students initially expected and subsequently perceived during the first six weeks of returning to school. Benefits and costs were defined as cognitive representations of what informants sought to achieve and avoid as they attempted to integrate school into their daily lives. Such cognitive representations constitute goal content (Austin & Vancouver, 1996), and the benefits and costs that emerged from semi-structured interviews were coded in accordance with the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals, (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992), which was designed to cover the full range of content within people's goals.

Coded responses to open-ended questions were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, to distinguish the benefits and costs experienced by students who persisted

for six weeks from those experienced by those who withdrew. Percentages of informants in categories of goals were tabulated to uncover preponderances for certain kinds of goals among persisters and withdrawers. Specific goal consequences within those categories were examined for a qualitative description of benefits and costs associated with persistence or withdrawal. With regard to students who persisted through the six weeks of the study, a retrospective assessment of their interest was correlated to both short-term (six weeks) and long-term (eight months) attendance, as well as the number of benefits that were associated with persistence.

Research questions

Research questions are:

1. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students expect at the beginning of a program?
2. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students perceive after they begin a program?
3. How/Do differences between these expected and perceived costs and benefits differ between students who persist and students who withdraw within the first six weeks of participation?

Theoretical Overview

This study drew from expectancy-value theory, which has roots in adult education literature, and multiple goal theory, which addresses the coordination of personal and social goals. Modern expectancy-value theory (Eccles-Parsons et al. 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) explains that students' choice, effort, and persistence are determined by their expectations for a task, and the values they place on it. Expectations within this study are not about the student's ability to succeed at school per se, but about the effect of

school upon one's everyday life and being able to sustain participation. Expectancy-value theorists define four types of subjective task values: interest, importance, utility, and cost. Cost is the negative trade-off associated with having to forego some other goal(s) in order to pursue the one under consideration. Changes in a student's expectations and subjective task values may cause her to reprioritize her goals relative to one another.

Cost is the most understudied aspect of value. Cost is thought to mediate changes in goal priority when a person has difficulty accommodating experience to expectations. So studying students' accommodation of cost in returning to school could elucidate its role in the subsequent adjustment of expectations and other, positive subjective task values. Of particular value would be finding whether cost precedes changes in other subjective values, develops after changes in them, or occurs with no change in them at all.

Yet, considering costs without also considering benefits would be naive. Early withdrawal could occur less from the presence of a cost, and more from the absence of a benefit – especially if that benefit was initially within the student's expectations. Benefits and costs are deemed antecedents to expectations and subjective task values. Therefore, expectancy-value theory provided the conceptual design of this study but did not limit the direction it took.

Using a goal content perspective to determine what people want to occur, benefits and costs were conceptualized as desired and undesired consequences that students returning to school wish to achieve and to avoid. These are summarized in the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992). This taxonomy provided a framework to code benefits and costs, from which to compare anticipated

outcomes and perceived outcomes. The categories of goals in this taxonomy include what people seek within themselves as well as within their relationships with other people.

In this manner, multiple goal theory also had a role in this study. Ford (1992) theorized that goals will only be sustained if people can coordinate them with other goals across the contexts within which they are defined. People define goals idiosyncratically but necessarily within particular contexts. The ability to coordinate them requires finding ongoing behavior that is compatible within those contexts. This means a new goal must be accommodated to previous experience in order to be integrated into a person's overall framework of goals.

Wentzel's (2000) work with multiple goal theory suggested three ways that goals might be coordinated. A *one-dimensional* relationship among goals would show previous orientations to self or the social environment as primary and therefore returning to school would be fully subordinate to the satisfaction of those orientations. The *complementary* model would indicate that goals reside in different contexts and are not sought concurrently, so that there would be less likelihood of conflict between personal/social goals and the school goal. The *hierarchical* model would reflect reciprocity among goals that are idiosyncratically linked according to personal priorities and belief systems.

Significance of the Study

Quigley (1997) reports that even though only approximately two percent of eligible adults participate in ABE literacy classes, the enrollment of many programs has increased to the upper limits of their resources. As many as one-fourth to one-third of undergraduate students today are estimated to have had developmental or remedial literacy courses within vocational, two-year and four-year colleges (Snow & Strucker,

2000). As colleges and universities scale back on their developmental and remedial courses, the demand for ABE literacy courses can be expected to increase.

Retention in basic education programs has become a serious priority at a time when the need for adult literacy may be greater than at any other in our history. After World War II, new federal policies and lowered admission standards increased access to post-secondary education and drove greater numbers of adults to improve fundamental skills. Since then, too, rapid changes in technology have been seen to affect nearly every occupational domain. The work-world landscape is being modified from the handling of things to the production of information (Cross, 1981).

Tracy-Mumford (2000) outlines a number of social changes that also impact adult basic education. Adults dominate the U.S. population at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Adults are demonstrating a greater tendency to seek second careers during middle age and engage in lifelong learning. Equal opportunity and the changing roles of women have continued to increase the numbers of adults engaging in education.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Education reported over 4 million adult learners enrolled in programs federally monitored by the Adult Education Act (Tracy-Mumford, 2000). The one million people wait-listed was deemed to be lower than the actual number of hopeful students, because some states do not utilize wait lists. Of those enrolled, 38% were estimated to be ABE students. Tracy-Mumford targets the native, English-speaking population 16 years or older that qualifies for basic literacy services at 15 million, of whom roughly one-third are estimated to read at 3 GE or lower.

Some studies discriminate noncompletion by those who withdraw early in a program from those who remain longer before leaving. Mezirow et al. (1975) found 40%

of ABE teachers surveyed reported attrition within the first five weeks at 10-20% and another 17% of teachers reported it at 25-49%. More recently, the dropout rate before the first 12 hours of instruction has been estimated at 18% and projected to one-third by the end of the first three weeks, constituting the majority of those labeled “at-risk,” meaning those students who have a greater likelihood to withdraw due to deficits in study skills and negative carry-over from previous school experiences (Perin & Greenberg, 1994; Quigley, 1992). More recently still, Reder & Strawn (2001) report that 22% of learners stop participating before completing 12 hours in a single program. Early withdrawal presents itself as a significant and chronic phenomenon.

Reasons for withdrawal are discussed in Chapter 2. They are notoriously difficult to obtain and frequently suspect. The motivational factors that influence recruitment and retention often overlap and are largely reported in adult education conferences as “barriers” in terms of educational systems, personal circumstances, or attitudes and disposition toward school. Of note is that personal circumstances are defined by external factors such as transportation, course cost, day care arrangements, etc. I believe we need a closer examination of internal and social elements that underlie and elaborate situational and circumstantial influences.

Of secondary importance was whether withdrawal was perceived to be temporary or permanent, and contingent upon what issues. This information was expected to help define the forfeited student goal as decidedly negative, a positive one that is simply unlikely to become realized, or one whose positive/negative construal sees cost to fluctuate and permit intermittent periods of student engagement. The findings of this

study might show that minimizing the cost of effort may lie less in outward preparations than in the ability to integrate school with personal meanings or social interactions.

Guidelines

To understand the focus of this study, some parameters need to be clarified. First is that this study was conducted with regard to formal education. “Formal” herein refers to a programmatic framework which labels the learner as a “student,” entails some period of study or practice with prepared materials not of the student’s choosing, defers to teachers as arbiters of skill and knowledge, and uses tests which must be passed in order to proceed from one level of activity to another. I posited this in contrast to tutored or other educational situations that do not involve studying per se, standardized performance evaluations, and the typical conceptualization of “school,” in order to capture an informant’s sense of “returning to school.”

Some adults return to basic education with the sole academic weakness of math, which they often have simply forgotten from lack of use. These students may not require much time to reach the level of competence they need to attain their GED. Students with literacy deficiencies, however, and especially with regard to expository text, will usually have to remain in school longer to attain competence that will enable them to not only pass the reading and writing portions of the GED, but also science and social studies. In order to study persistence with students who face prolonged engagement to reach their goals, I chose adults who entered the Department of Adult Education with literacy skills, either reading or writing, at the lower level of General Education Development instruction. Pertinent to the study is that low-literate adults sometimes face unique social

challenges when they return to school. Discussion of these social challenges is reserved for Chapter 2.

Basic education for adults is generally found in programs of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED). These have distinct derivations and, as shall be revealed shortly, a definitive educational boundary, although in practice their boundary often blurs. Programs labeled ABE and GED sometimes move the enrollment bar into each other's territories, and students themselves often straddle the bar by having competencies on both sides of the line. Therefore, the following definitions are not hard and fast. The literature review shall include students who fall into both categories, although this study targeted students who fell into the ABE category, with a secondary focus that they did so by virtue of reading or writing.

Adult Basic Education provides instruction up to 8.9 GE. It was instituted as America entered the 1960's, largely because of the space race, to provide a more useful (job amenable) level of literacy beyond basic reading and writing levels. Even though it remained heavily oriented to reading and language skills, it departed from the existing stigma of "literacy education." The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 accorded ABE with federal funding through state education agencies. This funding was available for adults beyond a basic level but with eight grades of schooling or less (hence the 9.0 GE cut off), with the expectation that it would prepare them for occupational training.

"Basic reading and writing levels," as used above, may be inferred to mean the phonetic and orthographic mechanics usually taught in first and second grades. At the adult education department of the community college where this study was conducted, literacy is defined in accordance with the state-recommended Test of Adult Basic

Education, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 3. A student diagnosed below 3.0 GE is usually referred to a local group of volunteer literacy tutors organized in conjunction with the county library. ABE diagnoses and curricula are tied to state-regulated performance competencies.

General Education Development, sometimes referred to as General Equivalency Diploma, is the senior component of adult literacy programs, which entails instruction specifically geared toward the GED test, and presumes a 9.0 GE level of competency. In 1965, the Office of Economic Opportunity initiated changes to allow Job Corps trainees to be included with the GED-tested population, which had previously been implemented solely for military personnel returning to civilian life. Students who wish to enter GED programs may be required to remediate ABE reading, language, or math levels before receiving GED instruction. State and federal monies also usually fund GED programs; GED exams are set by the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C.; states determine individually the score(s) at which they will award the GED certificate.

The third and final guideline is that “illiteracy” was not a term I chose herein, although it was used in many of the studies cited. One reason was that I have not found it defined among any of them. How little literacy constitutes illiteracy? Literacy has long been defined as relative and contextual (Guthrie, 1983; Heath, 1980). I declined to involve this project in the political hegemony that prevails in public policy, although an excellent discussion of that can be found in Kazemek (1988) and more recently in Merrifield (1998).

In a similar vein, my discussion avoided illiteracy figures and discussed numbers of people who qualify for ABE programs. ABE/GED programs ostensibly deal with

people who have achieved some knowledge about reading and writing. I also respected that adults with literacy skills deemed inferior by societal standards define themselves in terms of what they are capable of, rather than what they are not (Fingeret, 1982). I conceded to the use of “low-literate” among educator colleagues because I did not have a better term at my disposal.

Personal Role within the Research Topic

Inasmuch as the researcher herself is the research tool in qualitative work, I had to be aware of the following aspects of my background which provided personal biases to this research. First, I approached this project with a dozen years’ experience teaching reading and writing to adults with literacy skills that ranged from 3.5 to 9.0 GE. As a teacher, I wanted to help an informant who was struggling with personal issues that I believed I could help her clarify and organize. However, what enabled me to maintain a neutral posture during the interviews and analyses was knowing I would be a better advisor by first understanding the cultural terrain from as impartial a description of it as possible.

In addition, I felt torn between two worlds. On the one hand, I sympathize with people whom I perceive as disenfranchised by school systems that are too heavily biased toward convenience to deal effectively with the myriad needs and interests that students present. I believe education is often a matter of circumstance, and champion those whose intelligence goes largely unrecognized because they do not care for the school game. On the other hand, I think that education is perhaps the greatest avenue for opportunity and, ironically, the best chance such people have to reverse the effects of their disenfranchisement. The advantage of this duality – enjoying a substantial degree of

education while empathizing with those who do not – is that I feel it enabled me to hear the informants with fairness and achieve balance in my findings between the values and beliefs of those who are well-educated and those who are not.

My third bias was a common blind spot. I grew up in ethnically diverse schools and neighborhoods both rural and suburban, and currently enjoy a multi-racial, educationally diverse and economically stratified pool of personal friends which spans both genders, some disabilities, sexual orientations, and deeply religious as well as non-religious people. Therefore, I perceive myself as comfortable with individuals from different cultures and subcultures. However, I can only affirm that I am comfortable with the specific types of people with whom I have come into contact. Those people may not approach me as a person that they perceive as impartial to their sense of group identity, so the comfort that I feel may not be bilateral. The fact that I could identify this helped me remain alert to possible discomfort with unfamiliar types of people, as well as sensitive to the fact that they may not be at ease with me.

Rapport was also promoted by the fact that I conducted four interviews with most informants. I do not believe I could have obtained the richness of information that I did with one or two interviews. While a few students were immediately comfortable talking about themselves on virtually any subject, most were slower to open up. Almost invariably, I found each successive interview reflected more trust from the informant and provided more personal information.

On a final note, I should iterate the underlying motivation for this study: I feel there is value in bringing more understanding of the perspectives of basic education students to the educators who serve them, and hope that I can be instrumental to this end.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review to support this proposal consists of three main parts. The first section looks briefly at two background issues that may influence basic education adults returning to school: (a) reasons for previously having dropped out of high school, and (b) what it means for adults, who typically fulfill a variety of responsibilities and enjoy any number of social networks, to coordinate multiple goals. Special consideration is given to the effect of low-literacy upon these issues, since reading and writing are two of the three deficits that typically define basic education students (the third being math). The second section is an overview of attrition within adult basic education, which focuses on barriers to retention and recruitment, and the importance of addressing the student's inner world and existing social networks. The third section discusses the theoretical framework of this study. Expectancy-value theory (Eccles-Parsons et al. 1983; Wigfield and Eccles, 1992, 2000), suggested that students' choice, effort, and persistence for returning to school would lie within the influence of benefits and costs upon expectations and values. Defining benefits and costs as goals from a content perspective (Ford, 1992; Wentzel, 2000) – what it is that students are seeking to achieve – enables description of the multiple goals that students are trying to coordinate. This study essentially looked to the coordination of multiple goals, influenced by the specific expectations and values developed in association with returning to school, to describe students' decisions to either withdraw or remain in basic adult education programs.

Background Issues

One may presume that the predominant cause for high school dropout would be poor academic progress; however, research indicates that there are other reasons as well.

Furthermore, these reasons may be associated with a perceived dichotomy between school and learning. Since a student's past reasons for dropping out and current conceptions of school may play a role in her early adjustment, they are worth investigating. Another complication the student may face is that concurrent demands of family, job, church, community, etc., as well as valued networks of significant others, can directly or indirectly conflict with her goal of returning to school. While literature about the social world of basic education adults is primarily reserved for later discussion, this section will consider the importance of recognizing multiple goals.

Reasons for Dropping out of High School

There is a significant amount of evidence that poor academic progress precedes high school dropout. Students who dropout demonstrate difficulties with coursework that can be traced to elementary school, middle school, junior high school, or high school. For a thorough discussion of this topic, see Wigfield, Eccles, and Pintrich (1996). Studies also show that the structure, curriculum, and practices of schools per se debilitate students' motivation and beliefs about their academic success, which can affect academic progress. For example, Kavrell and Petersen (1984) suggest the typical drop in grades after elementary school may be due more to changes in grading practices than to a decline in students' learning. Despite findings that mitigate blaming students for unsatisfactory progress, the presumption that poor grades often precede dropout is well-founded.

Older studies indicate that the need to work is a more common reason (Kent, 1973; Kreitlow, Gustrom, & Martin, 1981). More recently, a national study of an unspecified number of GED candidates (Baldwin, 1994) found only 6.4 percent had dropped out because of weak performance. (GED Profiles is published by the GED

Testing Service of the American Council of Education, which has access to the hundreds of thousands of people who take the GED every year. However, the number of people responding to the optional questions about why they previously withdrew from high school is unstated.) Beder (1990) conducted an Iowa telephone survey of 129 ABE-eligible adults who no longer attended public school, had no high school diploma or GED, and were never in ABE classes. Subjects were randomly chosen from 1,321 survey respondents and only seven percent were found to have left school because they had gotten behind in course completion. We should consider that since there is a stigma on high school dropout, social desirability could cause a student to prioritize having to work, which can be construed to be out of her hands, over reasons that could cause her to face judgments of self, like poor academic progress.

From a developmental perspective, dropout may be the culmination of a long-term process of disengagement from school. Finn (1989) describes two models that begin in elementary school, *frustration/self-esteem* that worsens and *participation/involvement* in school-related activities that doesn't expand, which culminate in feeling rejected by school or failing to develop a sense of identification with school. Alexander (2001) reports that dropout masks vast differences among students, which involve academic, parental, and personal resource deficiencies throughout all school years. Profiles of students who drop out frequently show a variety of situational influences and interpersonal variables that are capable of having chronic effects, such as neighborhoods characterized by high levels of social disorganization, peer drug models, poor coping strategies, sexual involvement, and family stress (Hess, 2001; Newcomb, 2002; Weisman, 2001).

Fine (1991) articulates a personal orientation that conflicts with school culture. Of 40 informants in an alternative New York high school that she hoped to interview, 35% dropped out over the nine-month school period. Using September data, she reports:

Quite counterintuitive portraits of dropouts and stayins emerged. Students who dropped out were significantly less depressed, more likely to say “My problems are due to poverty, racism, and my personality,” more likely to say “If a teacher gave me a B and I deserved an A I would do something about it,” and less likely to provide highly conforming responses to the social desirability questionnaire. In contrast, students who remained in school were significantly more depressed, more likely to say “My problems are due to my personality,” and more likely to say “If a teacher gave me a B, I would do nothing about it; teachers are always right.” They also presented themselves as extremely conformist. (p. 4)

Fine reviewed educational literature to find that dropouts were consistently stereotyped, despite a lack of empirical evidence, as helpless, depressed, and without options. Instead, she concludes that the dropout does not fit this stereotype, but is psychologically healthy, a critic of social and economic injustice, and unwilling to “mindlessly” conform.

Dichotomy Between Learning and Schooling

School is where basic education adults first attempted to learn academically, where they first came to feel isolated, and where they first became stigmatized or acquired the standard against which they are socially judged (Beder, 1991; Zieghan, 1992). Therefore, that basic education adults frequently perceive a dichotomy between learning and schooling is not surprising, which Quigley (1992) also implies in his discussion of reluctant learners (those who withdrew within the first three weeks), which will be revisited in the section about attrition.

Zieghan (1992) interviewed 27 low literate adults from a rural reservation community in western Montana and 16 community members who were familiar with the

educational climate there, including teachers and administrators at the community college, public school reading teachers and counselors, and social service providers. She reports that across the board, low-literate participants equated “reading,” “writing,” and “literacy” with school, and viewed literacy education as couched in a larger social context that retains an unspoken acknowledgment of the stigma associated with low literacy. They held this view despite public encouragement, believing that the private message was that the individual herself is responsible for the stigma placed upon her.

On the other hand, Zieghan found that learning disassociated with literacy and school was a subject of enthusiastic discussion and something that her participants demonstrated they could aggressively seek. This learning was primarily informal and took place among friends, family, and co-workers. It was characterized by activities like “tearing into things,” figuring out how things work “on my own,” finding out if things were mechanical or based in relationships, applying knowledge to different situations, and teaching others. Informants distinguished these activities as devoid of the meaningless drudgery which typified their perceptions of school, the sustained mental activity of answering questions by reading and writing, and of the risk that their dignity would be violated. Fingeret’s (1982) study of adults in illiterate communities reports that learning to read is not itself perceived as threatening to social relationships if a student is able to maintain pre-existing patterns of behavior within established social groups. *Schooling*, however, is viewed as “a path out of the ghetto” (p. 10), which can threaten defining values within the community.

Community members in Zieghan’s study also verified the absence of a forum to address the roots of stigmatization, leaving adult low readers with the primary choices of

going public by returning to the environment where they originally faced the stigma, or of remaining silent about their literacy condition in order to maintain self-respect. Fingeret and Drennon (1997) confirm that simply by entering a program, literacy students break a barrier, although it is a boundary that they continually have to cross for some time, as the fear of shame is not then wholly or immediately behind them, despite initial success with their coursework. While the reasons that a student left school in the first place are not the primary focus of this study, sensitivity to them may be an important component of understanding her perception of school per se, and foster a better description of attendant costs and benefits.

Multiple Goals

The likelihood that basic education adults returning to school pursue multiple goals is supported by two considerations: that adult lives typically entail a number of roles and responsibilities, and that research shows academic goals are often coordinated with concurrent personal and social goals. Both of these indicate that in addition to external logistic issues, such as time management, finances, travel arrangements, etc., ABE students may be forced to juggle intra- and interpersonal priorities.

Studies about ABE enrollment motivation indicate that students have multiple categories and dimensions of goals are ostensibly pragmatic. Yet the importance of social others and requirement for self-evaluation can be seen to underlie many of the stated goals, suggesting a complicated picture that includes inter- and intra-personal components. Writing from five months of interviews conducted in 1990 with volunteers from nine intact student groups and five adults' case studies at Literacy Volunteers of New York City, Fingeret and Drennon (1997) report that entering a literacy program

constitutes a kind of boundary-crossing, only part of which has to do with the difficulty of learning new literacy practices. They show the difficulty some students face regarding the reconciliation of becoming students and the worry about losing the security of their old sets of friends and their “old ways of being in the world” (p. 90).

Beder & Valentine (1990) used an initial, qualitative study with twelve ABE students that not only asked the reason that they attended, but also why the reason was important or how they expected it to change their lives. The subsequent 62-item scale was given to 323 students randomly chosen from ABE students in Iowa programs. Exploratory factor analysis yielded ten motivational dimensions of why low-literate students enrolled in ABE. Four of the five factors that accounted for the most variance (self-improvement, family responsibilities, literacy development, and community/church involvement) indicate anticipation of intra-personal changes. Beder and Valentine labeled the factor that directly relates to life cycle phenomena as *launching*, as it seemed to suggest a motivation to restructure and take control of one’s life. In conjunction with motivational parameters, it may be that students at transition points in their lives are also more receptive to modifying social connections.

Fingeret (1983) reported adults more prone to enroll in programs when their lives and social networks are in transition due to such circumstances as new children, jobs, geographic locations or change in status of significant others. Transitions require adaptation and offer turning points when an individual is better able to entertain adjustment of short- and long-term goals. They also may stretch coping skills as the individual faces hopes, promises, fears and threats. Other studies corroborate Beder and Valentine’s primary conclusion that the motivations for enrollment in adult education are

more complex than simply wanting to improve basic skills and that the role of social others underlies many of the motivational categories (Boshier, 1983, 1991; Malicky & Norman, 1994; Morstain & Smart, 1974; Fujita-Starck, 1996).

However, these studies have not correlated enrollment motivations to withdrawal, and have not sought to ascertain what a person may wish to avoid within anticipated inter- and intra-personal changes. Therefore, what may better contribute to understanding attrition is not a hindsight review of students' initial enrollment motivations, but how their perceptions of costs and benefits change as engagement in a program progresses. If expectations and values are modified in response to opportunities and barriers, especially in ways that a student either did not anticipate or feels she cannot accommodate, then her overall motivation to participate may diminish from a synthesis of adjusted responses. The adult learner who juggles multiple responsibilities faces a variety of issues that demand that she consider the overall compatibility of her goals. In addition, life consists of a flux wherein new events, both internal and external, may exert unexpected influences that also need to be resolved.

An important consideration that may underlie an ABE student's motivation may be the ontological meaning of her school goal, and whether that meaning is congruent with the overall goal frameworks she maintains for the contexts in which she engages. If she sees becoming more educated as self-serving in terms of distinguishing herself as an individual, or establishing a role for herself, then she may exhibit more conceptions in her meanings that reflect individual identity. On the other hand, if she sees it as a relational goal, she may exhibit perceptions of movement *toward* or *away* from a particular group identity. There is also the possibility that the student is attempting to do both within a

complex set of relationships. As Schlenker and Pontari (2000) succinctly state, “social life is not so simplistic that people have the luxury of pursuing just one goal at a time” (p. 203). The fundamental issue for my study is how compatible these goal meanings are in relationship to one another.

The coordination of academic achievement with multiple goals from a content perspective has been theorized by Ford (1992) and researched by Wentzel (1991, 2000). These authors describe goals by the cognitive representations of what an individual is attempting to achieve in particular situations. Sensitivity to context allows that a goal may originate from the individual or from the context, but it is not meaningfully isolated from context because it is socially constructed. A goal content perspective highlights the need for a student returning to school to find compatibility between her school goal and other goals, or constrain the school goal to contexts that do not put it in conflict with other goals.

Ford (1992) explains that people are always behaving in relationship to their environment, what he calls the whole person-in-context, and a goal sustains commitment to the extent that it can be coordinated with other goals across contexts. This coordination is accomplished by organizing and directing ongoing behavior within that context. An individual typically responds to the events around her by remembered sets of related behavior episodes and uses these to guide new behavior. These remembered, behavioral guides, not wholly conscious, represent how the person conceives herself to function with specific goals in specific contexts. What this means for the adult literacy student is that her school goal becomes juxtaposed to previous experiences specific to various contexts. If she does not have or can not develop behavior that makes the school goal compatible to

those contexts that she values, then the student goal does not become organized within her existing framework of goals. That is, without being organized and integrated into the whole person-in-context that she is creating, the student goal will not sustain motivation and commitment.

The Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992) purports to cover the entire range of consequences that people seek and avoid, providing a framework to assess individual meanings of costs and benefits. In the taxonomy, personal consequences are defined in two major divisions as those occurring within people as individuals, and those occurring between people and their social environment. These denote different aspects of goal content, but are not mutually exclusive. As shown in Table 1, Within-Person consequences that people seek fall into the subset categories of Affective Goals, feelings or emotion, Cognitive Goals, mental representations, and Subjective Organization Goals, special or unusual states. Person-Environment consequences that people seek fall into the subset categories of Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals, maintaining or promoting oneself, Integrative Social Relationship Goals, maintaining or promoting the well-being of other people, and Task Goals, reflecting relationships between people and various objects in the environment (or even people in impersonal terms). Specific consequences within each of these groups in the taxonomy distinguish what people seek and what they avoid. For these details, please see Appendix F: Content of the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals.

Table 1: The Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992)

DESIRED WITHIN-PERSON CONSEQUENCES:	DESIRED PERSON-ENVIRONMENT CONSEQUENCES:
Affective Goals	Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals
Entertainment	Individuality
Tranquility	Self-Determination
Happiness	Superiority
Bodily Sensations	Resource Acquisition
Physical Well-Being	Integrative Social Relationship Goals
Cognitive Goals	Belongingness
Exploration	Social Responsibility
Understanding	Equity
Intellectual Creativity	Resource Provision
Positive Self-Evaluations	Task-Oriented Goals
Subjectively Organizational Goals	Mastery
Unity	Task Creativity
Transcendence	Management
	Material gain
	Safety

Having found a relationship between multiple goals and academic achievement among adolescents (Wentzel, 1991), Wentzel (2000) suggests three kinds of goal coordination that can describe these relations, which may bear keeping in mind during my study with adults. The first is the most general level, a *one-dimensional* influence whereby fundamental orientations toward self and the social environment will guide efforts to return to school. This developmental model deems that the student's social and emotional needs will be primary and that if costs threaten her sense of social belongingness and relatedness, the student will deprioritize her school goal. Second, relations between goals can be *complementary* and contribute independently to the school goal. In this manner, goals like social approval from different sets of others and personal satisfaction with literacy improvement may be anchored in distinct contexts, such that a student does not pursue them concurrently and may be less prone to encounter conflict

among goals. Finally, personal and social goals may be *hierarchical* and perceived as *reciprocal* to one another. Depending upon how the student has learned to organize her goals, she will have idiosyncratically developed her own rationale for prioritizing and subordinating goals. This model particularly calls into focus her ability to coordinate multiple goals, by describing how hierarchical belief systems link goals in demanding situations and promote responses for accommodating them to one another.

This picture is not only complicated by the number and kinds of goals that students may seek, but also by the fact that these three models are not deemed to be mutually exclusive. We can not even be sure that a student consistently perceives a given context with the same one-dimensional, complementary, or hierarchical proclivity. Like the sensitivity to reasons for previous high school dropout and perceptions of school per se, however, these considerations may prove valuable for describing the content of students' costs and benefits, and strategies for accommodating changes within them.

Overview of Adult Basic Education Attrition

While enrollment motives for ABE programs abound, information about why students drop out is more scarce. Exit interviews rarely exist, students who have withdrawn are typically difficult to contact, and dropout rationale which can be obtained is highly suspect as being the least threatening, the "last straw," or the most socially acceptable (Boshier, 1973; Cross, 1981; Cullen, 1994; Quigley, 1997). The most frequent reasons given by new students as initial motivation to enroll in adult basic education reflect *pragmatic* needs that describe ultimate achievements (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Boshier, 1971; Burgess, 1971; Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974; Cross, 1981; Houle, 1961; Malicky & Norman, 1994; Tough, 1968; Tracy-Mumford, 2000), while available dropout

information indicates that a major cause for withdrawal is often *affective* dissatisfaction with events that occur after enrollment, on the path toward those needs. Examples of what have been found to contribute to affective dissatisfaction are feeling overwhelmed with outside concerns (Barron-Jones, 1998), social challenges related to threat of job loss, parenting concerns, and unresolved domestic issues (Merritt et al., 2002), social and family problems among women due to juggling home and school responsibilities (Malicky & Norman, 1994), students' feeling less positive about themselves due to disruption in relationships with children and spouses (Malicky & Norman, 1994), simultaneously wanting more teacher attention but feeling uncomfortable in a classroom situation and not turning to teachers for help (Quigley, 1992), and skepticism about "school" which is not equated with education and learning (Quigley, 1997).

In a review of ABE studies conducted predominantly throughout the 1980's, Malicky and Norman (1994) surmise that "factors outside of (basic) literacy programs seem to be more influential in decisions not to participate or stay in literacy programs than factors within the programs themselves" (p. 145). Interventions that provide counseling or referrals for social issues have demonstrated a 25-42% increase in retention (Barron-Jones, 1998; Merritt et al., 2002). While many conflicting factors are reported to be of a material nature, such as time, money, geographical logistics, day care issues, etc., this section will show that social/psychological factors also play an important role, and especially the influence of social groups outside the school environment. Relevant research which follows has been grouped into four sections: barriers to recruitment and retention that have hegemonic status within ABE literature, studies that attempt to distinguish students who drop out from those who persist by their relationship to the

social environment within the classroom, social influences outside of the classroom, and more recent qualitative research that outlines how differently the students' point of view can portray withdrawal from what is typically interpreted by educators and administrators.

Traditional “Barriers” to Recruitment and Retention

Reasons for withdrawing from adult basic education are often linked with the same reasons thought to preclude eligible students from participating (Boshier, 1971; Cross, 1981; Quigley, 1997). Conceptualized as *barriers* to recruitment and retention, these have been widely accepted within adult literature for about the last twenty-five years and currently dominate workshops and conferences about adult education. The important points from this section are that the categories of barriers are not entirely discrete, and that internal parameters, both alone and in association with external parameters, are underrepresented in the data.

Cross' (1981) reasons for nonparticipation in mainstream adult programs fall primarily into three categories of barriers. She made a general synthesis of data from thirty state and national surveys of what respondents reported, having to allow for the variety of item formats and the fact that some surveys asked for the single, most major obstacle to participation while others requested all obstacles (Cross, 1979). *Situational* barriers comprise issues such as available time, cost, transportation, distance, and child-care. Cost and lack of time were cited as often as 50% of the time, while lack of child-care and transportation affected roughly 10% of respondents. *Institutional* barriers include inconvenient scheduling, location or transportation (how this differs from transportation and distance, mentioned as situational obstacles, is not made clear), course relevance, procedural and time problems (referring to overall time required to complete a program,

as opposed to a person's more immediate available time, already stated as a situational obstacle), and lack of information about programs and procedures. These affected 10 to 25% of respondents in most of the surveys. The most frequent complaints were inconvenient locations and scheduling, and lack of course relevance; few cited lack of information. *Dispositional* barriers relate to attitudes and self-perception about oneself as a learner, including issues such as age and confidence. While these only accounted for 5 to 10% of respondents' named obstacles, Cross deems that the importance of this area is underestimated due to the problem of social desirability, as well as the methodological issue that respondents who said they were not interested in further education were frequently dropped from further analysis. She proposes that many of those people would probably have added to the counts for dispositional barriers.

Studying nonparticipation, Beder (1989) elicited 32 reasons from open-ended interviews with 21 adult, high school drop-outs who had not entered ABE programs, and then used these with 129 other eligible but nonparticipating Iowa adults eligible for ABE, who were respondents to a state-wide survey seeking to identify high school drop-outs and who agreed to be interviewed. Factor analysis of the results produced five factors, one of which was deleted due to low interpretability. The four basic reasons for nonparticipation he interpreted are *low perception of need*, which increased with subjects' age, *perceived difficulty*, *situational barriers*, which were negatively associated with age but positively associated with the number of children in the home, and *dislike for school*.

Beder concludes that except for the situational category, these reasons primarily reflect perceptions about school itself. His depiction of barriers as *structural*, depicting the outer world in which students live, and *attitudinal*, representing their inner world as

the lived experience and the way they perceive educational program, is supported by national GED research (Baldwin, 1991). Structural reasons typically entail issues of transportation, location, finances, child-care, etc., while attitudinal reasons consistently reflect the influence of past schooling.

Quigley (1997) applies Cross' (1981) barriers to ABE attrition with the caveat that adopting them as barriers per se presents withdrawal as a passive reaction rather than an active, personal choice. He reconceptualizes the term "barrier" from an insinuation that students are blocked from entering programs, to a framework for talking about *responses* to barriers. In this manner, he casts barriers as the external and internal influences to which learners more dynamically react *after* they have begun participation in a program. He also defines the possibility that some barriers co-exist in more than one category, such as "fear of failing" which may constitute both an institutional and a dispositional barrier.

Quigley (1997) outlines the influences on the decision to stay or leave as:

influences of educational systems = institutional barriers,
influences of circumstances = situational barriers,
influences of experience = dispositional barriers.

This is how they are currently presented at adult education conferences and workshops. He claims that since most students have largely overcome the institutional barriers and situational barriers in order to begin attending, it is the dispositional barriers that need the most attention in order to reverse early dropout and improve retention. From informal surveys with teachers and tutors he conducted around the country, he does not offer definitive percentages, but reports that dispositional reasons account for well over half of the estimated explanations for dropout, referring to "attitudes in general, ...toward education in particular, ...and toward programs specifically" (p. 174).

Quigley (1992) notes that some ABE students maintain a strong belief in the importance of *education* even after withdrawing from *school*. In a study of two major ABE centers in Pittsburgh (Quigley, 1989, cited in Quigley 1992), he interviewed 17 students who withdrew within the first three weeks (termed “reluctant learners”) and 29 students who persisted with the program (termed “persisters”). Reluctant learners had a mean completed school grade of 9.4 and a mean for years out of school of 25 years; persisters had a mean completed school grade of 8.7 and a mean for years out of school of 12.4 years. Both groups liked their teachers, but reluctant learners felt they had not received adequate attention and were uncomfortable in a classroom situation. Surprisingly, the reluctant learners expressed no more negative school experiences than persisters, strong self-expectancy for school, and a slightly higher sense of the significance of school than the persisters, but were uncomfortable with and less accepting of school per se. Therefore, Quigley concludes, although many adults value literacy enough to enroll in a program, something occurs which causes them to renounce the current attempt without renouncing the value of the goal – and to some extent this “something” is their attitude about school.

In order to examine this “something,” I proposed that we consider not only what a student expects from the classroom when she becomes a student, but also what she expects from her overall life, and not just in terms of the long-term gains but the immediate experience. Lack of family or peer support may be a *situational* barrier, reflecting the social circumstances of a student’s world, and a *dispositional* barrier, reflecting an experiential influence upon how she sees the role of an enrolled student. Although barriers are defined for both students who do not achieve enrollment and

students who withdraw from it, they may not apply comparably to both groups. Students in the latter group have at least dealt with these barriers sufficiently, differently, or in such a manner to begin a program. To that end, there may be value in considering the underpinnings to a student's perceptions that reveal how students respond to barriers after they have begun enrollment.

A retrospective study by Hayes (1988) reflects the ambiguity that exists among personal priorities, social circumstances, and situational barriers. Hayes asked 160 students from seven urban programs to list deterrents to ABE and factor analyzed their responses. The most conceptually meaningful representation was determined to be a five-factor, orthogonal solution: low self-confidence, social disapproval, situational barriers, negative attitude to classes and low personal priority. However, all five of the items in the category of low personal priority bear relationship to other factors. Three items (*I don't like doing school work, I thought "book learning" wasn't important and I didn't know anyone who was going to the adult education classes*) co-occur in other factors – social disapproval and negative attitude to classes, and the remaining two items (*I thought it was more important to get a job than go to school and I didn't have time to go to school*) arguably pertain to the author's description of other factors – social disapproval and situational barriers.

As well as respecting Quigley's claim that barriers can co-exist *across categories*, we need to consider that they may occur *after* initial engagement in literacy programs. This suggests that a student may have or acquire a perception about returning to school that is influenced by out-of-school situations, and that her motivation to pursue education is an ongoing process. Nothing new may tangibly occur, but one may come to perceive

her condition differently as events unfold. In conclusion, I propose that social support or conflict may be perceived by the student as a product of both past and current experience. An issue that did not present sufficient difficulty to prevent enrollment may in fact come to prevent continued participation. Rather than looking for fixed categories of barriers that contribute to withdrawal, we might do better to address why it is that some students overcome the challenges they perceive and others do not.

Social Integration in the Classroom

Before recent qualitative studies, research that analyzed the interaction between the individual and her social environment primarily addressed students' perceptions regarding people within the classroom. To be a responsible candidate and respectful to the literature, I felt I should briefly address this work. Much of it built upon Boshier's (1973) congruence theory that explains dropouts as less affiliative with classmates because they perceive the latter to be different from themselves in undesirable ways.

Investigating the relationship between GED persistence and students' self-descriptions, Wilson (1980) administered Gough's (1952) Adjective Check List to all 142 of the students, ranging in age from 16 to 63, who entered a community college based GED program. Comparing those who completed 10 weeks of the program with those who dropped out, he found dropouts to be more impulsive, rebellious, hostile and in general less socialized and responsive to the needs of others. This study made conclusions about the potential difficulties in retaining non-persisting students with the above noted characteristics, but did not ascertain the extent or nature of either in-class or out-of-class social networks.

Darkenwald and Gavin (1987) examined the social ecology of a GED classroom to see if adult dropouts, compared to persisters, exhibited greater discrepancy between their initial expectations of the classroom social environment and the actual experience they encountered. Dropouts were defined as students who attended the first class session but failed to show up for four consecutive classes after the first class, through the fifth week. Of the original 93 students who began the 15-week GED preparation class, two refused to participate, 91 completed the “expectations” form of Moos and Trickett’s (1974) Classroom Environment Scale (CES), and 77 completed the “actual” form of the CES. The nine subscales of this measure are involvement, affiliation, teacher support, task orientation, competition, order and organization, rule clarity, teacher control and innovation.

From the resultant sample of 77 subjects, dropouts comprised 31%. The results from two-sample *t*-tests and a supplementary, ordinary least squares multiple regression did not verify the authors’ expectation, but did result in two findings. Dropouts experienced a greater discrepancy between initial expectations and actual experiences of the classroom social environment regarding affiliation (expecting and, according to the authors, presumably desiring less social involvement and friendship with other students). Persisters experienced a greater discrepancy between initial expectations and actual experiences of the classroom social environment regarding rule clarity (seeming to prefer greater emphasis on establishing and following definitive rules for behavior). The conclusion that GED dropouts are less affiliative addresses in-class conditions, and does not speak to the existence, strength, or influence of external social networks.

Studying on-site programs, Vann and Hinton (1994) examined workplace socialization factors that affect GED participation. They anticipated that social relationships were a contributing factor to the lower-than-expected retention rates at fourteen sites hosted by a major corporation in a south-central state. Three of the sites which were socio-economically similar to the others were selected, wherein 151 production employees had volunteered for the GED program at their worksites without time off for attendance. At the end of sixteen months, 39 students were classified as program finishers and qualified for the company's \$100 bonus. This bonus required a minimum of six months' attendance and 48 class hours, as well as either passing the GED or increasing their writing and math competencies two grade levels. Dropouts were stated to be those who dropped out of the programs before completing the time-and-achievement criteria. It is unclear if there were any individuals who persisted for the entire time but did not meet the achievement criteria.

Questionnaires were completed by 39% of the finishers and 33% of the dropouts, who responded by returning letters mailed to them. Each group was asked to list their workplace networks, which categorized them as in-class clique members or social isolates. Cliques were defined by naming those who had participated in the program or were confirmed former students. A chi-square test compared the frequencies of in-class cliques and isolates in the dropout and finisher groups. It yielded an interaction between retention and clique membership that indicated members of in-class cliques are more likely to remain in a program than those who are socially isolated. I take exception to the authors' naming the latter group as "socially isolated," because they may simply have had different reference groups than their classmates, which doesn't make them isolated per se

but perhaps differently-cliqued. Somewhat addressing this, a one-way ANOVA of in-plant networks' educational levels reveals that dropouts networked with others in the workplace who have similar levels of education. From this, the authors suggest that if members pursue an improved education, there is the risk of upsetting the power structures of their groups.

Vann and Hinton conclude that those who value education form primary and reference groups with others who share an orientation to learning and will provide support. The authors suggest that workplace educational programs need to address the existence of intact cliques prior to the inception of a program. Otherwise, workers who are isolates may associate social barriers with the classroom, which will hamper their participation and, ultimately, their persistence.

In summary, adults who drop out have been noted to differ from those who persist with regard to social affiliation with other students. However, findings do not clarify if in-class social integration that correlates to persistence co-occurs with or without concomitant support or denigration from external social networks. Quigley's previously mentioned 1989 study reports reluctant learners as "loners" with only a few close friends in or out of school. This may imply an even greater importance of outside support to sustain engagement – the fewer friends one has, the more one has to lose.

Capturing Students' Logic about Withdrawal

There is reason to suspect that much of the research to date on attrition in adult education literacy has prioritized teachers' goals for program completion over students' goals for progress. Albeit perhaps an inadvertent bias, this may have resulted in

identifying withdrawal in terms that are not always shared by students. Quigley (1997)

acknowledges that:

...practitioners and researchers need to pay more attention to the world as seen by students. In the majority of instances, it is not the same one we see or have experienced.

Sadly, our history is an account of exactly the opposite practice – applying societal and professional ‘solutions’ to problems we imagine or believe we deduce, but that learners either do not have or do not agree that they have. (p. 168)

Recent studies on intermittent participation from adult education demonstrate how differently the students’ perspective can define withdrawal from the traditional view of educators and program administrators.

Beltzer (1998) reports different perceptions between students and teachers regarding withdrawal that support a view of intermittent participation as a planned means to achieve basic literacy goals. Forty-seven qualitative interviews tracked ten students randomly recruited from the time they entered their program up to four months or until they dropped out – five who were participating in literacy classes and five others who were receiving volunteer tutoring, with no more criteria than that they had a phone and were willing to be interviewed. Half of the students were still engaged in their learning program at the end of the study. Students who left their program did not say they had quit and did not consider themselves dropouts. They attributed no sense of failure to either themselves or the program. Instead, they acknowledged that current circumstances (health/job/financial/legal problems or other personal/family problems) beyond their control precluded continued participation and would need to be worked out, at which time each student looked forward to returning.

In fact, nine of the ten students had participated in a basic literacy program at least once before and were starting anew. For these people, quitting would have meant a total cessation of effort to return until their goals were met, so stopping periodically was not viewed as quitting because they had maintained the understanding that they would return. Students focused on the gains made during each period of participation and accepted the need for temporary hiatuses as part of the way to reach their goals. These findings not only challenge the view that departure from a program is a failure, but suggest the issue of retention is sufficiently complex that it may require some redefinition of what it means to participate, as students will come and go under the best of institutional and program circumstances.

Reder and Strawn (2001) show qualitative baseline data from the Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning indicates that shifting to the student's point of view reveals much more participation (median 54 hours) occurring among those classified as stopping participation before completing 12 hours of instruction than is being reported by programs. This study consists of approximately 1,000 adults randomly sampled from a population of 18 to 44-year-olds in Portland, OR, who at the beginning of the study held no high school diploma or GED credential, were not in high school, and spoke proficient English. Since the sample comprises approximately equal numbers of individuals who had and had not recently enrolled in local adult education programs, the number of those contributing to findings about participation may be presumed to be about 500 students. The authors attribute the differential between their finding and the administrative data to the fact that students often attend different programs, accumulating more hours of participation overall than any single program would register. Furthermore, 58% of those

who had participated did so in more than one period of participation, and students reported a sense of cumulative progress where program data is recording a sporadic series of failed attempts.

By redefining “period of participation” as one or more class sessions with the same teacher, rather than the standard number of hours per term in a single program that meets the administrative minimum, Reder and Strawn capture a different view of participation. While this view is admittedly more fragmented and potentially complicated, it frames participation in such a manner that it suggests not only a different pattern of participation, but also a different logic about it – that is, one of accomplishment rather than failure.

Comings et al. (2000) report the first phase of the Adult Persistence Study of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), which interviewed 150 GED students in New England. These authors claim that a wider definition of persistence would better enable programs to value episodes of participation and educators to help students use those episodes as critical parts of a more comprehensive learning strategy. They propose expanding procedures to incorporate time-on-task events beyond the classroom that can become measurable events and therefore contribute to systems of accountability that support adult education funding. By remaining connected to programs between periods of participation via a broader range of services, students may be retained as long-term clients with intermittent suspensions of class attendance rather than viewed as dropping out and returning after failed attempts to persist.

The NCSALL study team also asked students about the supports and barriers they perceived to persistence, which was defined as: *students' staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must drop out of their programs, and returning to a program as soon as the demands of their lives allow*. Students were interviewed at the beginning of their program and then again after four months, and were defined as persistent if by the second interview they were in the same class, in a different class, or no longer in class but engaged in organized self-study. The strongest influence reported to optimize persistence was the support of socially significant others (friends, family, teachers, and fellow students), followed by self-confidence for doing program tasks (equated by the authors to Bandura's [1997] self-efficacy), and having personal goals with a personally meaningful sense of progress toward them. The decision to persist is framed as an on-going event, as adults juggle the variety of responsibilities that regularly demand their attention.

Summary of Adult Basic Education Attrition Issues

The most current practical information presented to adult educators about the early withdrawal of ABE students revolves primarily around categories of "barriers," which are the same reasons thought to preclude enrollment. These are defined as essentially discrete, although Quigley (1997) suggests that these categories overlap, that barriers may occur as responses to participation in education, and that dispositional barriers which reflect attitudes about school offer the most promise for change to improve retention. Recent qualitative studies argue that situational reasons, such as lack of support from family and friends, may also exert an affective influence, to the extent that they jeopardize a student's sense of belonging within particular social networks and impact

definitions of self. Cross (1981) suspects that dispositional barriers, or the influences from experience, are underrepresented, and herein may lie potential for better understanding withdrawal.

This study intended to elaborate the literature on ABE students in two ways. Although social support or conflict has been predominantly defined as a situational barrier, it may also spawn a dispositional influence that affects a person's attitude about school. This overlap between categories of barriers would expand family and peer support (or its absence) from being portrayed as a static, circumstantial factor to a more dynamic, experiential event. In addition, my study would broaden our understanding of the scope of social influences to a student's more general social world than just those within the classroom or tied to meeting her educational needs.

Furthermore, instead of looking for fixed categories of barriers, I hoped to also address why it is that some students overcome the challenges they perceive, while others do not. Individual, familial, peer, professional or cultural contexts may all play a role in what the student expects and how she interprets her experience. Claiming that, "learners and practitioners often see different worlds..." (p. 171), Quigley (1997) calls for research to distinguish dispositional differences between those who stay in programs and those who do not, as well as the process of disengagement (Quigley, 1998). I planned to see if some of these differences lie in the meanings that are associated with returning to school by analyzing the personal/social costs and rewards that promote persistence or withdrawal.

Theoretical Applications

Two theoretical orientations frame this study of how students' perceptions of costs and benefits influence their prioritization of returning to school. Expectancy-value theory (Eccles-Parsons et al., 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992, 2000) is consonant with early attrition, because previous expectancy-valence theories are cited by both major proponents, Cross (1981) and Quigley (1997), of barriers to recruitment and retention in adult basic education programs. Goals, costs, and benefits are deemed antecedent to the student's expectations for success and subjective values for a task. These, in turn, determine her choice, effort and persistence for the task in relationship to others that she desires to achieve. What students seek to achieve and to avoid is elucidated within the content aspect of goals (Ford, 1992, Wentzel, 2000). Defining benefits and costs within a framework of goal content allows discussion of what students are trying to accomplish by returning to school and within their coordination of multiple goals. As desired and undesired consequences, benefits and costs influence their expectations and values of being able to sustain participation and specifically how it is that school does or does not fit into their lives. Both theoretical orientations are discussed in this section.

Expectancy-value theory

The expectancy-value theory of motivation developed by Eccles-Parsons et al. (1983) and Wigfield and Eccles (1992, 2000) has evolved from earlier expectancy-valence theories. This cognitive tradition defines achievement choice, persistence and performance for a particular activity as deriving from a person's beliefs about her expectations for success and the subjective task values she associates with it – beliefs that can change concomitantly with the activity. The ideas of Lewin (1938) and Atkinson

(1957, 1966) underlie this theory and also underscore the work of both Cross (1981) and Quigley (1997), major proponents of barriers to recruitment and retention in adult basic education programs who were discussed in the first section of this review.

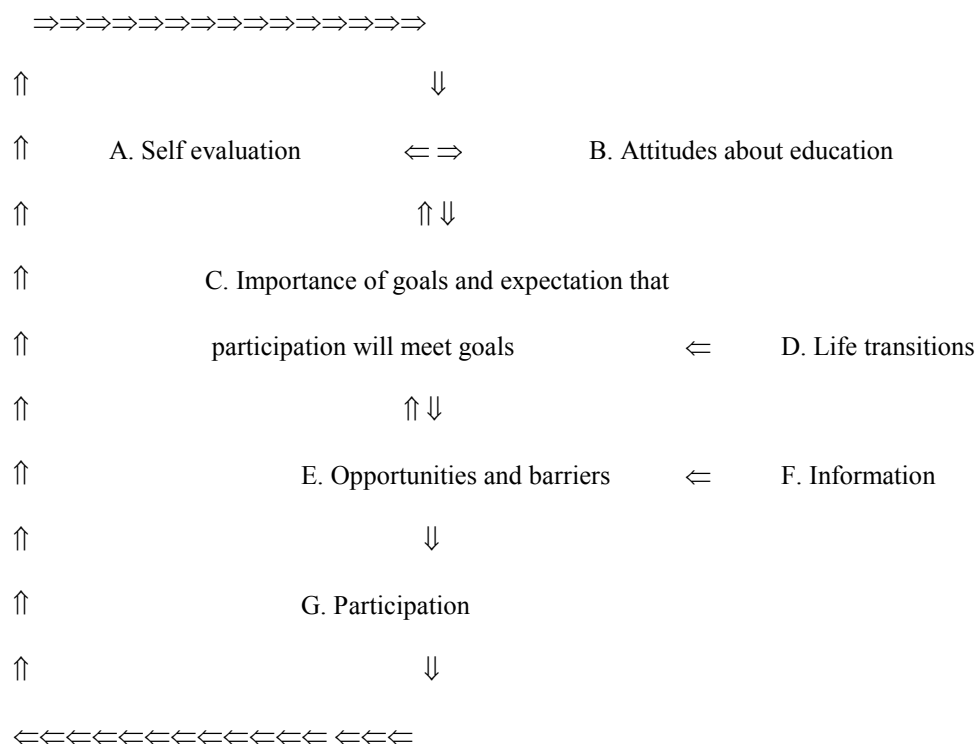
Cross (1981) borrows heavily from the earlier expectancy-valence authors, as well as Rubenson (1977). She credits Rubenson's work with having help shift the definition of the adult learner's barriers from external obstacles precluding participation in education to individually-based measures that entail the role of social processes, and especially reference groups, in shaping attitudes that affect expectations and values. Although Rubenson still put most emphasis on how the learner perceives her educational environment, he based her motivation on the situation she perceived, rather than what may exist in a more objective sense. Furthermore, he defined a component of expectation as one's anticipation that success of a task will result in positive consequences.

From this basis, Cross (1981) theorizes that part of students' motivation for achievement behavior, in terms of choosing tasks and persisting with them, is related to beliefs they have about succeeding at a particular activity and what will result from it (expectancies, or expectations), as well as the importance she places upon the consequences that she anticipates (valence, or value). She proposes participation in adult education in terms of a chain of responses wherein the individual evaluates her position with respect to her environment. Figure 1 shows Cross' chain of responses to include self-evaluation, established attitudes about education, expectations and values for the learning task, life transitions, opportunities and barriers, and education information that promotes either opportunities or barriers. It posits participation behavior as a stream of integrated action, rather than discrete influences. She claims that most measures

addressing adult participation in education only come in at the latter points of the chain, attempting to enhance opportunities and reduce barriers, without considering the earlier motivational parameters.

Figure 1: Chain-of-Response Model for Understanding Participation in Adult Learning Activities

Cross (1981)



Cross defines the strength of a student's motivation for education as the result of combining positive and negative forces that exist within the individual and the environment, such as "adult education can lead to higher pay, but it can also mean seeing less of the family" (p.116), which is an example of what is defined in Eccles, Wigfield and colleagues' expectancy-value theory as an aspect of value called, "cost." At the earliest point in the chain, where self-evaluation and attitudes not only arise from the

learner's own past experience, but indirectly from family, friends and significant others, as well as reference and memberships groups. I submit that such influence may be more direct and that attitudes may be about returning to school as well as about education in general.

Quigley (1992, 1997) reports using Vroom's (1964) theory in a 1989 study, although he provides no citation for this study, so I am not able to ascertain how he conducted it. Proposing adult education as an achievement-oriented activity, this is the project in which Quigley distinguishes persisters from resisters, the latter having renounced school but not education per se. Vroom (1964) claims people will engage in an achievement activity in order to satisfy their desire to get ahead and will have motivation to do so in accordance with the expectation (subjective judgment of success) and the valence (personal importance) of the activity. He does not pretend to solve "all the knotty theoretical problems involved in the determinants of valence" (Vroom, 1964, p. 19), but proposes a person's motivation to perform an activity as the sum of the products of the valences of all outcomes of the activity, and the strength of expectancy that the activity will be followed by those outcomes. It is daunting to think that Quigley's subjects would be able to anticipate "all possible outcomes" of an activity. More modern developments of expectancy-value theory by Eccles, Wigfield and colleagues do not adhere to such unflinching rationality. They acknowledge that people's affective states affect expectations of success and subjective task values.

The expectations of success and subjective task values of Eccles-Parsons et al. (1983), and Wigfield and Eccles (1992, 2000) are positively related determinants, grounded in the individual's previous experience, and linked to both psychological and

social factors. Expectations for success entail personal beliefs about how well one will do on a task or activity, and are influenced by perceptions of one's competence, task difficulty, environmental support, attitudes of significant others, etc. Task values comprise four types: the *interest* or enjoyment that an individual intrinsically perceives in the activity, the *importance* or need to attain the activity, the *utility* or relationship of the activity to future goals, and the *cost* or negative trade-off associated with having to forego some other activity in order to pursue the one under consideration.

Relative valuation of costs and benefits could be crucial to understanding how ABE students' expectations and values are modified. To date, cost is the least studied of subjective task values. How it is tolerated and how it effects expectations and other subjective task values may be pivotal in a student's on-going decision to remain in school.

Goal Content Perspective and Multiple Goals

In an extensive review of goals and goal construct literature, Austin and Vancouver (1996) define goals broadly as internal representations of desired states, having content, structure, and process. *Content* reflects the states or outcomes that people desire to achieve or to avoid. *Structure* includes properties that distinguish goals from other psychological processes, organization in terms of interrelationships and hierarchy among goals, and dimensions that vary among theorists by such issues as importance, difficulty, specificity, proximity in time, level of consciousness, or complexity. *Process* refers to temporal cycles of goal development, such as establishing, planning, evaluating and revision. This study focuses on goal content, in order to determine the outcomes students were seeking to achieve and to avoid. Specifically, outcomes anticipated at the

beginning of the program are compared to outcomes perceived during the first six weeks of participation or until withdrawal. Furthermore, “goals” herein refer to outcomes that students are able to cognitively express, and does not address what they may want that is operating outside of their awareness.

Regarding the goals that an individual seeks, Ford (1992) recognizes *content* and *process*. Of the three components of *structure* mentioned in the last paragraph, he captures goal interrelationships within a hierarchical taxonomy of goal content, and subsumes properties and dimensions within process. The Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (1987, 1992) allows analysis of goals primarily from a content perspective, with a limited consideration for their structure. I deemed process to be tacit – that is, how students managed the development of their goals. According to Ford (1992), this management includes the subgoal parameter of *scripts*, cognitive/behavioral schemas that a person has established in specific contexts. Since he defines the person as always in one context or another, or a combination of contexts, any goal is constructed in some context or another. The person must therefore find compatibility between the behavior required for a new goal and the established behavioral schemas of the context(s) within which that goal has been constructed. Failing this, she must presumably reconstruct new behaviors that will achieve compatibility, seek new contexts within which to anchor the new goal, or forfeit the new goal altogether as incompatible with her overall goal framework. Goal context is revisited in Chapter 3.

A goal content perspective allows consideration of the multiple goals that a person is attempting to satisfy. The conflict or compatibility perceived among valued goals will influence her coordination of them and their ultimate prioritization. A more specific

description of how a student judges the compatibility of returning to school with other personal/social goals important in her overall life may reveal important information about participation and withdrawal.

In summary, operationalizing benefits and costs as goals allows investigation of what students welcome and eschew as compatible with their lives when they return to school. Coming to terms with desired and undesired consequences describes expectations and values about being able to sustain participation. Understanding students' early valuation of school and goal coordination may help educators better address withdrawal.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study describes effects of school upon adult students' lives outside the classroom, which may contribute to early persistence or withdrawal from ABE programs. Specifically, it compares personal/social costs and benefits that students anticipate regarding their return to school with those that they experience after enrollment. Because studies have shown that there is a high rate of attrition within the first few weeks, I decided to focus on *early* persistence and withdrawal, shortly after enrollment, with a larger number of students than a few case studies over a longer time-frame. Holding the study to six weeks meant covering the first, crucial three to five weeks that define early withdrawal.

Expectancy-value theory suggested the direction of this study as the influence of costs and benefits upon expectations and values, but it determined neither what would constitute costs and benefits, nor how they would emerge from students' experience. Instead, benefits and costs were operationalized as goals from a content perspective – that is, cognitive representations of issues and events that students approach or avoid – in order to determine what students valued in their attempts to coordinate multiple goals. Such coordination has already been defined as finding compatibility among goal contexts. These are the personal/social situations in which the student perceives returning to school to have meaning, and in which she desires other outcomes that may or may not be compatible.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, goal contexts emerged from what students perceived as compatible or in conflict with her attempt to return to school. By reporting the areas of her life that made going to school a smooth event or a problematic

one, a student revealed the contexts in which going to school was meaningful and either successfully or unsuccessfully being coordinated with other outcomes that she desired. Whether anticipated or not, desired outcomes that a student perceived were deemed benefits, whereas undesired outcomes were considered to be costs. Outcomes that a person perceived as achieved were distinguished from outcomes that were desired but not perceived as having occurred or occurring. So the possibility of something that was desired but unachieved could produce an outcome, such as excitement or anxiety; however, the possibility itself was distinguished within the coding from actual outcomes.

Research questions are:

1. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students expect at the beginning of a program?
2. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students perceive after they begin a program?
3. How/Do differences between expected and perceived costs and benefits differ between students who persist and students who withdraw within the first six weeks of participation?

Setting

Interviews were conducted at the Department of Adult Education program at a rural community college in the southeast U.S., where I also am employed as an instructor for morning classes. In a three-county area, it was the only in-class program focused on adults. The school district operates two other programs. One deals with at-risk high school students, primarily 16-18 years old, offering them GED training if they finish vocational courses. This is essentially a stay-in-school program unavailable for adults who have been out of the school system for some time. The second is an on-line program that suffers an enrollment too sporadic to use in my study. The program I chose only

accepts students aged 16-18 years by special permission, so the vast majority of students are over 18. Furthermore, it is a leader in the state's college system by virtue of having trained six other colleges in self-paced/competency-based curriculum. Being self-paced, this program has an open-entrance/open-exit policy, and thereby on-going enrollment for ABE/GED instruction. During the regular school year, there are usually about 150 ABE/GED students enrolled per semester, along with community college students who use the same curriculum to remediate; summer enrollment is typically 35-45% lower.

County Background

This community college is located in a county which is rich for studying non-ESL adults returning to school for basic education. U.S. Census information from 2000 indicated that 29.6% of persons aged 25 and older had no high school diploma. Local Chamber of Commerce figures for 1998 estimate the population of the 25+ age group at 49,200. Using the 29.6% U.S. Census figure with this population number results in an estimated 14,564 adults aged 25+ without a high school diploma. This same community college is also the only site within the county that administers the GED, and only approximately 50 people per year aged 25+ usually achieve their GED. Therefore, a large number of people continue to reside in the area who might want basic education.

Looking at literacy figures which may play into the need for basic education, older census information from 1990 reported with a 95% confidence interval that 28% of those aged 16 and older (who at the beginning of this study were 29 and older) read at the lowest literacy level of the National Adult Literacy Survey. This level comprises adults who can perform many tasks involving simple texts and documents, but display difficulty using other skills considered necessary for functioning in everyday life. The Florida

Literacy Data and Statistics Reference Guide (2003) reports an overall county percentage of 29% for adults functioning at the lowest of five literacy levels in the National Assessment of Adult Literacy of 1992.

English as a second language does not seem to be a prominent influence upon literacy in this county. U.S. Census 2000 data show only 3.4% of the county's overall population (adult percentage unreported) were foreign born, and less than 2% were reported to speak English "Not well" and "Not at all." These ratings are somewhat compromised because English ability within census information is most probably the result of personal assessment, not a measured statistic. Similarly, the 1990 census information rated the county population who speak English very well at 98%, indicating no growth trend regarding ESL needs.

With a local unemployment rate of only 5%, according to the Chamber of Commerce, most informants were not seeking the GED to obtain employment per se, but to improve their access to different jobs and increase their income. Jobs available for informants are primarily limited to retail sales, manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. The second-largest local manufacturer, a wood-furniture company, closed down in 2002, the year before the study started. The four other largest employers – pulp and paper, plywood, lumber, and an electric power plant – have restricted their hiring practices to require the GED since the late 1980's. It is not uncommon for a man beyond his mid-30's, who has enjoyed satisfactory work and pay in one of these companies, even at the supervisory level, to lose his job through reorganization and find himself ineligible for anything else available there, because of the GED requirement that was instituted since his initial employment. Women tend to acquire more fast-food and cashiering/retail

work than what is available within the mills. Whereas a generation or two ago 16-year-olds could quit school and find jobs that provided an acceptable quality of life, the children and grandchildren of these people are not finding this to be the case.

Overview of Adult Education Program

The Department of Adult Education accommodates two types of students. First are those who seek the GED equivalent of a high school diploma. Second are students who have a high school diploma but need remediation in reading, writing, or math in order to satisfy the college placement test. The lower division curriculum, or basic education below 9.0 G.E., is identical for both groups. Students are not segregated by whether or not they have a diploma and typically only know this information by befriending other students. While people seeking their GED have no time constraint on their performance, students preparing for college enrollment are registered each semester for whatever amount of the curriculum the counseling department has deemed appropriate.

The self-paced nature of this program differs from “traditional” educational format in that students work at their own speed. Prepared curriculum materials are identified by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as appropriate for each individual according to her particular skill deficits. No class lectures require students to be present at specified hours. Instead, students attend school during designated times that they have chosen between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. While there is no upper limit upon a student’s participation, less than six hours a week is discouraged and less than four hours a week is unacceptable. (Differences among informants’ schedules is discussed in Procedures, Attendance Record.)

Students have book work and computer work, both of which provide lessons developed in accordance with the state's Department of Education performance standards and allow for tutored assistance by trained teachers. Book work and computer work are scheduled for equal amounts of time, that is half of a student's time is spent reading printed material and half is spent on computer lessons – both utilize tests for measuring competence. Practice work is provided for each performance standard until a student decides she is ready to take a test.

Differences from what students typically encountered in public school are that there is no cooperative peer work, no public comparisons of students' work, no easily observable identification of an individual's level of work by other students, and little teaching by the instructors that is not solicited. What makes this environment evocative of *school* is that learners study lesson guides and complete practice problems, defer to teachers as arbiters of skill and knowledge, take standardized pre-tests and post-tests, and receive passing/failing evaluations on their tests.

I did not presume to make value judgments about the above parameters of the self-paced program, although a couple benefits sprang readily to mind. One particular advantage of the self-paced curriculum over traditional classes is that students are usually able to have a successful post-test experience with a specific performance standard each time that they attend, as opposed to traditional assignments which often require more time investment before receiving positive feedback from tests. In reading and writing particularly, as opposed to math, students often pass several book and computer lessons on any given day.

A second advantage is that students enjoy a more independent role in their learning process, by controlling the pace and to some extent sequencing the particular skills of their coursework. However, specifically not in evidence is structured interaction that would foster the development of in-class social relationships. While protecting a student's sense of exposure within the class, this may also serve to make social support from out-of-class relationships more important.

In this program, students work at the ABE level to bring reading, writing, and math skills up to 8.9 GE, and then at the GED level with practice tests for the five subtests of the GED. These tests include skills above 9.0 GE for reading, writing, and math, which are not covered in the ABE work. The curriculum continually diagnoses student work to ascertain precise weak areas, so that students are able to focus on exactly what they need. When they demonstrate 80% mastery of all five areas, the department administers a predictor test, which is comparable to the GED, except that it has only half as many items. Results of the predictor test are adjusted to reflect GED-like scores – that is, they show the number of points achieved in each subtest category (410 minimum number of points required in each subtest to pass) as well as a total point value (2250 minimum number of total points from all five subtests required to pass), which is designed to preclude passing with minimum scores in all areas. While proceeding this far usually guarantees a student's preparedness for the GED, many opt to challenge it earlier.

Two apparent disadvantages of this self-paced, competency-based program come to mind. The first has to do with it being self-paced. The student who either desires substantial teacher attention or is a poor visual learner is not likely to be satisfied, because of the requirement to work independently much of the time. While some audio-tapes are

available, the bulk of the curriculum is on printed materials or the computer screen.

Teachers accommodate special needs as best they can, but one-on-one instruction is only available sporadically.

The second disadvantage, having to do with competency-based assessments, is that students are constantly focused on their weak areas. The exception to this is the student who did not apply herself on the placement test and starts out at a level that is well within her abilities. However, for the most part, the program targets skill deficits. While this focus on weak areas is helpful for students that do not want to “waste” their time, it nonetheless may have a chilling effect on the motivation of others.

Informants

Adults who enrolled in the Department of Adult Education were considered eligible based on the following six criteria:

- a) they were 25 years of age or older;
- b) they held no high school diploma or GED;
- c) they had not been in any other formal education program for at least six months;
- d) they scored below 9.0 GE on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for curriculum placement in reading or writing;
- e) they were native English speakers;
- f) they were not in the same classes that I teach.

The above-listed criteria were chosen for objective identification of basic education adults who might demonstrate the meanings I wished to investigate. By limiting informants to people who were at least 25, I hoped that they would be established as adults in two ways: (a) having achieved a level of social and economic independence

so that networks of significant others would extend beyond parental ties, and (b) having social networks that were not merely residual from recent high school attendance. Having networks of friends from high school is probably a more stable circumstance after several years' time than shortly after leaving school. While I was sensitive to gender differences among informants, I chose at this time to look more generally at the basic education experience from the point of view of both genders. Those who already held high a school diploma or GED, but had been referred by the community college to remediate reading or language, were not eligible because they might have entirely different expectations with regard to school than those without a diploma or GED. Students who had not been in a formal education program for at least six months might be thought to approach anew the sense of returning to school, and not as an ongoing accommodation to enrollment, which might look quite different from when it first began. The Department of Adult Education uses the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for placement within the curriculum (details will be discussed in the next section). Students with TABE reading or writing scores above 9.0 GE work specifically on GED test material, whereas those below 9.0 GE are formally defined as ABE students and address reading, writing and math competencies before practicing GED tests. Adults who speak English as a second language have sometimes achieved literacy in their native language and only need adult education for English. Such a person might not only have an entirely different relationship to literacy per se but might also experience other language issues that could have complicated the experience being investigated here. While informants knew that I was a teacher in their program, I did not interview those whom I taught, to minimize a conflict of interest or ambiguous perception of my role.

Students who qualified except for the final criterion that they not be in my classes became a comparison group. I tracked the attendance of this group to see if there were differences in participation between adult basic education students in the study and those not in the study. Such differences could indicate that the study itself may have influenced attendance. In charts that compiled information comparing these two groups, those in the study are distinguished as informants, while the ones not in the study whose attendance was tracked are called comparison students.

Informants were solicited across three semesters, which I am reporting as three recruiting phases. Phase I was the time frame in which I conducted the pilot-testing of grand tour questions. Phase I informants are P1- P6, and there were no other students who qualified for the study, except for being in my classes, to track in the comparison group. Phase II initially provided nine informants; however, one woman chose to withdraw from the study. These then became eight, Informants A-I, without Informant G, whose participation was evaluated as a member of the comparison group. (Informant G is discussed again in the Interviews section.) This semester also provided nine students who qualified for the study except for the fact that I was one of their teachers. These nine students are C1-C9 in the comparison group, which then totaled ten, because of Informant G. Phase III provided ten informants, J-S, and twelve students in the comparison group, C10-C21. The three phases are summarized as follows:

	<u>Informants</u>	<u>Comparison students</u>
Phase I (summer 2003)	P1 - P6	None
Phase II (fall 2003)	A - I (less G)	C1 - C9 (plus G)
Phase III (spring 2004)	<u>J - S</u>	<u>C10 - C21</u>
Totals	24 informants	22 comparison students

Demographic and Background Information

Demographic and background information is presented in Table 2. Columns display, in order, from left to right: informant in the study group or student in the comparison group, gender, ethnicity (White, African-American, Hispanic), age at the time interviews began, reading grade equivalent from the TABE test, reading scale score from the TABE test, writing grade equivalent from the TABE test, writing scale score from the TABE test; and for informants only: the last grade of high school completed, the number of previous enrollments in adult education, and the time elapsed since an informant's most recent previous adult education enrollment.

Informants (P1 through S) were 24 students seeking the GED who began their coursework with reading or writing competence below 9.0 GE, which deemed them ABE students. (This and the following figures discount Informant G, who chose to withdraw from the study.) They were 58% white (8 White males, 5 White females); 38% African-American (3 African-American males, 6 African-American females); and 4% Hispanic (no Hispanic males, 1 Hispanic female), in accordance with self-disclosure on enrollment forms. Ages ranged from 25 to 52. Their last school grade completed ranged from 7th to 11th. Seven informants (29%) enrolled in adult education for the first time; the remaining 17 (71%) had previous enrollments. Of these 17, the time elapsed since their last adult education enrollment ranged from 7 months to 15 years.

Comparison group students (C1-C21 and G) were 73% white (9 White males, 7 White females); 18% African-American (2 African-American males, 2 African-American females); and 9% Hispanic (2 Hispanic males, no Hispanic females), in accordance with self-disclosure on enrollment forms. Ages ranged from 25 to 62.

Table 2: Demographic and Background Information

Inf.	Gen.	Eth.	Age	R-GE	R-SS	W-GE	W-SS	HS	Prev. Enr.	Last Enr.
P1	M	W	44	5.9 A	515	6.9 E	562	8	1	10 yrs
P2	M	W	34	8.8 D	565	4.3 M	499	9	1	8 yrs
P3	M	AA	32	6.2 A	522	7.8 E	546	11	1	3 yrs
P4	F	AA	48	7.7 M	547	4.3 M	499	11	1	12 yrs
P5	F	W	34	8.5 D	559	10.1 D	574	9	1	1 yr
P6	F	W	52	9.2 D	558	5.4 M	499	9	3	2 yrs
A	F	W	33	9.4 D	576	4.3 M	499	7	2	4 yrs
B	M	AA	40	5.3 M	501	3.7 E	486	9	0	N/A
C	F	AA	25	10.0 D	582	4.3 M	499	11	2	5 yrs
D	F	AA	25	7.6 D	544	8.1 D	550	11	3	2 yrs
E	M	W	35	7.6 D	544	6.1 E	526	10	0	N/A
F	M	W	52	8.8 D	565	12.9 A	657	11	1	1.5 yrs
H	M	W	48	5.4 D	502	5.0 E	508	8	0	N/A
I	F	W	29	5.2 D	496	6.8 E	539	11	0	N/A
J	F	W	48	4.8 M	434	3.5 E	464	9	1	10 yrs
K	M	AA	39	2.5 M	410	2.8 E	448	8	5	7 mos
L	M	W	39	10.0 A	582	4.8 M	505	10	1	3 yrs
M	F	AA	30	8.1 D	550	9.9 M	582	10	1	4 yrs
N	F	H	26	6.6 D	531	2.1 D	407	11	0	N/A
O	F	AA	29	4.6 A	480	7.7 M	545	11	1	10 mos
P	M	W	39	8.5 D	559	4.8 M	505	9	1	15 yrs
Q	F	W	33	8.8 D	565	7.0 M	546	10	0	N/A
R	M	W	41	6.0 D	518	6.2 M	528	9	0	N/A
S	F	AA	27	5.2 D	497	9.7 D	567	10	4	4 yrs
Comp. Stud.	Gen.	Eth.	Age	R-GE	R-SS	W-GE	W-SS			
G	F	AA	38	3.5 D	445	2.5 E	430			
C1	F	W	55	8.6 A	562	11.1 D	588			
C2	M	W	33	5.8 M	514	3.4 D	479			
C3	F	AA	56	4.8 D	484	5.3 E	514			
C4	M	W	49	3.3 M	440	2.6 E	436			
C5	F	W	31	5.7 A	510	7.2 M	541			
C6	F	W	26	9.1 A	570	8.6 A	556			
C7	M	W	34	9.4 A	577	7.8 M	546			
C8	M	W	27	9.4 D	576	3.1 E	540			
C9	M	W	25	12.9 D	624	3.1 E	464			
C10	M	AA	28	7.8 D	549	6.8 D	539			
C11	M	AA	25	5.6 D	507	5.8 M	522			
C12	M	W	25	7.6 D	544	4.2 E	497			
C13	F	W	44	7.2 D	539	6.2 M	528			
C14	M	H	36	8.8 D	565	7.8 M	546			
C15	F	W	62	9.9 M	586	7.8 M	546			
C16	F	W	32	8.6 D	562	4.3 E	494			
C17	F	W	39	0.8 D	287	2.9 M	458			
C18	M	W	25	4.6 M	478	3.2 E	470			
C19	M	W	25	10.8 A	593	6.2 M	528			
C20	M	H	33	10.0 A	582	8.1 D	550			
C21	M	W	25	2.4 E	407	1.9 E	393			

Note. P1-P6 and A-S (without G, who withdrew) are informants. G and C1-C21 are students in the comparison group. Columns gender, ethnicity, age, reading grade equivalency, reading scale score, writing grade equivalency, writing scale score, last grade of school completed, number of previous adult education enrollments, and time elapsed since last adult education enrollment.

Reading and writing scores derived from the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) were included in the study to ascertain the possible association of literacy levels with participation, as an independent influence upon withdrawal. This test was developed by CTB/McGraw Hill, assesses basic academic skills, is normed on populations aged 15 and above, and is statistically correlated to the GED. Each of the two forms currently in use range in difficulty from pre-literacy through 12 GE. To accurately gauge skills at the level of content difficulty of the grades indicated, it is administered as a timed test. However, to diagnose learning objectives for curriculum placement, it may be used without time limits, as was the case for the informants in this study. This non-standard administration does compromise interpretations of the norms, but CTB recognizes this as a valid use of the TABE for instructional purposes. Therefore, the scores in Table 2 cannot be considered to be true norm-referenced comparisons, but indicative of learning objectives that an individual still needs to master.

The TABE was designed to serve two purposes. These are distinguished within the resulting score by a numeric component, which notes Grade Equivalent (GE), and an alphabetic component, which designates ability to comprehend content on an E (easy), M (medium), D (difficult), or A (advanced) level. Each is discussed below.

First, the TABE is diagnostic for *basic skills*, reflected in the numeric, grade equivalent (GE) portion of the score for what an adult can do. TABE publishers claim it was designed to measure the achievement of basic skills commonly found in adult education curricula. Curriculum developers who contributed to development of the TABE were from adult education programs, vocational/technical programs, and colleges, although no specific names are mentioned and no instructional objectives are referenced.

Test designers note that “the purpose of validation (of the TABE) is not to validate the test itself, but to validate the interpretations of the test scores for particular purposes” (TABE 7 & 8 Technical Report, 1996).

Basic reading skills that the TABE tests are interpreting graphic information, defining words in context, recalling information, constructing meaning, and evaluating and extending meaning. Reading comprehension questions are explicit, implicit, and predicative in nature. Reading selections are predominantly expository, so there is no way to tell if the reader has more skills with narrative text than expository text. The TABE does not measure a person’s reading rate. Basic writing skills that the TABE tests are usage, sentence formation, capitalization, punctuation, and writing conventions. Because the TABE is a multiple choice test, a person may be a good test taker by guessing but not be able to transfer the measured skills into authentic contexts. The TABE does not measure a student’s ability to write.

In order to construct the GE scale for adults who are not students currently in K-12 programs, the TABE scale scores of 6,000 adults were equated to children’s scores on the California Achievement Test, 5th Edition, in 1994. From that linking study, the TABE GE determination was made. A 6.9 GE score on the TABE purports that this adult scored similarly to the average score on the CAT of children who were nearing the end of the sixth grade.

Although the GE score is a commonly used scale score, it is not meaningful for nongraded instruction and may be inadequate or misleading for adult education. While adults have more experience and breadth of background knowledge that children lack, the adults in adult basic education may not have much knowledge about school subjects.

Therefore, to make the TABE valid for instructional and vocational use with adults, there is a second, *content* component, which is the alphabetic portion of the TABE score (E, M, D, A, for easy, medium difficult, and advanced, respectively). The content score identifies the grade level of the information upon which the tester demonstrated her basic reading or writing skills. TABE developers drew content from reference books, texts, state curricula, etc. previously identified by grade level according to publishers and state guidelines. They identified E (easy) content from mid-grade one to the end of third grade (1.6 - 3.9 GE), M (medium) content from mid-third grade to the end of sixth grade (3.6 - 6.9 GE) D (difficult) content from mid-sixth grade to the end of eighth grade (6.6 - 8.9 GE), and A (advanced) from mid-eighth grade to post-high school (8.6 - 13+ GE). There is about a half grade of overlap between each level. Hence, the “E,” “M,” “D,” or “A” in Table 2 next to each informant’s GE score for reading and writing.

Each section of the TABE – reading, mathematics, and writing – commences with a 17-item Locator Test, which indicates the level of content difficulty (Easy, Medium, Difficult, or Advanced) most appropriately administered to each examinee. The Department of Adult Education does not require a specific level for entry, but uses the Locator Test to obtain the most accurate measurement of knowledge to assign computer lessons and modify bookwork. Overall, the locator is deemed by CTB to be accurate $\frac{3}{4}$ of the time. Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the time, the student should be more accurately placed a level above or below.

In Table 2, the GE scores for basic skills in reading and writing do not always fall in accordance with the GE range for content scores. Thirty-eight percent of the students reflect R-GE or W-GE numeric scores whose range of grade equivalency is not the same

as that of the content, alphabetic score. Eighteen percent reflect a basic skill GE score one level *higher* than the equivalent range for their content score. Another way to frame this is to say that the content score reflected a *lower* level than one would expect for the basic skill GE score. For example, a student scored 7.8 M, indicating a basic skill level toward the end of the seventh grade, which would ideally equate to a content score of D (6.6 - 8.9 GE); however, this tester scored M for content, representing only 3.6 - 6.9 GE for content. Therefore, the basic skill GE is one level higher than the content GE. Two percent of students reflect a basic skill GE score two levels higher than the equivalent range for their content score – for example, a student scored 7.8 E when E represents 1.6 - 3.9 GE, rather than D which is where one would hope to see a student reading content appropriate to her basic skills.

These discrepancies could be attributed to the inaccuracy of the Locator Test. Or they could typify a person who quit school, continued to read or write but did not retain classroom information she had been exposed to, and now some years later finds herself to be an adequate reader/writer devoid of knowledge about the background material frequently used in the texts of reading and writing tests. In fact, it is not uncommon for a middle-aged adult to pass the GED test who has TABE reading or writing scores below 9.0 GE. Overall, these scores do not present a problem for this study, because all of these students demonstrated abilities that indicated they were found to have been appropriately placed below 9.0 GE, which is the TABE criterion.

The remaining 16% of the 38% that was noted for out-of-range scores reflect GE scores *lower* than the equivalent range for their content score. Twelve percent show a GE score one level lower than their associated content range, and 4% of them are two levels

lower. These scores could also be attributed to the inaccuracy of the Locator Test. Or this could be the result of a student who ceased to apply herself after the locator portion of the TABE. She may have done this due to illness, fatigue, frustration, or boredom, but it is not rare. Such students simply start the curriculum at a lower level than they need and must inevitably show the same competencies that they ignored on the test. Despite these discrepancies, no informant was waived to the upper division curriculum within her first six weeks— all of them worked on basic reading or writing. The impact of variability in student reading and writing GE scores upon participation will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, GE scores do not reflect a scale of equal intervals. Adult TABE scale scores (“SS” in Table 2) comprise equal intervals and are reported by CTB to be a more accurate assessment of reading and writing abilities per se, than the GE which reflects school-equivalent competence. The reason both GE and SS assessments are included here is because this study needed to consider whether reading and writing abilities may have been responsible for attendance differences among informants. While SS assessments reflect reading and writing ability per se, GE assessments are what students see on their paperwork. I deemed it worth considering both an informant’s scale scores to show her demonstrated ability, and GE scores to show what might be her perception of her ability. The impact of variability in student reading and writing scale scores upon participation is also discussed in Results.

Information for the last three columns – last HS grade completed, number of previous adult education enrollments, and the time elapsed since a student’s last enrollment – was not available for C1-C21, comparison students who were tracked only for attendance comparisons and not interviewed.

Near the end of the study, Informant Q unexpectedly was found to be discrepant from all other informants. I had presumed and encountered that informants were seeking their entire GED. That is, they were not enrolling with some subtest(s) of the GED already satisfied, and seeking to retest for only the remaining subtest(s). I did not discover until interviews had begun that Informant Q, despite ABE-level reading and writing TABE scores, was lacking only the math subtest to acquire her GED.

Procedures

This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, in order to explore the phenomenon of early withdrawal and to measure the commonality of students' experience in relationship to it. Mixed methods can be traced to Campbell and Fisk (1959), whose "multimethodmatrix" studied the validity of psychological traits. Later work with mixed methods included interviews combined with surveys (Sieber, 1973), triangulation for convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods to neutralize each of their biases (Jick, 1979), methods being used to inform each other (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989), and methods nested for different levels of analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In current parlance, the general strategy I used to obtain a comprehensive analysis of early withdrawal is *concurrent procedures*. In this design, data are collected in one phase, and then interpreted to provide both qualitative and quantitative results. My rationale, as stated, was to capture students' subjective experience and see the degree to which that experience shared common elements.

I operationalized benefits and costs as goal content, consequences that informants sought to achieve and to avoid. Simplistically, I reported as benefits the positive issues

and events that informants seemed to welcome, and costs as the negative issues and events that they seemed to eschew. *What* and *how* questions uncovered what they expected to occur as well as what they perceived to have occurred. These questions were developed and piloted to elicit informants' purposes, desires, and concerns, by prompting them to discuss their desired futures and various ways that school could impact their everyday lives in the present. While the overall "school goal" that I ascribed to students was to maintain participation in the program, other discussion of goals was in reference to the Ford and Nichols taxonomy as goal *consequences* and goal *categories* that it delineates.

I do not believe that either qualitative or quantitative methods dominated in this study, because of the contribution each makes and the interplay between them that was involved in data analysis. Qualitative data about benefits and costs was collected from open-ended interviews and then coded into predetermined code categories. Percentages of informants who reported benefits and costs within goal subsets were tabulated across groups of informants that demonstrated different rates of participation. Specific goal consequences within those subsets were analyzed for qualitative differences to describe benefits and costs associated with persistence and withdrawal. A retrospective analysis of informants' interest in the program was quantified to statistically correlate it to attendance and to the number of benefits that were qualitatively derived. In my view, this embeddedness suggests that quantitative and qualitative methods were nested, but does not speak to dominance.

Hoping to achieve saturation, the point at which new data confirms conceptual categories that have been found without supporting evidence of new ones, I adopted

Merten's (1998) recommendation of 30-50 interviews. I predicted I would need 10-12 informants that ultimately fell into each group: withdrawers and persisters. I further predicted that this number would produce 40-48 interviews for each group; however, I overlooked one event and encountered another that was unexpected.

The event I overlooked is that the number of interview hours for withdrawers would be smaller because they attend fewer weeks. Minimally, an informant who withdrew would provide an initial interview and a withdrawal interview by phone. Maximally, an informant could provide three interviews while participating, and their fourth could be the withdrawal interview by phone. Mezirow et al. (1975) reports occurrences of early withdrawal at 10-20% and 25-49%. More recently, it has been estimated at 18-33% (Perin & Greenberg, 1994; Quigley, 1992) and 22% (Reder & Strawn, 2001). Expecting the same number of interviews from withdrawers as persisters, therefore, was unrealistic. This study encountered a 6:15 ratio of Withdrawers to Persisters, putting early withdrawal per se at 28%, excluding the Gray Zone. Including the Gray Zone informants, non-persistence was 37.5%.

The event I encountered unexpectedly became apparent in the latter half of Phase I. Informants who reduced their attendance to a chronic level that would usually discourage persistence within a traditional program remained enrolled in the self-paced program of this study. A student who decreases participation in a traditional program is usually pressured, either by themselves or the program (instructors, counselors, etc.) to resume full participation because of missed work, make-up tests, negative progress reports, etc. An inability or disinclination to resume full participation often leads to students' ceasing to attend altogether. In the self-paced program, however, students are

able to simply pick up where they left off with no pressure from the program. The Department of Adult Education only drops students from the rolls who fail to attend for a 2-week period without informing someone in the program of an intended return date. Subsequent to this, a student must re-enroll. Students know this policy. The result is that they may attend erratically without affecting their enrollment status.

This type of participation fell between my intended definition of sustained persistence, as regular attendance, and outright withdrawal, as cessation of attendance in line with the department's 2-week policy. For this reason, I labeled such informants as the "Gray Zone" between persistence and withdrawal. These were the students who remained enrolled as long as they showed up at least once every two weeks. I interpreted their marginal attendance as prolonged disengagement, and welcomed it as an expanded window to study what precluded them from achieving greater participation. The distinction between Persisters and Gray Zone informants turned out to be 80% attendance or better and below 60% attendance, respectively.

Like outright Withdrawers who ceased attending before completing six weeks of participation, Gray Zone informants generally lacked the effects of school upon their lives outside the classroom that I found to distinguish Persisters. This corroborated my definition of Gray Zone informants as quasi-withdrawers, rather than as quasi-persisters. In this light, the study compiled the following:

- 60 interviews from 15 Persisters,
- 25 interviews from 9 Non-persisters:
 - 12 interviews from 3 Gray Zone informants and
 - 13 interviews from 6 outright Withdrawers.

More importantly, I believe that I achieved saturation. All seven Persisters in Phase III corroborated the patterns of Persistence exhibited in Phases I and II. I readily acknowledge that new properties might emerge from further study, and that new information may be meaningful to a student in ways that the information I have gathered is not. But I do not expect that new properties would contradict the suggestion I have developed to describe persistence and lack of persistence within the first six weeks of adult education participation.

Recruitment

The Department of Adult Education accepts students on a walk-in basis without semester constraints. The first three informants were approached after they took the TABE test, and I attempted to interview them either before or after their first scheduled class time. However, it was difficult for students to keep appointments for extra time, so I obtained approval from the dean of the department to use student's class time for soliciting and interviewing informants. From then on, informants were recruited within the first two days of their class participation in the program.

I introduced myself as a teacher in the program who was, like them, also an adult in school. I explained that while there were many studies that focused on how students felt about and fit in with school, there was less information about how school fits into the lives of adults, who often already have a full slate of responsibilities. They were informed that the study was not soliciting people under 25, because younger people often did not have the same kinds of responsibility as a more mature adult.

After that, I asked if they would be interested in learning more about the study, and assured them that it would require no time outside of their scheduled hours with the

program. If they asked how long interviews lasted, I told them the first interview usually took about 15-20 minutes. Later interviews were often longer, but informants sat in full view of a clock, should they have wished to limit their time. Interviews were never constrained to less than 45 minutes of the informant's available class time, but rarely lasted longer than 30 minutes. At no time did I experience a sense of the informant wishing me to get the interview over with; most students seemed genuinely interested in their own observations, especially by the third and fourth interviews.

With the agreement to learn more about the study, we relocated to an empty room, which was always a classroom that I knew would not be one of the students' own. I read the Consent Form (Appendix A) aloud as they read along silently, adding information and answering questions. Students were invited to take the form and return it; however, no one did. I also emphasized that they were under no obligation to join the study. Most were ready to start talking and some I had to slow down until I could turn on the tape recorder. A few were unsure they would have anything to offer, and I told them if they wanted to try the first interview, they could always reconsider staying in the study before the second one.

I intentionally did not disclose two research points. The first is that I was targeting basic education students, because I did not want the normative aspect of their student self-concept to be more salient than usual. The second is that my ultimate dissertation goal would address early withdrawal, because I did not want them to think about withdrawal more than they already would. However, once I realized that withdrawal interviews would typically have to occur by phone, I started telling informants at the end of the first interview that once they were in the study, their story would be important whether or not

they stayed with the program, so that if I had to call them at home, it would be in no way to ask about their attendance, but simply to find out how school was or was not fitting into their lives. I believed it was important to distinguish the study as much as possible from the program, so that informants who withdrew would not view my call as program oversight and perhaps feel defensive. I also reminded withdrawers of this distinction when I ultimately called them for their final interview.

Interviews

After informants signed the consent form, we conducted the first interview, and agreed to interview again in 10 days to 2 weeks, by me finding them during their normal class time. Follow-up interviews were conducted when informants felt ready to take a break or pause in their work. Again, we always used an empty classroom that was not one that the student had class in, to minimize any constraint that the environment would put on the informant. Each Interview Guide has a short statement prefacing the questions to remind informants that I was talking to them as another adult student, and not representing the school or the program. Students were always alerted to when the tape recorder was being turned on. Since conversation preceded and followed the taped session in order to ease into and out of the interview, interviews for the most part fit smoothly into a broader interaction.

Everyone who qualified agreed to enter the study (24 informants). Informant G decided to withdraw when it came time for the second interview. The only feedback I received was that she didn't "feel like it;" we remained comfortably cordial when I saw her after that. I was able to obtain complete sets of interview from all informants. That is, students who persisted through six weeks were interviewed four times, and students who

ceased attending were interviewed during their participation and once again after their withdrawal. Withdrawal interviews were conducted by phone, at times arranged when informants said they would be comfortable and free of external distractions.

My original plan was to contact students at 10-day intervals. The purpose was to capture information related to the first week of the program and be able to note subsequent changes that would be integral to understanding students' thinking processes. However, 10-day intervals did not always work out. The program only holds classes four days a week, Monday through Thursday, and some students only attend two days a week. If I could not contact a student on a targeted date, it was sometimes 5 days before I saw them again. Such a gap also meant that sometimes an informant didn't have enough school experience between interviews to cause her to reassess her expectations. It turned out that 2 to 2-1/2 week intervals worked out better, and sometimes even those became longer if I didn't catch a student on the one particular time she attended out of several days that I tried to catch her. In general, I tried to get the second interview as close to 10 days as possible, to capture crucial first impressions, then let the following third and fourth interviews occur at 2-week intervals.

I often saw informants between interviews and after an informant had completed all of her interviews. They seemed to take a measure of pride in having contributed to the study. All informants received a \$15 gift certificate to Chili's (the newest restaurant in town) upon the completion of their interviews and a thank-you note. I asked for their address at the end of the last interview, with the stated purpose of sending a thank-you note.

I do not believe the information that I gathered could have been elicited in less than four interviews – maybe three interviews, but the fourth was often invaluable for important information. Even being careful to postpone questions potentially loaded with judgment for the last interview, such as the last year they completed high school or exactly how many times they had enrolled in GED programs in the past, it takes time to develop rapport with strangers – especially the kind of rapport that allows them to admit feelings of inadequacy, past participation in something like Narcotics Anonymous, or wishing for more encouragement from their spouse. This rapport highlights the interactive nature of qualitative work, for not only did I apparently win their trust, but they won my sometimes overwhelming respect.

Grand Tour Questions

Interview questions did not ask informants what they believed would be or had become benefits or costs. Instead, the questions asked how they came to be returning to school, what they felt school would do for them both right away and in the long run, what kinds of things would make it easy or difficult to go to school, what people would help or hinder them going to school, etc. These questions were prompts to encourage informants to consider these and any other aspects of their everyday lives that they associated with school. As will be discussed in reference to coding, I identified responses as benefits or costs simply by whether the informant seemed to welcome an issue or event as helpful for attendance, or eschew it as problematic.

In Phase I, interview questions were pilot-tested and refined until four consecutive informants were responsive to and comfortable with them. Refining consisted of making the prompts were more understandable to informants and effective at eliciting their

experience. The resulting Grand Tour Questions (1-27, see Appendix B) were also organized into five interview guides, to provide variety and continuity in successive interviews for persisters, and to capture important information from withdrawers. While interviews were essentially structured, in that they established a definitive focus, the overall discussion was flexible enough to accommodate individuals' viewpoints about costs and benefits. (Appendix B provides Grand Tour Questions and Interview Guides.)

After Phase II, Grand Tour Questions 28 and 29 were added to the interview guides for the first and second interviews, respectively. For the most part, interview transcripts after Phase I show the question numbers with each grand tour question, which makes it easy to relocate specific kinds of information. However, such numbering is not present in every transcript, since I sometimes typed them without access to prepared templates which had each set of numbered interview questions, and I never took the time to add 28 and 29 to their respective templates. Therefore, information directly in response to grand tour questions is in all the interview transcripts, but is not always numbered correspondingly.

In addition to Grand Tour Questions, the fourth interview included what I have called the Have-to/Like-to chart. This was an attempt to tease out some distinction between the values of interest and importance. It quickly became evident that all students returned to school with strong senses of utility and importance for the GED. What the Have-to/Like-to chart asked for was a retrospective evaluation of if and when school had also become interesting. I did not develop it in time for P1 and P2, but otherwise used it for all persisters and gray zone informants. I did not deem it appropriate to attempt to gain this information from outright withdrawers who were contacted for their final interview

by phone and therefore could not see the charts. After presenting the three, sample Have-To/Like-To charts, students were asked to evaluate their own sense of importance versus interest, and their individual chart was taped to their fourth interview transcript.

(Appendix C shows the sample charts, and Appendix B, Interview Guide – Fourth Interview, provides the typical narrative that accompanied them.)

The distribution of Grand Tour Questions across the interviews provided some variety but allowed me to revisit important topics. The first interview solicited informants' initial expectations. Questions in the second interview attempted to uncover changes among informants' perceptions from what they expected, how they then saw themselves as students, and ways that school may or may not have been fitting into their overall lives. The third interview primarily paraphrased questions from the second interview about personal perceptions and asked about participation as an issue per se. The fourth interview reviewed salient information from the third interview, inviting more comment or modification, had informants fill out the Have-to/Like-to chart, and asked about influences of the study. The withdrawal interview addressed as many questions as seemed appropriate from the above, given that some informants participated too short to meaningfully answer certain questions.

Attendance Record

The Department of Adult Education holds class Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (Fridays are reserved for TABE testing). Each student determined her own schedule, according to the level of commitment she chose to make – attending different hours on different days was not a problem, as best suited students needs. Holidays and college closures were excluded from the calculation, so that a student's attendance

percentage was not penalized by days that were not available for participation. Partial weeks (e.g., M-W of Thanksgiving week, or M-T at the end of the spring semester) were included in the Attendance Record (Appendix D) as part of students' participation, with students' attendance pro-rated; weeks wholly closed for spring and semester breaks were eliminated from the Attendance Record without a gap in the sequence of students' participation.

Students' attendance percentages do not reflect equitable amounts of participation, but adherence to the schedules they made at the time of their initial enrollment. For example, some students may have signed up for three hours four times a week, whereas others may have scheduled only two hours three times a week. The self-paced program recommends at least six hours a week, usually across two or three days, and does not accept less than four hours' participation. No one in the study was scheduled for less than four hours and two days a week. If a student changed her schedule, then the attendance percentage was based upon the newer commitment. In this manner, the attendance percentages were not made by evaluating students' participation against the participation of other students, but against their own elective schedules.

Furthermore, because attendance was monitored by a sign-in log, attendance percentages reflect the number of *days* a student participated within a given week, but not necessarily the exact number of *hours*. Class rolls were neither recorded consistently enough nor updated timely enough to rely on hourly assessments. It is possible that a student showed up and received credit for attending a day that she did not actually remain for the entire number of hours scheduled. It is also possible, although less common, that a student may have stayed longer than the amount of time scheduled. Therefore, attendance

percentages represent the number of days a student attended with respect to her individual schedule, but not amounts of seat-time invested in adult education coursework. If one were to use the attendance percentages to estimate the number of hours actually invested, such figures would most likely be inaccurately liberal, or over-stated.

In order to distinguish students who persisted from those who withdrew or attended poorly enough to define the Gray Zone, attendance was calculated in weekly percentages for both informants in the study and students in the comparison group (6-Week Actual Average). However, because I knew of illness, hospitalizations, family deaths, etc., I also made an Adjusted Average, which eliminated each student's poorest week of attendance and averaged the best five out of six weeks. This adjusted average is also likely to make the attendance percentage liberal, since students whose worst weeks of participation were not due to serious extenuating circumstances benefited by a higher percentage than they would otherwise have realized. In order to see which informants might be marginal Persisters (only sustain participation for six weeks and then withdraw, as did Informant I), I monitored percentages until Week 12.

Interview Intervals

Interview Intervals (Appendix E) reports the number of days that elapsed between informants' interviews. The reason that an informant's first interview might occur on Day 3, despite the Consent Form stipulation that she begin within two days' time of commencing the program, is because I sometimes contacted a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday student on their second day of participation, which technically is Day 3 on the Interview Intervals chart. Interview Intervals counts 7-day weeks, so that it

accurately reflects the number of days elapsed from the beginning of participation, excluding any whole week that the college was closed.

Although, as has already been stated, GED students are not limited to enrollment at the beginning of semesters, they rarely begin near the end of a semester. Most informants finished their interviews within the same semester that they initially enrolled. The exception to this is the last four informants (P-S), who enrolled after spring break and remained in the study during the summer semester.

An irregularity occurred between Informant K's third and fourth interviews, and Informant O's second and third interviews, due to my own illness, a sinus infection, that kept me home for a week. Otherwise, the intervals reflect the logistics of catching students as was best possible, given that I typically returned to school two evenings a week, in addition to staying any afternoon that interviews looked prospective. With no staff at a department phone after 5:00 p.m., it was not possible to know if an evening student was present until I arrived. Sometimes I would miss an informant because I'd waited 30-45 minutes after their scheduled time, and they would arrive later than that.

Informants were never aware that I'd waited for them when they did not show up. I always greeted them and began interviews as if I had no knowledge of their attendance. Except for withdrawers' phone interviews that were often arranged, there was never an agreement that the subsequent interview would occur on a certain date because I did not want the study to put any kind of onus upon students to attend.

Informant Data Logs

My personal impressions of each informant, individual background information, questions that evolved over the course of her interviews, and follow-up notes about

attendance and school goals are contained in composition books. In addition, there is a narrative summary of each informant that provides a short overview of her circumstances and helps me recapture a sense of her individual orientation to school.

Interview Transcripts

Interviews were typed verbatim as soon as possible after each interview. The taped interviews did not usually include the repetitive pre-interview reminders that I was also an adult student and the post-interview thank-yous. I felt it was important to have some less formal conversation with the informant before and after the interview than the tape recorder represented.

As interview transcripts were reviewed, data were highlighted and marginal notes indicated relevant coding categories. (Coding categories will be discussed in the following section.) I usually read each interview two or three times to review coding notes. After the first interview, I would reread the previous interview before coding the current one, in order to refamiliarize myself with details about the informant's experience.

Individual Coding Charts

Information coded on the interview transcripts was recorded as it developed from interview to interview onto two large charts. One was for costs, marked in pencil, and one was for benefits, marked in red. I usually remembered to note important information that was neither a cost nor a benefit in black. Having separate, large sheets provided ample space for each coding category, allowed me to review important information without rereading entire interviews, and let me feel my way around the meanings of an informant's responses. As these were unfinalized, working charts, sometimes data would

be coded in two or three places until I figured out an individual's perspective, which still might occupy more than one coding category. These also showed repetitive statements about recurring issues that the informant expressed.

Notations on the individual coding charts indicated the source interview (1, 2, 3, or 4) from which each response was drawn, for easy relocation. However, this information, the specific interview in which each response was reported, was not carried forward into summary documents, because I did not believe it pertained well to my methodology. To use such timing with my data would be misleading due to differences in interview intervals (for example, some informants' third interview occurred during Week 4, while others' in Week 6) and the fact that I suspected informants may have had perceptions somewhat earlier than they divulged them (for example, particularly shy people, who became more comfortable with subsequent interviews). So while the numeric notations on individual coding charts was helpful to relocate information, it was not carried forward into the summary documents, which will be discussed shortly.

The basis for coding was the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1992) (Appendix I). It purports to cover the entire range of consequences that people seek, and thereby provided a framework to assess individual meanings of costs and benefits. In the Ford and Nichols taxonomy, personal consequences are defined as those occurring within people as individuals; social consequences are those occurring between people and their social environment. These denote different aspects, but are not mutually exclusive, such that a single perception may have both personal and social components, or multiple components within either of the major goal categories.

For example, if an informant said, “I like learning and figuring out the right way to do things,” I coded that within understanding (gaining knowledge and avoiding erroneous beliefs). If an informant said, “I’m really happy to be learning and figuring out the right way to do things,” I coded that within understanding and also within happiness (experiencing feelings of joy, satisfaction, or well-being). For a comment like, “I’m relieved about learning,” I coded understanding and tranquillity (feeling relaxed and at ease). “I feel good to be learning things that help me with my kids’ homework,” would be coded within understanding, positive self evaluations (maintaining a sense of pride), and social responsibility (meeting a social role obligation).

I determined which code categories I believed were reflected in interview data, added notes to the taxonomy for clarity and consistency (see italics in Appendix F) , and conducted three peer reviews to evaluate my coding. At the end of Phase I, the Program Advisor reviewed coded responses of Informants P1-P3. At the end of Phase II, the Lead Teacher took time to familiarize herself with the taxonomy and we reviewed extensive amounts of data. Specifically these were all of Informant E’s, portions of Informants P4, B and F’s, and most other informants’ data regarding specific code categories that we chose to focus on. Again in Phase III, the Lead Teacher reviewed recoding I was conducting with most of Informants P5 and P6’s data, and specific points in others’ that pertained to specific code categories. Summaries of the peer reviews are in chapter 4.

The reason that I recoded some informants’ data was that I found I had developed better recognition of a few code categories with Phase II informants than I had from Phase I informants. As a reliability gauge, I believed my time was warranted to recode the Phase I informants’ interview data. My coding within the categories that were confirmed

by this rework felt consistent as I went forward through Phases III and IV, and I found overall that codings seemed reliable because I reviewed an informant's previous interview before I coded the newest one.

One category that was better noted by the recoding was tranquillity, which invariably co-occurred with other categories, like understanding, intellectual creativity, happiness, entertainment, or management. What enabled me to recognize it better was noticing relief or distress that informants reported with contents that fell into those areas. self-determination was also connected to other categories, usually positive self, but also mastery and management. I came to recognize different aspects of self-determination by making a conscious effort to be more sensitive to an informant's desire for freedom and choice over and above the independence they sought from the GED itself. A third distinction was between task creativity, an informant's desire or interest to create an innovative product or service, and intellectual creativity, an informant's desire or interest to do or learn something which was not new per se, but new to the informant.

I also noticed that I had notes in exploration that better belonged in intellectual creativity, because there was no evidence that the knowledge and information that informants valued "satisfied curiosity about personally meaningful events." Perhaps this study was unable to capture exploration in reference to the GED because so many informants viewed the GED as a stepping-stone to other educational goals that held greater meaning for them.

Finally, two other sets of code categories co-occurred so often that I would sometimes worry about my ability to distinguish them. The first set is entertainment and happiness. Happiness may not always be exciting, but when is positive excitement not

joyful and satisfying? Finding unexpected success with school work or finally doing something with one's previously routine life made some informants feel both stimulated and satisfied. because entertainment and happiness are in the same category of affective goals, I do not believe that my results was compromised if I did over-extend either of these interpretations.

The other set of code categories which often co-occurred was resource acquisition and resource provision, both aspects of social exchange. People often may not distinguish when they are getting and when they are giving social support, or how much one naturally engenders the other. Ford and Nichols (1992) acknowledge that social exchange is often a reciprocal process, especially within friendship or spousal relationships.

Except for the Have-to/Like-to chart (discussed in the section on Grand Tour Questions and Interview Guides), I did not find it necessary to depart from the Ford and Nichols taxonomy to organize the concepts and meanings which emerged from informants' experience (Appendix F provides content definitions of the coding categories). However, I did add some content notes to those of Ford and Nichols' for several categories, which are italicized in Appendix F. These were elaborations of the goal categories that emerged from interview responses and that I wished to be consistent with for coding purposes.

Main Points

Main Points (Appendix G) is one of two documents that summarized data from the Individual Coding Charts. It is organized by major discussion points from the interviews, called areas of inquiry, and shows the code categories associated with informants' cost/benefit responses. Each column of information names the area of

inquiry, which in most cases corresponds to specific Grand Tour Questions but may also be a category of information that emerged as an offshoot from several informants and became a distinct point of information. If an area of inquiry is associated with one or more of the numbered Grand Tour Questions, those numbers are shown at the top of the column (numbers for Grand Tour Questions are included in Appendix B).

Immediately under the column heading for the discussion point, or area of inquiry, are informants' responses; to the right of the response in bold type is the associated code category. Code categories in black type shows expected or perceived benefits; red type shows expected or perceived costs. Code categories in italics note information that was not a realized benefit per se, but something anticipated or hoped for. In this document, informants are ranked according to their 5-Week Adjusted Average of participation from the Attendance Record (Appendix D).

Code Contents

The second summary document, Code Contents (Appendix H), also compiled data from the Individual Coding Charts. It reflects how much each code category ultimately captured costs and benefits from informants' responses. Each column of information names the specific goal consequence to which informant information was coded.

Immediately under the column are informants' responses. Black type shows perceived benefits; red type shows perceived costs; italics note information that is not a realized benefit per se, but is associated with the code category, such as something that an informant anticipates or hopes will happen. Here too, informants are ranked according to their 5-Week Adjusted Average of participation from the Attendance Record (Appendix D).

Journal

A personal journal served as an outlet, catch-all, and diary for everything else. Self-disclosure, reactions to the research, and information that wasn't captured in the other records invariably fell into one of six sections: design, recruiting, interviewing, individual analyses, cross-case analysis and personal feelings. These sections accommodated equally well transient thoughts and comprehensive memos. As time went by, I believe notes that should have been in one section sometimes ended up in another, but I reviewed the journal often, adding follow-up thoughts and rebuttals on adjacent pages, and highlighted issues that I wanted to keep in mind.

Analysis

Before formal analysis was begun, background issues were considered, to detect a possible bias either from the study or inherent to informants. Informants and comparison students were ranked by attendance to first ascertain if either group dominated within higher or lower participation levels. If informants demonstrated participation that differed from students not in the study, it could suggest that the study itself may have influenced attendance. Second, ranking students by attendance percentages also allowed me to determine if higher or lower participation seemed to be associated with reading and writing skills, or to demographic information. Following the check on background factors, two kinds of analysis were performed from data in the summary documents, Main Points (Appendix G) and Code Contents (Appendix H). A third analysis was conducted on information from the Have-to/Like-to charts.

First, percentage tables were constructed for different sets of information, areas of inquiry from Main Points, as they pertained to each research questions. Percentage tables

show how informants' responses to those areas of inquiry were associated with the two major goal categories and their subsets of goal categories in the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992). These are the major goal category of within-person goals, which has three goal subsets: affective, cognitive, subjective organizational goals; and the major goal category of person-environment goals, which also has three goal subsets: self-assertive social relationship, integrative social relationship and task goals (Appendix F). The percentage tables presented for the first research question distinguish initial expectations regarding issues that pertained to informants' everyday lives, which comprise the foreground of this study, from initial expectations that pertained to class and coursework, which is a background issue. Similarly, percentage tables for the second research question distinguish subsequent perceptions regarding issues that pertained to informants' everyday live from subsequent perceptions that pertained to class and coursework. Another percentage table for the third research question captured informants views about what they thought was required to sustain participation. A final table summarizes the information from Code Contents by the percentage of informants that reported benefits and costs in each of the specific categories of goal content.

As stated, each percentage table quantitatively summarizes information from different areas of inquiry in Main Points. The twenty categories of specific goal consequences that were coded in association with informants' responses were tallied into the six, broader goal subsets that subsume the specific goal consequences. For example, reports associated with entertainment, tranquillity, happiness, and physical well-being were tallied within the subset of affective goals; reports associated with understanding,

intellectual creativity, and positive self-evaluation were tallied within the subset of cognitive goals, etc. (See Appendix F for a complete list of specific goal consequences and goal subsets.) Percentages reflect the number of informants who reported responses in the subset, not necessarily how many times an informant reported the subset within the areas of inquiry in that set of data.

For example, consider two areas of inquiry that contribute to a percentage table. If an informant reported benefits of mastery and understanding in the first area of inquiry, and benefits of understanding, tranquillity and positive self-evaluations in the second area of inquiry, then the percentage table represents this informant once in the subset of *task* goals (for mastery), once in the subset of *affective* goals (for tranquillity), and once in the subset of *cognitive* goals (for both responses of understanding and one of positive self-evaluations). Once an informant was tallied to a goal subset for benefits or costs, she was not retallied there again for the areas of inquiry for that percentage table. Because one informant's response to a question may have been coded to a single goal consequence while another informant's response may have reflected four different goal consequences, it would have been difficult and perhaps misrepresentative to attempt to record percentages as a proportion of responses. The number of informants was finite, whereas there was no way to gauge the relative strengths of multiple goal consequences within a response. Therefore, percentage tables show the number of informants, not the weight of responses, in each of the three groups (Persisters, Gray Zone informants, and Withdrawers – described earlier in this chapter under Procedures) associated with each goal subset, based on the information coded in areas of inquiry from Main Points. Differences in the percentages of each group's benefits and costs showed initial and

subsequent patterns in the goal subsets that contributed to describing persistence and withdrawal. Chapter 4 explains the criteria by which percentage differences were deemed to be significant or not.

Second, specific benefits and costs for the areas of inquiry in from Main Points were compared for qualitative distinctions between Persisters and Non-persisters. Consideration was given to the overall preponderance of benefits and costs in each area of inquiry, the specific goal consequences associated with the area of inquiry and unique combinations of goal consequences that informants reported. Code Contents provided a cross-check to see how benefits and costs had occurred overall from all areas of inquiry in the specific code categories. This second analysis produced a qualitative description of specific benefits and cost that informants reported in association with persistence and withdrawal.

Finally, quantified reports of informants' interest from the Have-to/Like-to Charts were assessed to determine if interest was higher for informants with greater five-week attendance averages, for informants who reported more specific benefits that distinguished Persisters, and for informants who were still in the program after 8 months. Pearson correlations were computed for total interest with the five-week adjusted attendance average, number of benefits, and long-term attendance by total number of weeks' participation.

In summary, this study of early persistence and withdrawal produced qualitative and quantitative results. Qualitative analysis provided a description of specific kinds of benefits and one cost that distinguished Persisters from Non-persisters. Quantitative analysis showed how informants' percentages differed in the development of benefits

and costs associated with goal subsets, and the correlation of interest with a) both short-term and long-term attendance, and b) the number of benefits derived from the qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to ascertain effects of school upon adult students' lives outside the classroom that would contribute to persistence or early withdrawal from ABE programs. Two theoretical perspectives provided the overall framework for this study. Expectancy-value theory suggested that these effects would reside within the relationship between expectations, subjective task values, benefits and costs. Expectations in this study did not focus primarily on being able to succeed in an ABE program per se, but on being able to accommodate school into one's overall life. Personal/social benefits and costs were defined as goals and allowed to emerge from information gathered directly from interviews.

Multiple goals theory (Ford, 1992) states that people are not only usually trying to satisfy a number of goals at the same time, but that they are more motivated when they are able to do so. Using goal content to define what students were hoping to achieve and avoid, benefits and costs were coded as desired and undesired experiences in accordance with the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992). Comparing what students anticipated upon returning to school to what they experienced after enrollment, I assessed how benefits and costs in categories of goal content showed modifications of expectations and values that described persistence and withdrawal within the first six weeks of participation. As mentioned in chapter 3, the reason for limiting the study to six weeks was that early withdrawal as defined within the literature review occurs within the first three to five weeks, so six weeks was intended to capture that event. Students' perceptions after six weeks of enrollment could entail reasons for persistence or withdrawal that may not be associated with *early* withdrawal.

Background Factors that Could Influence Participation Outcomes

Before addressing personal/social costs and benefits uncovered by the research questions, I will address background issues which might independently influence persistence or withdrawal. Such issues are demographic details, literacy skills, numbers of previous enrollments, or number of days scheduled. Since these kinds of information are outside the information gathered from the study, their association with participation or withdrawal can be investigated by combining informants and comparison students, providing a larger pool of students to assess. Juxtaposing the attendance of informants and comparison students also allowed me to see if there were differences in their participation. Such differences might indicate that there was something about study that may have influenced participation.

Table 3 ranks the attendance information by the 5-Week Adjusted Average for participation (see Attendance Record, Appendix D), combining both the informants' group and the comparison group. *Persisters* were students who maintained an overall attendance rate of 80% or greater. Non-persisters were the Gray Zone and Withdrawers. *Gray Zone* students persisted through six weeks, but attended at such a low rate that they would probably feel discouraged to continue, or be discouraged to continue if not administratively dropped outright, but for the Department of Adult Education's liberal attendance policy.

There were no comparison group students in the Gray Zone, which led me to believe that the Gray Zone may be an effect of the study. Specifically, I believe this effect

Table 3: Ranked Attendance - Informants and Comparison Group Combined

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Actual	Adj'd.		Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Wk 11	Wk 12
PERSISTERS									PERSISTERS						
							Aver.	Aver.							
B	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	B	100%	100%	100%	66%	100%	100%
R	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	R	100%	0%	100%	100%	50%	0%
C3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	C3	100%	75%	100%	100%	75%	75%
C7	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	100%	96%	100%	C7	100%	75%	100%	50%	50%	GED
F	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	92%	100%	F	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%
C18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	92%	100%	C18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Q	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	83%	100%	Q	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	100%
C11	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	83%	100%	C11	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%
K	100%	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	92%	95%	K	100%	66%	33%	66%	66%	33%
C12	100%	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	92%	95%	C12	75%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%
C16	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%	92%	95%	C16	50%	50%	50%	out		
C1	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	25%	83%	95%	C1	100%	50%	0%	33%	GED	
P	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	0%	79%	95%	P	25%	75%	66%	50%	100%	0%
G	100%	66%	100%	66%	100%	100%	89%	93%	G	66%	100%	100%	100%	100%	66%
P4	100%	33%	100%	66%	100%	100%	83%	93%	P4	100%	100%	66%	66%	100%	66%
S	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	83%	90%	S	50%	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%
P2	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	83%	90%	P2	100%	50%	0%	50%	out	
P3	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	83%	90%	P3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
E	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	100%	83%	90%	E	100%	100%	50%	50%	out	
C13	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	83%	90%	C13	100%	0%	75%	75%	75%	out
C21	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	83%	80%	C21	100%	100%	100%	50%	0%	100%
C5	100%	100%	100%	33%	66%	66%	78%	86%	C5	30%	out				
C17	100%	100%	100%	25%	75%	50%	75%	85%	C17	75%	75%	75%	out		
P5	100%	100%	66%	66%	66%	66%	77%	80%	P5	66%	66%	33%	0%	33%	out
I	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	75%	80%	I	out					
C10	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	50%	75%	80%	C10	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	out
C6	100%	100%	75%	25%	75%	50%	71%	80%	C6	75%	25%	100%	50%	50%	75%
J	100%	100%	50%	100%	0%	50%	67%	80%	J	50%	0%	100%	50%	100%	50%
O	100%	0%	100%	50%	100%	50%	67%	80%	O	25%	50%	50%	50%	GED	
C20	100%	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	67%	80%	C20	out					
GRAY ZONE									GRAY ZONE						
P1	100%	100%	0%	66%	0%	30%	49%	59%	P1	50%	out				
D	66%	66%	33%	33%	33%	66%	50%	53%	D	33%	33%	66%	33%	out	
P6	100%	0%	66%	33%	33%	0%	39%	46%	P6	33%	33%	0%	33%	out	
WITHDRAWERS															
N	50%	0%	50%	50%	100%	out									
C2	100%	66%	33%	66%	out										
H	100%	75%	50%	out											
C19	50%	0%	100%	out											
A	100%	50%	out												
C	66%	33%	out												
L	100%	50%	out												
C14	50%	75%	out												
M	100%	out													
C4	100%	out													
C15	50%	out													
C8	25%	out													
C9	25%	out													

Note. P1-P6 and A-S (without G) are informants in the study. G and C1-C21 are the comparison group.

"Actual aver." is the 6-week attendance average. "Adj'd aver." is the best 5 of 6 weeks attendance average.

"Out" indicates that the student ceased attendance; "GED" indicates that the students challenged the GED test.

is the attenuation of withdrawal upon students who would not have participated through six weeks, except for their involvement in the study – this will be revisited in Effects of the Study, presented later in this chapter. *Withdrawers* were students who ceased to attend prior to completing six weeks of participation.

Informants and comparison students fell proportionally within Persisters and Non-persisters: Persisters reflect 63% of informants and 68% of the comparison students; Non-persisters (Gray Zone and Withdrawers combined) reflect 37% of informants and 32% of the comparison students. Furthermore, informants and comparison students were intermixed in the ranking, so that neither group dominated either the higher or lower levels of attendance. (The exception to this is the 4:1 ratio of comparison students to informants who attended only one week. This may also be the same effect of the study to attenuate withdrawal. Of the students who attended two weeks, three were informants while only one was a comparison student.)

Gender differences in group composition are summarized as follows:

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
<u>Persisters</u>		
Informants	8	7
Comparison students	7	8
<u>Gray Zone</u>		
Informants	2	1
Comparison students	0	0
<u>Withdrawers</u>		
Informants	2	4
Comparison students	6	1

Among Persisters, informants and comparison students comprised almost equal numbers of males to females. There were no comparison students in the Gray Zone, and the small number of informants in it doesn't make a meaningful contrast to either other group.

Among Withdrawers, however, informant females outnumbered males 2:1, while comparison males outnumbered females 6:1. It is highly unlikely that comparison males had any knowledge of the program and could have been influenced by an awareness of it. Therefore, it appears possible that the study may have influenced women to withdraw or men to remain longer in the program.

Using the ranking from Table 3, Table 4 presents the demographic and background information from Table 2 for each informant: gender (Gen.), ethnicity (Eth.), age (Age), reading grade equivalent (R-GE), reading scale score (R-SS), writing grade equivalent (W-GE), writing scale score (W-SS), high school grade completed (HS), number of previous enrollments (Prev. Enr.), time since last adult education enrollment (Last Enr.), and the number of days per week that students chose to attend (Days/Week).

No major differences in these categories are apparent in the groups of informants, although three small differences can be observed. First, African-Americans appear more likely to persist than Whites (77% versus 60%, respectively). Yet both ethnicities are represented in each category (Persisters, Gray Zone, and Withdrawers) and fall throughout the range of high- to low-attending Persisters. The second difference is that Non-persisters reflect more high R-GE scores, reading grade equivalent, with low W-GE scores, writing grade equivalent. This might be associated with difficulty or frustration producing practice and test papers to show one's knowledge. Conversely, Persisters reflect somewhat higher W-GE scores without disparity in their R-GE scores. These two differences may indicate that self-paced programs, which rely on students' written performance, are better suited to students with stronger writing skills. The third difference is that Non-persisters appear slightly more prone to schedule themselves for four days a

Table 4: Background Information Ranked by Attendance

	Gen.	Eth	Age	R-GE	R-SS	W-GE	W-SS	HS	Prev. Enr.	Last Enr.	Days/ Week
PERSISTERS											
B	M	AA	40	5.3 M	501	3.7 E	486	9	0	N/A	3
R	M	W	41	6.0 D	518	6.2 M	528	9	0	N/A	2
C3	F	AA	56	4.8 D	484	5.3 E	514				4
C7	M	W	34	9.4 A	577	7.8 M	546				4
F	M	W	52	8.8 D	565	12.9 A	657	11	1	1.5 yrs	2
C18	M	W	25	4.6 M	478	3.2 E	470				4
Q	F	W	33	8.8 D	565	7.0 M	546	10	0	N/A	2
C11	M	AA	25	5.6 D	507	5.8 M	522				2
K	M	AA	39	2.5 M	410	2.8 E	448	8	5	7 mos	4
C12	M	W	25	7.6 D	544	4.2 E	497				4
C16	F	W	32	8.6 D	562	4.3 E	494				4
C1	F	W	55	8.6 A	562	11.1 D	588				4
P	M	W	39	8.5 D	559	4.8 M	505	9	1	15 yrs	2
G	F	AA	38	3.5 D	445	2.5 E	430				3
P4	F	AA	48	7.7 M	547	4.3 M	499	11	1	12 yrs	3
S	F	AA	27	5.2 D	497	9.7 D	567	10	4	4 yrs	2
P2	M	W	34	8.8 D	565	4.3 M	499	9	1	8 yrs	2
P3	M	AA	32	6.2 A	522	7.8 E	546	11	1	3 yrs	2
E	M	W	35	7.6 D	544	6.1 E	526	10	0	N/A	2
C13	F	W	44	7.2 D	539	6.2 M	528				4
C21	M	W	25	2.4 E	407	1.9 E	393				2
C5	F	W	31	5.7 A	510	7.2 M	541				3
C17	F	W	39	0.8 D	287	2.9 M	458				4
P5	F	W	34	8.5 D	559	10.1 D	574	9	1	1 yr	3
I	F	W	29	5.2 D	496	6.8 E	539	11	0	N/A	2
C10	M	AA	28	7.8 D	549	6.8 D	539				2
C6	F	W	26	9.1 A	570	8.6 A	556				4
J	F	W	48	4.8 M	434	3.5 E	464	9	1	10 yrs	2
O	F	AA	29	4.6 A	480	7.7 M	545	11	1	10 mos	2
C20	M	H	33	10.0 A	582	8.1 D	550				2
GRAY ZONE											
P1	M	W	44	5.9 A	515	6.9 E	562	8	1	10 yrs	3
D	F	AA	25	7.6 D	544	8.1 D	550	11	3	2 yrs	3
P6	F	W	52	9.2 D	558	5.4 M	499	9	3	2 yrs	3
WITHDRAWERS											
N	F	H	26	6.6 D	531	2.1 D	407	11	0	N/A	2
C2	M	W	33	5.8 M	514	3.4 D	479				3
H	M	W	48	5.4 D	502	5.0 E	508	8	0	N/A	4
C19	M	W	25	10.8 A	593	6.2 M	528				2
A	F	W	33	9.4 D	576	4.3 M	499	7	2	4 yrs	4
C	F	AA	25	10.0 D	582	4.3 M	499	11	2	5 yrs	3
L	M	W	39	10.0 A	582	4.8 M	505	10	1	3 yrs	4
C14	M	H	36	8.8 D	565	7.8 M	546				4
M	F	AA	30	8.1 D	550	9.9 M	582	10	1	4 yrs	2
C4	M	W	49	3.3 M	440	2.6 E	436				2
C15	F	W	62	9.9 M	586	7.8 M	546				2
C8	M	W	27	9.4 D	576	3.1 E	540				4
C9	M	W	25	12.9 D	624	3.1 E	464				4

Note. P1 - P6 and A - S (without G, who withdrew) are informants in the study. G and C1 - C21 are the comparison students. Columns represent gender, ethnicity, age, reading grade equivalency, reading scale score, writing grade equivalency, writing scale score, last grade of school completed, number of previous adult education enrollments, time elapsed since last adult education enrollment, and number of days per week scheduled for this current enrollment.

week than Persisters. Perhaps Non-persisters include individuals who are more impetuous or overly optimistic about being able to adjust to their school schedule.

Another consideration besides background factors is situational barriers, discussed in chapter 2 (Beder 1989; Cross, 1981; Quigley, 1977). Situational barriers, or influences of circumstances, are distinguished as the external structure of a student's life, vis-à-vis dispositional barriers, which are associated with her experiential/attitudinal predisposition. Informants have often dealt with situational barriers simply to be able to begin the program: transportation, child-care, job schedules, family responsibilities, etc. Yet situational barriers may arise unexpectedly when circumstances change, or may intensify when an informant's planning goes awry. Information about situational barriers emerged from Grand Tour questions specifically aimed to uncover informants' circumstances (e.g., How is your everyday life different now that you're a student again? What kinds of events are making a difference, helpful or not helpful, for going to school?) as well as incidental responses to other questions (e.g., Do you have a sense of progress? What hinders your progress?). With a wistfulness that did not bespeak disappointment in himself but merely sadness, Informant P1 revealed the effect of unexpected circumstances upon his ability to focus on school:

Distractions can be in the way. It can be difficult... I was really zealous, for the first time in my life, really. And then I had a flurry of events that took place that really threw me off balance. This (new) job messed me up. Well, what I'm saying is... uh, we got a lot of things going on and the job messed all my plans up... I had plans on how I was gonna go to school, and then when I got the job it changed my routine and that kind of hindered my... feelings toward it. Like, I had to go to a funeral, so I ended up spending that time over there, so that's what happens.. There were these circumstances or, changes that were going on, so that would cause a hindrance, you know.. for me to lose my... you know... joy of learning, like that. And right now, we're having two babies all at once, in a span of four weeks. We was running back and forth to the hospital... (Now) my wife

ain't been home, (she's) helping take care of them... My focus, or my attention, got off onto so many other things, it kind of took the joy out of what I was doing, I wasn't enjoying it... There wasn't anything wrong with the things that was going on. It was that my schedule was different than what I had planned. I'm not having as much fun with it as I was.

Time management proved to be the most commonly reported challenge to informants. Informant P-4 may have been the most long-suffering student, inasmuch as she claimed to have already attained her GED, but she was having to repeat the effort because records had been lost:

My daughters graduated, they're both out of school now, and with the job that I'm doing, allow me time to come. It takes away from the extra time I had to do things around the house and stuff, to squeeze in my studying. And it's changed a lot... I have to try and focus my life on my school. As for personal life? I don't have time for that. That's on the back burner. Right now I'm just trying to stay focused on school. If I focus on the personal, then I won't have time for my school... I'm keeping up, but it's like I say, I have to cut back so that I'll have more time to devote to my studying. It's taken a lot of my shopping time, going to the mall, going out with the girlfriends. I have to find time to, pretty much readjust everything how to find time for me to go to school... My yard work is basically on a Saturday or Sunday. My exercise is after my class. And then my housework is at night. I just stay busier. I'm more busy now than ever!

While findings will show that there are personal/social benefits of returning to school associated with Persisters, these benefits could always override serious circumstances like financial crises, juvenile delinquency within the family, or unforeseen health problems. Informant N and Informant L suffered more extreme circumstances than other informants – Informant N discovered a medical condition that required medication and an operation, both of which interfered with her participation; Informant L experienced undue stress from newly moving into a group home, which he believed exacerbated his heart condition and thwarted his concentration. Informant P5 made it through almost 11 weeks, well past the six weeks of the study, but had to withdraw in order to supervise her teenage son who'd been arrested. Informant E persevered despite

terrible insecurities, but postponed GED instruction for vocational training that would enable him to more immediately improve his income potential. Therefore, while this study elucidates some of the benefits that help students persevere in the face of manageable obstacles, we must also concede that extenuating circumstances will sometimes prevail over school goals.

Research Question #1

The first research question asked about personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students expected at the start of a program, in order to begin analysis of what distinguished persistence from withdrawal. Recall that the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992) has two major divisions at the most abstract level of goal content: within-person consequences and person-environment consequences. Within each of those are three goal subsets: affective, cognitive, and subjective organizational goal subsets in within-person goals and self-assertive social relationship, integrative social relationship and task goal subsets in person-environment goals. At the third, least abstract level of goal content categories, are the specific goal consequences in association with which informants' responses were coded. (See Table 1 or Appendix F for a full list of specific goal consequences within the subsets.)

Rather than attempt to quantify the twenty categories of specific goal consequences that reflected informant responses, responses were tallied into the six, broader goal subsets. For example, entertainment, tranquillity, happiness, and physical well-being were tallied within the subset of affective goals; understanding, intellectual creativity, and positive self-evaluation were tallied within the subset of cognitive goals,

etc. Specific consequences were compared qualitatively for kinds of differences that distinguished Persisters and Non-persisters. Quantitative information associated with goal subsets in the two major goal categories from the taxonomy will be presented before the qualitative summary of benefits and costs at the level of specific goal consequences.

Quantitative tables presented in this section, which focus on personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic education students expected at the start of a program, show the percent of informants (Persisters, Gray Zone informants, or Withdrawers) who reported anticipated benefits and costs that were collected from the first interview or reported in retrospect as being in place at the time of enrollment. Initial expectations pertinent to informants' everyday lives, the primary focus of this study, are presented in a separate table from informants' initial reaction to class, which is a background issue. Informants' initial expectations about issues pertinent to their everyday lives are located in the following five areas of inquiry from Main Points: reasons for returning to school at this time (page 201), initial expectations about having a GED (page 202), logistic adjustments expected (page 203), people expected to be important (page 204), and events expected to be important (page 205).

Percentages do not reflect the number of responses in the subset, but the number of informants who reported responses in the subset. Because one informant's response to a question may have represented only one goal consequence and another informant's response may have represented four, it would have been difficult and perhaps misrepresentative to attempt to record percentages as a proportion of responses. Therefore, Table 5 shows the percent of informants in each goal subset, based on their responses to the five areas of inquiry from Main Points listed above.

Table 5: Code Subsets from Main Points – Initial Expectations Regarding Students’ Everyday Lives

	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>		----- Non-persisters -----			
	Benefits	Costs	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>		<u>Withdrawers (n = 6)</u>	
	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals	33 %	20 %	33 %	33 %	66 %	33 %
Cognitive Goals	53 %	0 %	66 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Subjective Organization Goals	7 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals	93 %	13 %	100 %	0 %	83 %	17 %
Integrative Social Relationship Goals	40 %	20 %	0 %	33 %	33 %	33 %
Task Goals	100 %	47 %	100 %	33 %	100 %	33 %

Because of the variation in sizes of the groups, meaningful differences between groups need to be defined. Any difference between Persisters and either of the Non-Persister groups (Gray Zone informants or Withdrawers) will be noted if it is over 20%, which equates to 3 informants in the Persisters’ group. This, while somewhat arbitrary, is at least a common factor (3 is 1/2 the size of the Gray Zone group, and 1/3 the size of the Withdrawers’ group) and provides consistency throughout the presentation of results. Similarly, a difference between Gray Zone informants and Withdrawers greater than 33% will be noted, because 33% only represented one person and two people in those groups, respectively. (To preserve this margin of difference, 67% among Gray Zone informants and Withdrawers is reported as 66%.) Hence, all following discussion of differences

among percentages of reported benefits or costs across informant groups will reflect these guidelines for difference, unless designated otherwise.

In the major code category of within-person consequences in Table 5, Withdrawers differed from Persisters with more expectations of affective benefits, and from Persisters and Gray Zone informants with less (in fact, no) anticipation of affective benefits. Initial expectations of cognitive benefits were typically a desire for self-improvement to increase confidence, and a sense of self-worth by completing something that felt like unfinished business or constituted something “missing inside.” No group reported anticipation of cognitive costs. Affective benefits that were similar included wanting access to jobs which would be more enjoyable or interesting, being able to reduce the mental or physical stress of their current job situation, and feeling a sense of happiness or satisfaction in connection with finishing basic education. Initial expectations of affective costs, also not different across the three groups of informants, had to do with losing sleep, expecting to be bored, and the stress of working around children’s needs.

In the major code category of person-environment consequences, Persisters stood out by anticipating more integrative social relationship benefits than Gray Zone informants. These initial goals were centered around children and grandchildren: helping them with homework, or being an example to them for the importance of education. Initial expectations of costs reported in association with integrative social relationship goals reflected concerns about being able to provide adequate child care.

Informants across all three groups were unanimous regarding task benefits and close to unanimous in anticipating self-assertive social relationship benefits. Anticipated task benefits were associated with managing time and resources to achieve the GED, and

for some students, mastery goals beyond the GED. All but two informants returned to school to get a better job, which meant more money and benefits, but was often also tied to other kinds of benefits such as self-employment, new job choices, something closer to home or changing a home environment, and less physical labor. Informant L discussed more of these reasons than most informants:

Now that I'm seeking disability, it's something that if I want to further my education I have to do because I can't be retrained in any other field... Vocational Rehabilitation said I'm not a likely candidate to be retrained. But, I'd like to get back in the work force. More doors'll open up, where, with me still being disabled, the door will open to student loans and stuff like that. I'll be able to go to college. And (the group home) is a very negative environment. Mental, people are mentally ill. The monotony is very depressing and by coming to class gives me a positive influence on myself. I can't put too much stress on myself... My goal is to be able to be trained in something where I may be able to open my own business, or you know, computer repair, that doesn't require anything too physical.

Initial expectations of costs associated with task consequences revolved around time management for children's and family needs, job schedules, and financial assistance from local social agencies.

Informant A faced all of these:

It's just that you can't get any kind of job without the GED. And I have 3 children and I have to support them. I have a 13-year-old, a 10-year-old, and a 2-year-old. So (laugh)...it's gonna be, I haven't worked since I had him. Letting go of him's gonna be different. All my time is spent (at home). So I just won't be there with them. Just trying to fit in, working also. Trying to find a job through the Work Source, I have to put in about 6 applications every week. I had to turn in like, 15. And then when I started this class, I had to put in 20 hours of schooling, but there's not enough room for that, so I have to put in, I think, another 8 hours with them on Friday, so... I'll have to show them that check stub once a month to show them I guess that I am employed, and that way they can still help me with my daycare... I was trying to do this first, and then get the job, but they won't let you do that, so I'll have to do both.

Expected self-assertive social relationship benefits included the freedom to make more job choices for oneself, feeling more equal to other people, and social support for the pursuit of education. Informant P-1 was facing these at middle age:

I been getting along without as far as, uh, making a living. Now I find I need to have my high school diploma to get a better and get a job that, some of the kinds of jobs I would want, some of the like, big companies. So I can get on maintenance at Georgia Pacific or some place like that. I don't want to work on my tools, building boats like I did, it wears you out. I want to supervise.

And the society we're in today, you can feel better I believe working around those people knowing that you've made that accomplishment. I believe it builds self-confidence as far as dealing and working with people... There's a certain amount of insecurity when you're working with people that's knowledgeable about things that you're not knowledgeable. Whether it be basic or a lot.

Anticipated costs in this subset were concerns about social support and thinking one would have to force oneself to attend.

A sixth, area of inquiry, initial reaction to class (Main Point, page 206), was not included in Table 5, because it targeted the classroom and coursework. Initial reaction to class is presented in Table 6. Across all subsets, only affective and cognitive benefits showed sizable percentages, above one or two people. Persisters expected fewer cognitive benefits than Non-persisters. Persisters also reported in all but one subset, and were the only group to show any anticipation of costs with regard to class. Initial affective benefits perceived regarding class were relief to feel more comfortable around strangers than expected, happiness that the work was not too difficult, and surprise or excitement to like school. Initial cognitive benefits included enjoyment of learning or seeing how much one already knew.

Table 6: Code Subsets from Main Points – Initial Reaction to Class

	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>		----- Non-persisters -----			
	Benefits	Costs	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>		<u>Withdrawers (n = 6)</u>	
	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals	47 %	13 %	66 %	0 %	50%	0%
Cognitive Goals	13 %	13 %	66 %	0 %	83 %	0 %
Subjective Organization Goals	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals	7 %	13 %	0 %	0 %	17 %	0 %
Integrative Social Relationship Goals	7 %	6 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Task Goals	13%	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

Combing the individual goal consequences qualitatively within each subset revealed much in common among informants' expectations. These primarily consisted of long-term benefits associated with the outcome of better jobs and income. Many also anticipated a feeling of becoming personally satisfied, either to feel more "complete" as an individual, to achieve a sense of equality with others, or to wrap up "unfinished business." Except for one informant who knew school would immediately affect her ability to help with her children's homework and another believing she would feel more equitable to other, educated people as she progressed, there was little thought about short-term benefits from the process of school. Short-term expectations of potential costs focused primarily on finding time for school, being able to manage family and job

schedules, and secondarily on making do with less income, when school time meant a reduction in work hours.

Yet optimism prevailed, as even among returning students who were experienced with making time for school, most informants did not expect the extent of management difficulties they (almost inevitably) encountered. For the most part, informants correctly perceived which friends and family members would facilitate their ability to attend school, and these were overwhelming reported as positive influences.

Nonetheless, there were two specific benefits within initial expectations that distinguished who would persist in the program and who would not. The first was an openness about the GED having personal meanings that entailed evaluations of self-worth. Initial expectations about the GED (Main Points, page 196) shows that half of the Persisters, 2 of 3 Gray Zone Informants, and no Withdrawers reported information related to positive self-evaluation in the first interview. Speaking as a person who knew herself with no uncertainty, Informant S reflected this with conviction:

I always regretted not graduating... There's just something in me that has the urge to have the GED.. It's not about a job, because I've done plenty of good jobs. Something I need inside... and it's something for my kids, let them know that, "look it's all about school. If you don't finish you'll regret it..." I've had it for a long time. I mean, it's just me. I'm always saying, "Oh, I'll do it later..." It'll show that I finally put all the other stuff aside. And I finally done what I really wanted to do. It's just very, important to me. It's something that I always wanted to do. Yeah, I'll feel a lot better... yeah.

Withdrawers may not have been initially aware of self-evaluation issues or were simply unwilling to disclose them at the first interview. While Gray Zone Informants were actually considered to be Non-persisters, this finding of positive self-evaluations among

them similar to Persisters helped confirm that this was an in-between group of informants that warranted distinction.

Second was the social event of co-attending. Co-attending (Main Points, page 198) indicated that attending with another person may be a positive influence upon persistence. Informant P3 revealed the mutuality of co-attendance with quiet shyness, almost eager in clarifying that the support was bilateral, that it was not just he who required or received it:

My wife, we come in together. You know, she wants me to do this (laugh). She was already going, for her college classes, and she said I should, you know, come on and do it now, too. We kind of keep each other, uh, motivated. 'Cause she was always afraid of failing. She's afraid of math. And I always said, "You can do it." So I try, you know, to motivate her and help her study at home. Being in college, she can't miss no days - that means I come in, too. She'll say, you know, that the progress that I done make, and how fast I'm moving along. We always talk about it. She tells me to, "take care of business." Yeah, she keeps telling me how good I'm doing.

Furthermore, co-attendance was with a person of social significance (spouse, girlfriend, or sister) and not simply a convenient person with whom to car-pool.

In summary, upon enrollment, there were quantitative distinctions at the level of goal subsets, and qualitative distinctions at the level of specific benefits, between informants who would persist and those who would not. Regarding issues that effected their overall lives, almost twice as many Persisters and Gray Zone informants expected cognitive as affective benefits, whereas Withdrawers had no anticipation of cognitive benefits. Within person-environment consequences, Persisters experienced more anticipation of integrative social relationship benefits. Regarding their initial reaction to class, Persisters more conservatively anticipated cognitive benefits, but reported benefits and costs in more subsets overall. In addition, two specific benefits distinguished

Persisters from Non-persisters: an openness to disclose self-worth among reasons for pursuing the GED, and co-attendance.

Research Question #2

The second research question sought to determine personal/social costs and benefits that adult basic education students perceived after they began a program. This section refers to information about informants' subsequent perceptions collected from interviews 2, 3, and 4. Table 7 represents ten areas of inquiry in Main Points (Appendix G) regarding issues pertinent to informants' everyday lives. Four of these are follow-up counterparts to the issues just presented in research question #1: Subsequent expectations about having the GED (page 202), logistic adjustments realized (page 203), people realized to be important (page 204), and events realized to be important (page 205). Six other areas of inquiry provide informants' perceptions after they began the program – two having to do with what they thought about themselves – how informants thought about themselves as student and how informants thought about themselves in relationship to others (page 207); two having to do with what they liked and didn't like about school (page 208), one that asked if they were able to use knowledge from class in their everyday lives (page 209) and another that asked if new opportunities had arisen despite not yet having the GED (page 210). Distinct from these, informants' subsequent reaction to class (page 206) is presented in a separate table because it targets in-class issues.

A cursory look at Table 7 shows Non-persisters fell behind in overall percentage totals of perceived benefits compared to Persisters, and Withdrawers suffered this more than Gray Zone informants. Persisters' total subsequent, perceived benefits were higher or equal to Non-persisters' in every subset, although the formal margins of difference did

not hold for cognitive and subjective organization goals. Perceived costs reflected more erratic patterns, as each of the three groups of informants differed from the others in different goal subsets.

Table 7: Code Subsets from Main Points – Subsequent Perceptions Regarding Students’ Everyday Lives

	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>		----- Non-persisters -----			
	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>		<u>Withdrawers (n = 6)</u>	
	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals	60 %	53 %	33 %	66 %	33 %	83 %
Cognitive Goals	100 %	20 %	100 %	66 %	83 %	33 %
Subjective Organization Goals	20 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals	93 %	27 %	66 %	0 %	50 %	66 %
Integrative Social Relationship Goals	80 %	40 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	50 %
Task Goals	80 %	60 %	33 %	100 %	17 %	66 %

Among within-person goals, Persisters differed from Non-persisters by more perception of affective benefits. Perceived affective benefits included a sense of satisfaction or happiness to be moving toward the GED, feeling more relaxed about the new routine, and excitement for school. Perceived cognitive benefits, not different among informants, were predominantly more confidence or pride about school, enjoyment of

learning, and increased self-esteem. Perceived subjective organization benefits, reflected among more Persisters, were beliefs that school was something God had led the informant to, He was helping her with, or a “meant-to-be” event.

Perceived costs associated with affective goals (lower among Persisters than Withdrawers) were most typically stress, fatigue and dissatisfaction from making time for school. Anxiety occurred from reduced income due to less time available to work, having little time for social life, and staying up later to get things done at home. Other stresses were well-meaning friends who seemed “pushy” when they meant to encourage the informant, and unexpected events that prevented the informant from keeping to her school schedule. Perceived costs associated with cognitive goals (lower among Persisters than Gray Zone informants) were predominantly having difficulty learning or remembering things.

Differences were also visible among the three groups of informants within person-environment goal subsets. Perceived self-assertive social relationship benefits (higher among Persisters than Non-persisters) entailed enjoying social support from others, feeling more comparable to or more confident with others, gaining a sense of self-importance or feeling more complete as an individual, glad to be doing something with one’s life unlike others known to the informant, and happy to be able to prioritize oneself for a change. Informant P-5 seemed to savor these as hard-won victories:

This has really been long-time goal for me and this is something I’ve wanted to do for a really really long time and it’s just never been... I’m the only one (who doesn’t have a high school diploma) in the family... It makes me feel a little bit important, like I’m doing something for me, finally. ‘Cause I always put, my whole life, everybody has come before me. My kids, they’re number one. And now that they’re on their way, I get to be #1 ... Everything at home is going so

good. Everybody's just clicking. They help out so much, you have no idea how much they help out. It's so cool.

Perceived costs associated with self-assertive social relationship goals (higher among Withdrawers than Persisters, and higher among Persisters than Gray Zone informants) reflected wishing for more social support from specific others, feeling self-conscious around other students or at school in general, and missing time for personal interests by going to school. These were chronic and unabating for Informant E:

To tell the truth, it's very uncomfortable for me. Maybe in time, I'll adjust a little bit more.. It's embarrassing to keep going up to ask questions. The other people here, I don't care what they think of me but I see the way they look at me.. Looking at me like, maybe they're sizing me up, I don't know. I feel like I'm being watched. I feel so out of place here... I just miss, kind of "me" time sometimes... I mean, school is to get me what I want. But it's not the kind of "me" time, "me" time is relaxing, and to me, this is not relaxing. It's a little frustrating and uh, well, time-consuming. It's more against my favor. It's against me to come in, yeah.

Perceived integrative social relationship benefits, not only reported solely by Persisters but by 80% of them, were being able to share the school experience with others by counseling, tutoring, or co-attending. This often included feeling like a better parent, grandparent, spouse, etc., and feeling belongingness, approval or cooperation from others for attending school. Informant P-4 enjoyed these benefits with her grandchildren:

With my grandson, I felt a little ashamed because I didn't go to school. I felt ashamed, embarrassed about it. And then he told me, "Nana, that's cool that you're going back to school." He's fourteen... I talked to him and told him the things I did in life to make him aware of how important his education is. As well as my granddaughter. So I sit to the table and if there's something I can't pronounce, he helps me with it. So I don't feel as ashamed as I did before.

Perceived costs associated with integrative social relationship goals (absent among Gray Zone informants) typically centered around not being able to meet social expectations

related to family or church, and a concomitant sense of separation from those contexts.

Informant B keenly felt his lack of contact with his church work and associates:

'Cause normally I would be in prayer anyhow, because we have prayer Monday through Friday, 7 to 8 o'clock. And at night it's 8:20, 8:30 before I get out of prayer... And there's some elderly folks that I know, that I could read to them. I go to the nursing homes, people that have needs, I tell them about the Lord, read the Bible to them. A lot of time I'll get a scripture and break it down, teach them what it's all about. I bless the food, and pray for them, and stuff like that... 'Cause I got a brother in the church, but now that I'm going to school, I don't have the time. Unless I see him on the weekends, like I see him at church. But like on Tuesday, I used to go on down there and read the Bible with him... It's OK because see, like I still have Wednesday free for Bible study. Friday's evangelistic service, and there's no school on Friday. I don't see them, as often, but they see me out there on the line. They praying for me, they keep me in prayer for my school.

Perceived task benefits (higher among Persisters) entailed progress toward the GED, elevating one's targeted level of education beyond the GED, achieving success in managing one's time and resources to attend school, and finding greater productivity in one's everyday life from skills or knowledge gained from the program. Costs associated with task goals (higher among Gray Zone informants) were time management difficulties, loss of income, and feeling that one's progress was slower than anticipated.

Differences in benefits between Table 5 and Table 7 show changes from initial expectations to subsequent perceptions about informants' everyday lives. Suspending the formal margins of difference for a moment to consider overall numbers of increases and decreases, benefits favored Persisters. Persisters enjoyed increases of perceived benefits in four subsets, whereas Gray Zone informants and Withdrawers only reported an increase of perceived benefits in one subset. Gray Zone informants suffered a decrease of perceived benefits in two subsets, while Withdrawers showed a decrease of perceived

benefits in four subsets. Overall increases and decreases in costs did not distinguish Persisters from Non-persisters. Persisters and Withdrawers both reported cost increases in five subsets, while Gray Zone informants reported three subset increases and one subset decrease.

The formal guidelines for difference can be used as a gauge to assess increases and decreases within each group of informants in comparison to themselves – that is, where Persisters demonstrated a difference greater than 20% between benefits and costs that they initially anticipated from those they subsequently perceived, and where Gray Zone informants or Withdrawers similarly demonstrated a difference greater than 33%. Persisters showed anticipated-to-perceived benefit increases in affective goals (27%), cognitive goals (47%), and integrative social relationship goals (40%); and an anticipated-to-perceived cost increase in affective goals (33%). Gray Zone informants reported an anticipated-to-perceived benefit decrease in task goals (67%) and anticipated-to-perceived cost increases in cognitive goals (66%) task goals (66%). Withdrawers demonstrated anticipated-to-perceived benefit increases in cognitive goals (83%), a benefit decrease in task goals (83%), and anticipated-to-perceived cost increases in affective goals (50%) and self-assertive relationship goals (50%). Table 8 summarizes these differences.

Table 8: Intra-group Comparison of Anticipated-to-Perceived Benefits and Costs Regarding Students' Everyday Lives

	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>		----- Non-persisters -----			
	Benefits	Costs	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>		<u>Withdrawers (n = 6)</u>	
	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals	↑	↑	-	-	-	↑
Cognitive Goals	↑	-	-	↑	↑	-
Subjective Organization Goals	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals	-	-	-	-	-	↑
Integrative Social Relationship Goals	↑	-	-	-	-	-
Task Goals	-	-	↓	↑	↓	-

Note. “↑” indicates an increase within formal guidelines of difference.
 “↓” indicates a decrease within formal guidelines of difference.
 “-“ indicates no difference according to formal guidelines.

Table 9 shows informants' subsequent perceptions about classroom and coursework issues tallied from subsequent reaction to class (Main Points, page 206). However, only two Withdrawers reported in this area of inquiry. That is because the other four Withdrawers ceased attending before the regular, second interview would have occurred. Informants A, C, L and M were asked what they liked and didn't like about school in the Withdrawal Interview, but were not given this question as it was posed to

Persisters. Table 9, therefore, is less complete, and the Withdrawers' percentages are noted in parentheses to flag the reader that they are misrepresentative of the group.

Table 9: Code Subsets from Main Points – Subsequent Reaction to Class

	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>		----- Non-persisters -----			
	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>		<u>Withdrawers (n = 2)</u>	
			<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Costs</u>
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals	33 %	27 %	0 %	100 %	(50 %)	(50 %)
Cognitive Goals	33 %	20 %	33 %	66 %	(100 %)	(50 %)
Subjective						
Organization Goals	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social						
Relationship Goals	7 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Integrative Social						
Relationship Goals	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Task Goals	13%	13 %	33 %	33 %	(50 %)	0 %

Note. Parentheses caution the reader that this group is significantly lower in number here than it is in other tables and is therefore misrepresentative.

Gray Zone informants differed from Persisters with fewer reports of affective benefits and more of costs among both affective and cognitive goals. Affective benefits were excitement or happiness about learning. Affective costs were frustration or anxiety associated with learning and fatigue. Cognitive costs pertained to difficulty with learning and remembering things, finding learning harder than anticipated, and feeling overwhelmed by tests.

Comparing Persisters to Gray Zone informants on Tables 6 and 9 shows their changes from initial to subsequent reactions to class. Suspending the margins of difference to consider overall numbers of increases and decreases yields little because most costs and benefits among within-person consequences increased and decreased similarly between these two groups, and because the respondents within person-environment consequences were so few. The one subset that shows an opposite direction of change is cognitive benefits, which increased among Persisters but decreased among Gray Zone informants. Using the guidelines for difference as a gauge to assess increases and decreases within each group of informants, Gray Zone informants reported initial-to-subsequent reactions to class with decreased affective benefits (66%), increased affective costs (100%), and increased cognitive costs (66%).

Informants' sense of progress (Main Points, page 209) reports whether informants perceived their progress to be simply up or down ("up" or "down" in lower case letters), or strongly up or down ("UP" or "DOWN" in capital letters). Most informants experienced an initial sense of progress, which was tempered by further work. Persisters were half as likely as Non-persisters to rate their progress as strong. What hindered informants' progress (Main Points, page 198) shows what informants believed slowed their sense of progress. By and large, it was perceived to be hindered by their difficulty with the coursework, but also by logistic problems and a sense of the work simply taking too long. For three informants, these challenges incurred concomitant distress.

Informants were not asked, but some reported, if the schoolwork was easier or harder than they had anticipated it to be. This is an offshoot category, school is easy/hard (Main Points, page 209). It includes if a person thought it changed from easy to hard

(easy-hard), or vice versa (hard-easy). Easy and hard both occur with progress being up and down, so there is no apparent association between perceptions of progress and of difficulty. Of those who expressed feelings that the coursework was easy or hard (7 Persisters, 2 Gray Zone informants, and 3 Withdrawers), Persisters were three times more likely than Non-persisters to report schoolwork as initially hard.

Looking qualitatively at subsequent benefits that informants generally shared in common, i.e. that did not distinguish Persisters from Non-persisters, revealed enjoyment of the learning experience, pride to be doing something different and meaningful with their lives, increased confidence for performing schoolwork, and a goal elevation from simply achieving the GED to seeking education beyond the high school level.

The heaviest cost that informants generally shared in common after enrollment was time management, which was typically associated with financial problems from fewer work hours, discomfort for missing family time, and fatigue from a hectic schedule or lack of sleep. Other common costs were difficulty remembering new things, frustration that progress was not faster, and self-consciousness in class. Many informants underestimated the effect of these costs and suffered either unexpected difficulty with them or a chronic increase in anxiety from them. Yet neither the underestimation of difficulty nor the increase in anxiety differentiated Persisters or Non-persisters.

There was one benefit and one cost that stood out as wholly pertinent to Persisters and Non-persisters, respectively. The benefit is found in the “now” and “future” columns contingent to how informants thought about themselves as students (Main Points, page 202). Students who developed a sense of being a different person, either changed or changing, within the six week’s participation were Persisters, whereas informants who

reported only wanting to feel a different sense of themselves were Non-persisters.

Informant P delightedly expressed what seemed to be a personal discovery in noting this about himself:

It's turning out pretty good. I seem to be reading a lot more. And I'm taking notes, too! (smile) I think I'm pretty smart! (laugh) I'm getting there, it's still gonna take some time... But I'm doing it, I'm learning. I think it's different now because I care. I mean, it's no big deal, but yeah, it's almost like a whole new me... Now, I feel I can do it. Basic things I didn't take full advantage of when it was there. So now it's like a second life. I'll make it. I think it's a new me... It is making a big difference. I don't know, just change the whole attitude of life.

The cost that distinguished Withdrawers is found in people realized to be important (Main Points, page 204). It shows that costs predominated among Withdrawers responding directly about people who were important for them to be able to attend school, although in Code Contents (Appendix H, page 217), resource acquisition indicates from other parts of their interviews that they did enjoy social support. Perhaps the social support they received was from people not deemed *important*, as that was what the question asked - I did not catch this issue in time to isolate it within the interviews.

Informant N's disappointment with her close family was clear when asked about important people:

I didn't expect for my family to be so cold. Like, I've noticed, when I (first) got here, my parents was calling me every day. And my sisters were calling me. But it's been about 3 weeks that I haven't talked to either my parents or my sisters. And I expected once they knew that I was out here doing something, they would call me But nothing. I feel really, like I been really depressed... I think they're just like, giving me space, but I don't like it! You know, I'm used to talking to my mom every day, and my sisters every day. They got cell phones. They can call after 9 for free. Knowing that I heard their voice or talked to them the night before, you know, makes me feel better, but they don't call. And I been feeling lonely... I told my mom, I said, "Why don't you, um, you don't call me, you don't write no letters, nothing. She was like, "Oh, I'm too busy." Not, "You're too busy," but "I'm too busy." So I was like, "OK..." I guess it's just normal adjustment. I just have to get adjusted to the difference.

Yet she reported the following in conjunction with other questions that she was asked:

The only obstacle was my son gets home at 3:50 - who would watch him from 3:50 til say, 6:30 when I got home? And my aunt was like, "Hey I can pick him up and hold him til you get home." So I say, "How much I have to pay you?" And my aunt's like, "You don't have to pay me nothing. You doing something for you and your kids. Don't worry about that..." And they just gave me a car, it just needs a water pump or something like that. And they're gonna fix that this weekend. Now, the lady that brings me, she's real good, she my aunt's best friend...

And (laugh) I met a guy. And he was like, "I want you to be my wife." We just met 3 weeks ago, and he moved down here, and I've been seeing a lot of him. He's like, "You know, you gotta go to school. If you go to school, and you get like, an education, then get certified for something. So you know, you're making good money and I'm making good money, maybe we'll be able to have a nice wedding." And that motivates me... He bought me a school book bag, 'cause I just had like a little travel keeper. One time when there was no class, he ended up taking me home. It made me feel different. Just that makes me feel... good.

In summary, the second research question also provided quantitative and qualitative distinctions between Persisters and Non-persisters, across goal subsets and within specific goal consequences. Goal subsets regarding everyday-life issues showed significantly more Persisters with subsequent perceptions of benefits in 4 out of 6 categories, all three person-environment subsets (self-assertive social relationship, integrative social relationship, and task goals) and affective goals, and fewer Persisters with perceived costs in 3 categories: affective, cognitive, and self-assertive relationship goals. Intra-group comparisons of anticipated to perceived benefits and costs corroborate that more Persisters demonstrated subsequent increases in benefits: affective cognitive, and integrative social relationship goals; while more Non-persisters reported increases in costs: affective, cognitive, and self-assertive relationship goals. For informants'

subsequent reaction to class, Gray Zone informants differed from Persisters by reporting fewer affective benefits and more affective and cognitive costs.

Specific consequences within goal subsets revealed a benefit and a cost that were associated with Persisters and Withdrawers, respectively. Feeling like a different person, either changed or changing, within the six week's participation, only occurred among Persisters; predominantly reporting costs in response to the question about people important for them to be able to attend school was reported with only one exception by Withdrawers.

Research Question #3

Research question #3 addressed differences between expected and perceived costs and benefits to distinguish students who persisted and students who withdrew within the first six weeks of participation. Some differences have been uncovered by the first two research questions; however, there is more information that contributes to this analysis. What remains is to look at a couple areas of inquiry from Main Points that have not yet been addressed, and review two additional documents: Code Contents (Appendix H) and the Have to/Like to Charts. While Main Points (Appendix G) shows how costs and benefits associated with each major discussion point reflected code categories; Code Contents (Appendix H) captures how much each code category reflected costs and benefits overall. Finally, Have to/Like to Charts compare informants' ratings of the subjective value of interest to attendance and to the number of specific benefits found from qualitative analysis to distinguish Persisters from Non-persisters.

Remaining Data from Main Points that Contributes to Distinguishing Persisters from Non-Persisters

The information from Main Points yet to review presents the kinds of goal consequences informants believed were associated with staying in school. These consequences were derived from three columns of responses in Main Points: advice to hypothetical others (page 211), what it takes to stay in school/what school is about (page 212), and how a person keeps/gets what it takes to stay in school (page 212). These are presented in Table 9. Since they are primarily hypothetical in nature, they are italicized in Main Points and do not reflect benefits or costs per se.

Table 10 shows, as evidenced in other tables, that Persisters reported goal consequences across more, and in this case all, subsets. Among within-person goal

Table 10: Code Subsets from Main Points – What’s Needed to Stay in School

	----- Non-persisters -----		
	<u>Persisters (n = 15)</u>	<u>Gray Zone (n = 3)</u>	<u>Withdrawers (n = 6)</u>
	Goal Consequences	Goal Consequences	Goal Consequences
<u>Within-Person</u>			
Affective Goals	20 %	33 %	0 %
Cognitive Goals	27 %	0 %	33 %
Subjective Organization Goals	13 %	0 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>			
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals	93 %	100 %	83 %
Integrative Social Relationship Goals	13 %	0 %	0 %
Task Goals	53 %	66 %	50 %

subsets, no group differed. However, Gray Zone informants named no cognitive goal consequences, and Withdrawers named no affective goal consequences. Cognitive goal consequences included making comparisons about the less-desirable past and the more-promising future for better self-esteem, staying focused on self-improvement, and being able to look at oneself in the mirror. Affective goal consequences associated with staying in school were patience and not being anxious that school would be difficult or uncomfortable. Only Persisters reported benefits associated with subjective organization goals, a spiritual connection or sense of harmony from participating in school.

Person-environment consequences dominated in what informants thought was required to remain a persister and not become a withdrawer. Short of 2 people, informants reported that school required personal commitment and determination to weather the effort. Informant R's determination was rooted in being tired of having to drive so far to get a good job. He and his wife worked together, second shift at best, because they had only one car, and he knew that since his wife got her GED, it was him keeping them tied to the long, late commute:

I don't know what to tell (other people). Me, myself, I just get up and come... Just put it in your head (laugh), that you're gonna do it. You just got to want to. I mean, you just got to buckle down and do it. I mean, you can't let other people tell you not to...I ain't giving up. I'm getting it done. I guess I'm a fighter, or something! 'Cause... I mean I have got times where I've, you know, I's asleep and the alarm's went off and I say, "I'm just not gonna go in today." And I make myself do it. And now, that, that I'm doing it, I'm gonna do it.

Being able to stick with school was underscored by various responses about wanting self-improvement, managing time, getting social support, and having faith that it would work out.

Task orientations to being able to stay in school included time management, treating school with the same kind of commitment that one gives to a job, learning to do things the right way, and wanting more out of life. As a musician of over 30 years, Informant F had not found the financial security from residuals that he had anticipated when he was younger:

You want a better life style – say, have that financial security – and the only way to get it is by going through certain steps. And this is one of the milestones that you’ve got to get past in order to get at all the rest of it. ‘Cause really, in today’s... the way I see it anyway, in today’s work force a lot of the jobs that people used to be able to go to, that may not have had the great education, aren’t there anymore. They’re over in Mexico or Japan or China, or everywhere else... And I want to be more and have more, besides what I do now... At least I can say I am trying to do something now. Whereas before, I always figured I’d make it one way or another, (but) the entertainment business, it isn’t stable enough and I think that I’m, everybody should have some kind of extra skill, something to fall back on. These days, you’ve got to have something. I’m doing something to improve my future...

Only Persisters reported benefits associated with integrative social relationship goals: being an example to children or not letting family down.

The last discussion in this section deals with how informants anticipated using the time set aside for school after they achieved the GED, reasons for previous withdrawal, and what Withdrawers felt they needed to be able to return to school. The first area of inquiry, how students would use their school time later (Main Points, page x) shows proportional responses among Persisters (66%) and Non-persisters (60%) to pursue further education.

Reasons for previous withdrawal (page ii) indicate why informants believed they ceased attending their most recent attempt to attain the GED, if applicable. Adjacent to it are reasons and code categories for Withdrawers’ current reasons for withdrawal. The

four Withdrawers who had previous enrollments withdrew from school during this study for reasons that reflected the same code categories as their previous withdrawal. Overall, the responses reflected costs that were 28% affective, 14% cognitive, 28% task, and 28% social integrative relationship consequences – no strong consensus.

Finally, goal consequences that Withdrawers reported that they would need to reenroll, from what's needed to return to school (page 205), map well onto the reasons that they stated for withdrawing. That is, when specific types of consequences were not identical, they were yet within the same subset of goal categories. The exception to this was Informant H, who reported leaving as a cost consequence within positive self-evaluation, which is a cognitive goal, but needing resource acquisition from co-attendance to reenroll, a self-assertive relationship goal.

Code Contents

Every informant did not report responses in every code category, which is readily seen from Code Contents (Appendix H), where benefits are in black type, costs in red. To create Table 11, informants' responses in Code Contents from each specific consequence category were tallied, excluding italicized responses which were not outright benefits or costs, but peripheral information. Percentages do not reflect the actual number of responses, but the number of informants who reported responses for each specific goal consequence.

What should not be surprising at this point is that Persisters experienced benefits within all categories of goal consequences except material gain, where no group experienced benefits. Gray Zone informants failed to achieve benefits in five other categories; Withdrawers failed to achieve benefits in four other categories. Perceptions of

Table 11: Summary of Specific Goal Consequences from Code Contents

	Persisters (n = 15)		----- Non-persisters -----			
	Benefits	Costs	Gray Zone (n = 3)		Withdrawers (n = 2)	
	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs	Benefits	Costs
<u>Within-Person</u>						
Affective Goals						
Entertainment	67 %	13 %	66 %	33 %	50 %	17 %
Tranquillity	73 %	63 %	66 %	33 %	0 %	83 %
Happiness	67 %	13 %	66 %	33 %	50 %	17 %
Physical Well-Being	13 %	67 %	33 %	66 %	0 %	50 %
Cognitive Goals						
Understanding	93 %	48 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	33 %
Intellectual Creativity	53 %	13 %	100 %	0 %	50 %	0 %
Positive Self-Evaluations	100 %	13 %	100 %	0 %	83 %	33 %
Subjective Organization Goals						
Unity	33 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	33 %	0 %
<u>Person-Environment</u>						
Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals						
Individuality	53 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	33 %	0 %
Self-Determination	80 %	7 %	66 %	0 %	50 %	17 %
Superiority	67 %	13 %	33 %	33 %	17 %	17 %
Resource Acquisition	100 %	45 %	100 %	66 %	66 %	83 %
Integrative Social Relationship Goals						
Belongingness	60 %	60 %	0 %	66 %	17 %	50 %
Social Responsibility	73 %	27 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	33 %
Equity	20 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Resource Provision	73 %	0 %	33 %	33 %	0 %	0 %
Task Goals						
Mastery	93 %	7 %	100 %	33 %	83 %	17 %
Management	47 %	73 %	66 %	100 %	50 %	100 %
Material Gain	0 %	7 %	0 %	33 %	0 %	0 %

costs were distributed more equitably across the groups of informants. These will be examined in greater detail.

Where perceptions of benefits are different, Gray Zone informants had lower percentages than Persisters in six categories while Withdrawers reflected lower percentages in seven categories. Gray Zone informants shared the higher side of a difference with Persisters in two categories, tranquility and resource acquisition. Otherwise, they shared four categories with Withdrawers wherein benefits among both groups of Non-persisters were lower than Persisters: superiority, belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision. Withdrawers differed from Persisters with fewer perceptions of self-determination benefits; Gray Zone informants differed from Persisters with fewer perceptions of individuality benefits.

Gray Zone informants also differed alone in several categories of costs. Four categories of lower perceived costs for Gray Zone informants than both Persisters and Withdrawers were tranquility, social responsibility, resource provision, and material gain. One category where Gray Zone informants alone demonstrated higher perceived costs was understanding. They shared one category of higher costs with Withdrawers, vis-à-vis Persisters, which was management, but no category of higher or lower costs with Persisters, vis-à-vis Withdrawers. Withdrawers alone showed higher costs than Persisters in resource acquisition.

These differences show that benefits distinguished Persisters from Non-Persisters more than did costs, which were more erratically associated with the different groups of informants. Gray Zone informants shared more commonality of benefit percentages with Withdrawers than they did with Persisters. The strongest categories of difference between

Persisters and Withdrawers were tranquillity, social responsibility, and resource provision. In each of those categories, Withdrawers had no benefits while Persisters enjoyed them at a level of 73%. Also strong, but at a difference below 50% in comparison to Withdrawers, were Persisters' benefits in self-determination, superiority, resource acquisition, and belongingness.

These categories are qualitatively examined more closely within Code Contents. Withdrawers had no benefits to outweigh their 83% perception of costs in tranquillity (page 209), whereas half of the Persisters who reported tranquillity costs also perceived tranquillity benefits. Non-persisters' dearth of benefits in social responsibility (page 214) and resource provision (page 213) can be contrasted to Persisters' experiences that frequently linked these categories: helping or pleasing a family member, tutoring children or grandchildren, and service to others like helping co-workers or counseling teen mothers to return to school. Recall these integrative social relationship benefits were mentioned in conjunction with Table 7. Part of Informant E's commitment to "no more excuses" was the solidarity of his family, for whom he felt he was attending school almost as much as for himself:

Like I said, I got the support from my wife and kids, so that helps. This is what they all want for me. I feel like my wife respects the fact that I'm doing it. My kids respect it. I know my mother says, "Hey, thumbs up!" ... There are a lot of people... I'm not dropping out. Well, I couldn't tell my family that either. Because they're happy for me, they want to see me get this. And I can't say to them, "Daddy's accepted the fact that he can't do it." I'm not accepting that. I'm gonna earn that paper. I just can't let them down. So I am not quitting this, I am not. There's no way I'm gonna quit it.

While several informants were pleased to be able to help their children or grandchildren, Informant J talked about this with understated poignancy and slow deliberation:

Helping my grandkids, I like that feeling. We have that time we spend besides sitting there saying, "Well, Grandma can't help you," because I don't know. I can say, "This is the way you do it," if I know. (I'm) able to help them more than I could mine. Because when mine was in school, I couldn't help them that much... I'm helping my granddaughter do a lot more reading. Capitalizing her letters. More and more. And too (smile) she thinks she's helping me, "Granny, you in school, too!" I said, "Yeah." I let her read to me. She gets a real big kick out of it, she'll try to read to me. I feel I'm a better grandmother... for it. 'Cause I can help her do things, and explain to her. If that makes any sense...

The service that P4 anticipated by helping the children in her day care spilled over to some of their mothers and other women in the neighborhood as well:

I like to show the girls, the teen parents, and the young ones that's getting pregnant. Show them that they can go back to school, no matter what age they are and how important it is to have... that high school diploma, and it can open many more doors for them and they can move forward. It's not a responsibility, I just like helping them for them to know, "Don't give up." Some young girls don't have parents, so they don't push them to get that GED. Two of them has went back to school. It makes me feel good about myself, 'cause they let me know that, "Hey, you helped me do this." Help them get off AFDC, and what it feel like to actually have their own, and accomplish something in your life. I didn't have anyone to.. my mom didn't encourage me to stay in school. And I see them in the same situation I was in. And I let them know it's not too late. If I can go back, they can go back.

Many of these kinds of responses were tied to informants finding they were able to use new knowledge from school in their everyday lives. Persisters' co-attendance further linked resource provision to resource acquisition, whereas it was with regard to resource acquisition that most Withdrawers had the negative responses about who was important for them to be able to attend school. Persisters' belongingness benefits were similar to those from social responsibility and resource provision, but with the added expression of enjoying them as shared time or improved closeness. Chapter 5 will discuss self-determination (page 217) and superiority (page 217).

While the code category of unity (page 216) does not show a percentage difference, there is yet a qualitative distinction between the unity benefits of Persisters and those of Withdrawers. The latter reported unity with regard to having been guided to the decision to return to school. Persisters, on the other hand, spoke about spiritual connectedness with a greater power that specifically addressed their struggles with time management and schoolwork that helped them remain engaged with the program. Despite costs that seemed overwhelming within cognitive, positive self-evaluations, and superiority goal consequences, Informant E subjugated his personal feelings about school for what he felt was a higher purpose:

I...I'm very superstitious and feel that... I'm where I'm supposed to be in life. So I think the reason I never got it before is that because I'm supposed to be here now. It feels like a necessity. That this is the time, and the place, and this what I'm supposed to do. I'm where God wants me to be. I believe that, like it or not... It's not a matter of like or dislike. It's just what I'm doing... Whatever I gotta take on the chin, it's that I'm kind of where I'm supposed to be. And this is what I'm supposed to be doing. And this is the time I'm supposed to be doing it. (So) I'm not down about it.

In review of this section, quantitative results showed that benefits more clearly distinguished Persisters from Non-persisters than did costs. Six of the seven distinguishing categories wherein Withdrawers, and often Gray Zone informants, reported fewer benefits were within person-environment goals – three each in self-assertive social relationship and integrative relationship goals. The one remaining category was an affective goal, tranquillity. Code Contents corroborated specific benefits that distinguished Persisters: co-attendance (also noted previously from Main Points), helping or pleasing a family member, tutoring children or grandchildren, and service to others.

Another category of benefit that qualitatively distinguished Persisters from Non-persisters was unity.

Summary of Goal Subsets that Quantitatively Distinguished

Persisters from Non-persisters

From the onset of participation, Persisters demonstrated expectations and perceptions of benefits across more goal subsets than either Gray Zone informants or Withdrawers. Persisters also experienced more gains and fewer losses of benefits, despite relatively equitable gains in costs. Withdrawers anticipated cognitive benefits only in association with their initial reaction to class, whereas Persisters also had initial expectations of cognitive benefits in response to issues about their everyday lives. All three person-environment goal subsets were where Persisters showed subsequent perceptions of benefits that contrasted starkly to Withdrawers. Among these, the latter had their largest drop of anticipated-to-perceived benefits within task goals. Regarding informants' reactions to class, Persisters initially reported more potential costs than Non-persisters, but subsequently experienced fewer of them. Persisters were furthermore four times less likely to rate their progress as strong, and, among the half that reported difficulty, were four times more likely to perceive coursework as hard.

A quantitative review of specific goal consequences corroborates much of the above. Persisters' benefits outweighed those of Non-persisters heavily among tranquillity, social responsibility, and resource provision, and to a lesser extent among self-determination, superiority, resource acquisition, and belongingness. Gray Zone informants reported more similarly to Withdrawers than to Persisters. This highlights the difference between Persisters and Non-persisters as predominantly in person-

environment subsets of self-assertive social relationship and integrative social relationship goal consequences, and the affective goal category that reflects relaxation or stress.

Summary of Benefits and Cost that Qualitatively Distinguished

Persisters from Non-persisters

Interview data uncovered eight personal/social experiences perceived as costs or benefits that distinguished Persisters from Withdrawers. Some of these events were redefined by a consensus of peer reviewers (shown in italics), which will be discussed in the next chapter. Peer reviews are summarized in Research Verification and Standards, later in this chapter.

The following three personal benefits were associated with Persisters and are captured within the concept of *Personal Growth*:

1. Early Self-Disclosure

Issues of positive self-evaluation were reported in the first interview (including two of the three Gray Zone informants) – documented in initial expectations about having the GED, Main Points, page 190. Initial self-disclosure was redefined as early self-disclosure in a peer review to better capture an informant's willingness to express self-evaluation than "initial," which referred to the beginning of the study.

2. The New Me

The informant developed a sense of herself as a different person, changed or changing, as a student – documented in "Now" column in conjunction with how informant thought about (her)self as a student, Main Points, page 196. Different sense of self was redefined the new me in a peer review to better reflect an informant's sense of pleasure or excitement.

3. Daily Guidance From A Higher Power

Spiritual connectedness was associated with the on-going struggle to remain in school – documented in unity, Code Contents, page 192. Spiritual connection to school was redefined daily guidance from a higher power in a peer review by peer reviewers not only more religious than myself, but also better versed in local religious meanings.

The following four social benefits were reported by Persisters, captured within the concept of *Social Sharing*:

4. Co-Attending

The informant co-attended with a close friend or relative – documented in co-attending, in conjunction with people expected to be important, Main Points, page 193. Co-attendance was not only associated with informants' persistence, but also with their lack of attendance when it ceased to occur.

5. Pleasing family member(s)

A family member was pleased by the informant's participation in school – documented in belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision, Code Contents, page 194. Informants felt that beyond social support, there was a sense of pride or satisfaction in the family members that the informant might “let them down” if she withdrew.

6. Tutoring

Information from school allowed the informant to (better) tutor others – documented in belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision, Code Contents, page 194. This occurred with young children's general reading and writing abilities, older children's homework, and a spouse's learning.

7. Service

Being in school enhanced the informant's provision of a service to others – documented in belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision, Code Contents, page 194. Being a better service provider included helping co-workers who developed a new-found respect for the informant as a student and actively sought his assistance, or counseling teen mothers to return to school.

The following social cost was associated with Non-persisters:

8. Lack of Preferred Social Support

When asked directly about people who were important for the informant to be able to attend school, responses largely focused on lack of support from others, even though elsewhere in the interviews social support was reported – documented in people realized to be important, Main Points, page 193.

Table 12 summarizes these findings. Informants are ranked according to the 5-Week

Adjusted Average for participation as they appear in other tables, in order to more readily

see the association of information to levels of attendance. These results will be discussed in chapter 5.

Table 12: Summary of Benefits and Cost that Distinguished Persisters and Non-Persisters

	<i>/-----Personal Growth-----/</i>			<i>/-----Social Sharing -----/</i>				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Early Self Discl.	The New Me	Daily Guid./ Power	Co- Att'g	Pleasing Family Mem'(s)	Tutor'g	Service	Lack Pref. Supp.
<u>Persisters</u>								
B	X	X	X				(X)	
R						X	X	
F	X							
Q	X					X		
K	X	X	X					
P		X						
P4	X				X	X	X	
S	X	X			X			
P3			(X)	X	X			
P2				X				
E	X	X	X		X			
J						X		
P5	X	(X)	X			X		
O						X		
I				X			(X)	
<u>Gray Zone</u>								
P1	X							
P6	X				X			
D								
<u>Withdrawers</u>								
N								X
H								X
A								X
C								(X)
L								X
M								

Note. Benefit columns are, from left to right, early self disclosure, the new me, daily guidance from a higher power, co-attending, pleasing family member(s), tutoring, service. The cost column is lack of preferred social support. Non-Persisters are Gray Zone informants and Withdrawers.

Have to/Like to Charts

The Have to/Like to Charts were a tool to investigate the interest component of subjective task values. When informants filled them out retrospectively at the end of their interviews, importance was presumed to have been their motivation for returning to school. They were told that returning students usually need the GED because it was important for personal reasons as well as their prospective job futures. The subsequent question presented to them was if interest had become any part of their experience, without any diminishment of importance but in addition to it. Therefore, the Have to/Like summaries in Table 13 rate each informant's assessment of interest, but does not address it relative to importance.

Table 13 shows each informant's rating of interest on a scale of 0-10 for the six weeks of the study and the sum of those six weeks as their total interest. Informants are ranked according to their 5-Week Adjusted Attendance for participation. No data are presented for Informants P1 and P2 because these charts were initiated after they had completed their interviews. No data are presented for Withdrawers, since they did not sustain enough participation to make a meaningful assessment of retrospective interest relative to the other informants.

Table 14 ranks informants according to the total interest that they reported, in accordance with Table 13. It shows the total number of benefits that each informant realized, in accordance with Table 12, and her long term attendance, up to eight months. Table 15 displays Pearson correlations of total interest to informants' 5-week adjusted average for attendance, total number distinguishing benefits experienced, and long-term attendance up to eight months.

Table 13: Have to/Like to Charts: Informants ranked by attendance showing interest for each week of the six-week study (0-10 points possible for each week)

Inf.	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Total Interest
Persisters							
B	8	10	4	10	10	10	52
R	0	6	6	6	6	6	30
F	0	2	2	2	2	2	10
Q	0	0	0	4	4	6	14
K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P	0	4	6	6	8	8	32
P4	2	1	1	1	1	1	7
S	0	0	4	5	6	7	22
P3	5	10	10	10	10	10	55
P2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
J	0	0	0	0	5	5	10
P5	6	8	10	10	10	10	54
O	0	0	5	5	5	5	20
I	0	2	4	4	4	4	18
Gray Zone							
P1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	0	0	5	7	9	9	30
P6	10	10	10	10	10	10	60

Table 14: Have to/Like to Charts: Informants ranked by total interest showing total benefits and long-term attendance

Inf.	Total Interest	Total Benefits	Long-Term Attendance (Max. 8 mo's)
P6	60	2	2.50
P3	55	4	5.25
P5	54	5	2.60
B	52	5	8.00
P	32	2	2.40
R	30	2	4.25
D	30	0	2.40
S	22	3	8.00
O	20	2	2.40
I	18	2	1.50
Q	14	3	3.50
F	10	1	8.00
J	10	2	8.00
P4	7	5	8.00
K	0	3	3.00
E	0	4	2.40

Table 15: Correlations of Total Interest to Attendance Percentages, Total Number of Benefits and Long-Term Attendance

	Total Interest
5-Week Adjusted Attendance	0.16
Number of Benefits	0.51
Long-Term Attendance	0.70

(Note: All correlations significant at $p < .001$)

Table 15 reveals that while total interest has a low correlation (.16) to informants' 5-Week Adjusted Average for participation, it correlates at a moderately high level (.51) to the total number of distinguishing benefits experienced, and at a high level (.70) to long-term attendance. From this we may presume that interest, or the way that interest was presented to informants by the Have-to/Like-to Charts, was not influential in early persistence. However, it does seem to enjoy some association with informants' experience of benefits and with sustained participation.

Possible Effects of the Study on Participants

The last area of inquiry, influence of the study (Main Points, page xiii), asked students if/how they believed that being in the study had influenced their thinking about school. Unfortunately, three informants, P1 - P3, had finished their interviews before this question was included in the protocol. However, almost all Non-persisters and several Persisters said that there was no influence, but then proceeded to explain how the study had in fact influenced them. Acknowledgment of a person's feelings and effort reflects a sense of significance that imparts respect and value, which may inevitably have an effect, despite her ability to explain it. Therefore, the "yes" or "no" answer is probably not as important as the subsequent response.

Comparing Withdrawers' perceptions of the study's influence after one or two weeks with Persisters' after six or seven weeks may be unreasonable. Having said that, code categories span a range of benefits (no costs) and show a slight dominance (23%) of mastery among Persisters, which may simply be due to longevity of participation. In general, the study seemed to foster positive self-reflection.

I have speculated that the Gray Zone, which appeared among the first set of pilot informants, P1 - P6, may be an effect of this study. Because it entailed one-third of that group – informants P1 and P6, specifically – I expected that it might turn out to be a larger proportion of the total informants than the one-eighth that resulted. Gray Zone informants are those who reduced their attendance to a chronic level that would usually discourage persistence within a traditional program. Such students would typically be pressured, either by themselves or the program (instructors, counselors, etc.) to resume full participation because of missed work, make-up tests, and negative progress reports. An inability or disinclination to resume full participation often leads basic education students to cease attending altogether. In the self-paced program, however, students are able to simply pick up where they left off with no pressure from the program, as long as they attend once every two weeks.

This type of participation entails a different attendance parameter than I proposed to define “early withdrawal.” “Withdrawal” meant cessation of attendance (adult education students typically disappear – they do not fill out withdrawal forms). So the attendance levels of Gray Zone informants resided between sustained persistence and outright withdrawal. Where Gray Zone informants were similar to Persisters was in a) initial anticipation of cognitive benefits in everyday life, and the specific benefit of positive self-evaluations at the first interview as part of their rationale for returning to school; and b) accrual of perceived benefits related to tranquillity and resource acquisition. Where Gray Zone informants were similar to Withdrawers was in a) overall subsequent development of fewer perceptions of benefits and more perceptions of costs, and b) specific lack of subsequent benefits related to individuality and integrative social

relationship goal consequences: belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision.

Initially, I suspected that the Gray Zone informants were experiencing prolonged withdrawal, perhaps as a result of feeling motivated or connected to the program because of the personal acknowledgment that the interviews provided. Unfortunately, this is not indicated by the responses in influence of the study, Main Points, page 202. Yet because there are no Gray Zone students in the comparison group, I maintain that the Gray Zone is worth noting for future studies of this nature, as I may simply have not uncovered the rationale for that group. Better questions (specifically *why* information) may uncover reasons for marginal participation that are not effects of the study, but reflect different benefit/cost outcomes or relationships among them.

Research Verification and Standards

This section addresses the validation of research strategies used in this study. First, sampling issues will be presented. Then, validity, reliability, and objectivity shall be reviewed with the respective qualitative correlates of transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which Lincoln and Guba (1985) are credited for developing. To know if the description that a qualitative study provides is believable and accurate, Creswell (1998) suggests that verification, akin to validation, must be distinguished from standards, which are criteria imposed after a study is complete. Therefore, standards will be in the final section.

Sampling

Sampling size and selection can threaten the quality of data collected and the accuracy of inferences derived. I proposed to acquire 30-50 interviews each from

persisters and withdrawers, suggested by Mertens (1998) to achieve saturation. As explained in Chapter 3, however, expecting the same number of interviews from withdrawers as persisters was unrealistic. The number of informants who did not persist are within the expected percentage range for early withdrawal, which is reported in the Introduction from older studies as variable from 10% to 49%, from more recent studies as 19-33%. Informants represented a 6:15 ratio of Withdrawers to Persisters, putting early withdrawal at 28.5%, excluding the Gray Zone. Including the Gray Zone informants, non-persistence was 37.5%. The ratio of Withdrawers' to Persisters' interviews was 12:60, meaning Withdrawers provided 16.6% of the data; including Gray Zone informants, Non-Persisters provided 29% of the data. So a robust proportion of non-persistence was documented overall. I furthermore believed saturation had been achieved by Phase III, because all seven Persisters in Phase III demonstrated perceptions of the benefits that defined persistence exhibited in Phases I and II, while no Withdrawers experienced those benefits. At that time, I had not uncovered the cost of lack of preferred social support associated with Withdrawers; however, two of the three Withdrawers in Phase III had reported it, the exception being Informant M.

Selection bias was minimized by the fact that I was able to contact and recruit all eligible students who entered the Department of Adult Education within the time frame of this study, in accordance with the informant criteria listed in chapter 3. One informant chose not to continue after the first interview. The single factor that distinguished informants from comparison students was that the latter attended in the morning, when I was likely to be their teacher. This attendance parameter could have affected the outcomes of the study. Morning students may have encountered less fatigue and fewer

time management problems than informants, who typically worked during the day. On the other hand, afternoon and evening students may have been more motivated initially, to add school to an already full schedule. Having informants with more fatigue and time management difficulties could actually have generated more findings, by exacerbating such conflicts and promoting more perceptions of costs that needed to be accommodated in order to sustain participation.

Internal Validity/Credibility

Internal validity, that one is measuring what one is intending to measure, can be threatened by selection bias, inappropriate instruments, or inadequate procedures. I did not know ahead of time that I would successfully be able to accommodate all qualified students who enrolled during the time frame of the study (explained in the last paragraph). Use of the comparison group, to ascertain if informants of the study participated comparably to students who were not, also supports the internal validity of this study. I have already discussed the attention informants received as a possible explanation for the Gray Zone, which does not occur in the comparison group. There was also a gender disparity among withdrawers, where informant females outnumbered males 2:1, while comparison males outnumbered females 6:1. African-American students appeared more likely to persist than White students by a 16% margin, although both ethnicities are represented in each category (Persisters, Gray Zone, and Withdrawers) and fall throughout the range of high- to low-attending Persisters. Because Persisters reflected somewhat higher writing GE scores without disparity in their reading GE scores, the self-paced program, which relies on students' written performance, may be better suited to students with stronger writing skills. Otherwise, informants and comparison students

were intermixed in the overall ranking, so that neither group dominated higher or lower levels of attendance.

Construct validity pertains to the instrument used to reduce informants' perceptions of benefits and costs to goal content – the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987; Ford, 1992). This instrument was warranted because the 24-category taxonomy was developed over the course of several years, both in research and clinical work, and is supported by an underlying theoretical perspective, living systems framework (Ford, 1992). Austin and Vancouver (1996) credit this taxonomy with subsuming life domains important to psychologists, and incorporating goals that have been the focus of long-standing research: self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985), equity and procedural justice (Adams, 1963; Cropanzano, 1993), competence-mastery (Koestner & McClelland, 1990; McClelland, 1965). I believe the taxonomy optimized construct representation because it facilitated comparison of informants' perceptions with a classification system that did not limit the priorities or complexity of them. I also believe it was relevant because it accommodated what I understood informants to perceive as desired and undesired states issues and events, which was my initial intention.

Besides how well the Ford and Nichols taxonomy captured benefits and costs as goal content, I need to consider how effectively I elicited cognitive representations of desired and undesired states. Because my goal was to ascertain informants' perspectives of what they wanted, I believed I was getting this by asking *what* and *how* questions. In hindsight, I see that I did not capture subordinate levels of goals, or sequential relationships and linkages that were not presented by the informant, because I did not ask

why questions. What the taxonomy might not have accommodated were more abstract issues like, “I want more meaning out of life,” or “I want to make a difference in the world,” unless such abstractions could be broken down to underlying goals. Fortunately, informants who “wanted more out of life” stated that they wanted more material things or a job closer to home, and regarding “a better job,” they were able to define if it was material gain, intellectual creativity, entertainment, etc. that they sought.

The most tenuous coding I did may have been Informant K wanting to know self better, wanting to change self, and wanting to grow. Since he disclosed that he believed his education was something he should already have achieved, I coded these as positive self-evaluation for initial expectations about having the GED and positive self-evaluation/individuality for how he felt about himself as a student. Better questioning may have revealed any number of other goal consequences. Fortunately, I perceived the desire for change as an offshoot area of inquiry and included him in the more abstract *new me* benefit category.

A threat to measurement validity, having drawn correct inferences from the way data was measured, is the ad-hoc manner in which differences among groups of informants in the percentage tables were deemed to be significant or not. Recall that a difference over 20%, between Persisters and either of the Non-Persister groups (Gray Zone informants or Withdrawers) was interpreted as meaningful; a difference greater than 33% between Gray Zone informants and Withdrawers was deemed meaningful. This was unavoidable because of the difference in the sizes of the groups and at least provided a guideline for consistency, although a different means of determining differences could possibly produce different results.

For qualitative work, the truth value of internal validity converts to credibility as the correspondence between informants' perceptions and the researcher's portrayal of them. This trustworthiness can be enhanced by six procedures, of which I employed the following three:

1. *Clarifying researcher bias from the outset to bracket personal assumptions that may impact the inquiry.* Chapter 1 discusses biases I was aware of at the beginning of the study. Overall, I found that my disclosure of being a student provided a comfortable common ground for the interview conversations. Informants who were plagued by a sense of age seemed encouraged that someone so much older (than most of them) was also in school. There is, however, the possibility that a different researcher would have a different effect upon informants than I did, simply by virtue of personal demeanor.

2. *Negative case analysis to find disconfirming evidence which minimizes outliers and exceptions.* Because my findings describe patterns of properties that underlie persistence, the contrast of Persisters to Gray Zone informants and outright Withdrawers constitutes negative case analysis. Informant F is acknowledged in chapter 5 as a possible outlier. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim zero exceptions to a hypothesis may be too rigid, like achieving statistical significance at the .000 level, and suggest that if a formulation fits even as few as 60% of cases, it would have evidence of acceptability. Twenty-three out of my total 24 informants is a 95.8% fit; 11 out of 12 Persisters is a 91.6% fit – both figures demonstrate substantial strength of my suggestion about early participation in adult education.

3. *Peer review or debriefing of intermediary findings to provide catharsis, confront*

values, and keep the researcher honest. I conducted four peer reviews:

a. Review of general pilot coding and the finalized list of grand tour questions with the Program Advisor, at the end of Phase I (August 5, 2003 – ½ hour). We reviewed the demographic information being collected and discussed possible connections between coding categories. He briefly reviewed Informants P1-P3's Coding Sheets and said he felt I'd put a lot of thought into applying the coding categories. He confirmed that this study would obtain rich information, approved of the age limit on informants, cautioned that the self-paced program could produce different responses to school than a traditional program, and felt overall that the questions were good, didn't lead informants, and seemed to address the stated goals.

b. Review of specific coding from interview transcripts to Individual Coding Charts with the Lead Teacher, at the end of Phase II (December 12, 2003 – 1 hour). After a lengthy discussion to familiarize the lead teacher with the coding categories, we reviewed all of Informant E's Individual Coding Sheets and sporadic parts of Informants P4, B and F's, with related discussion of similar issues in others' data. Discussion focused primarily around resource acquisition vs. resource provision, task creativity vs. exploration. We also noted that a student's level of commitment or public proclamation may not code because of the difference between what one says and what one does.

c. Review of differences in recoding P1-P6 with the Lead Teacher, at the beginning of Phase III (January 15, 2004 – 1 ½ hours). This review focused on greater inclusion of tranquillity, entertainment, and happiness from intellectual

creativity, and of self-determination from mastery and management, as well as (again) the interconnectedness among resource acquisition, resource provision, belongingness and social responsibility. We reviewed most of Informant P5's and P6's Coding Sheets, as well as specific points in all other informants'.

d. Review of conceptual description of benefits/cost that describe persistence and withdrawal with the Lead Teacher, the Assistant Program Advisor who is also a Special Education Instructor, and another Instructor, at the end of Phase III (November 11, 2004 – 1 ½ hour). I reviewed my findings with the group. We first discussed the personal benefits and clarified them from observations of other informants that were similar and dissimilar. “Early self disclosure” seemed to better portray this event from “initial,” and was thought to be distinct from “personal growth,” which captures the next two. “The new me” was thought to capture the more positive element of the “different me;” and “daily guidance from a higher power” was finally decided to represent the spiritual connection to school. The latter was discussed at length, re religion vs. spirituality and the “daily” aspect of the focus that distinguished these informants from those who only reported guidance on a broader level. “Use of knowledge” seemed clearly to be applied in both personal and social directions, while “social sharing” encompassed co-attendance, pleasing a relative, tutoring and service. No other concept than “perceived lack of support” was felt to describe the one social cost.

After this peer review, I reconsidered whether “early self disclosure” belonged within “personal growth.” While willingness to disclosure issues about one's self cannot be called growth per se, it may pertain to an openness that

promotes personal development. For the informants of this study, it decidedly seemed to represent the desire to complete themselves in some way and is therefore related to personal growth.

A fourth procedure was partially utilized: *member checks to solicit the informants' verification of accuracy*. Informants were invited at each interview to modify and correct my understanding of their previous responses. However, they were not asked about coding categories associated with those perceptions – without outright training of the taxonomy, I do not believe the informants would have been capable of such an assessment.

Prolonged engagement was not suitable for this study because its focus was only six weeks, although I would say that four interviews was persistent contact; *triangulation* was not viable because (a) I was only concerned with an informant's own perceptions and (b) I think talking to her close associates would have jeopardized her being candid with me, a total stranger. I also believe that having multiple interviews where I corroborated previous disclosures enabled me to catch social desirability and eliminate from data summaries. Creswell (1989) recommends engaging in at least two of the above, so I believe that using three forwards my claim to credibility.

External Validity/Transferability

The generalizability of external validity, determining the degree to which one's findings may be applicable to other situations, converts to transferability as the congruence between the study site and a receiving context. A reader will depend upon the sufficiency of (a) thick description of participants' details, and (b) multiple cases to strengthen confidence in the findings, in order to determine the similarity of conditions.

In addition to the informants' demographic data, I have included a detailed description of the self-paced, ABE curriculum which distinguished this program, and a county profile which delineated the informants' small town/rural area in terms of literacy education and employment.

The external validity of this study is threatened by the fact that the Department of Adult Education employs a self-paced, competency-based curriculum. Because there is no social cooperation among students in the classroom, out-of-class social support may be more crucial than for students in a traditional program. Specifically, the lack of in-class socializing could reduce perceived benefits associated with resource acquisition, belongingness, or resource provision. Because the basic education population is typically sensitive about in-class social comparison, however, in-class socialization could also foster perceived costs associated with superiority, resource acquisition, or belongingness. Furthermore, because students in the Department of Adult Education are always working on deficits and primarily demonstrate progress in writing, the findings of this study may not apply to programs that have fixed content or provide more means than writing for students to show what they've learned.

Reliability/Dependability

The consistency of reliability, achieving stability of findings over time, converts to dependability as the quality and appropriateness of the investigative process. This devolves to the methodological skill and integrity of the researcher. I believe the foregoing Procedures section demonstrates that I have used systematic means to conduct this study, and maintained a written trail of my thoughts and activities. This chapter, its

appendices, and the availability of Individual Coding Charts, Informant Data Logs and my Journal should make the work sufficiently transparent that a public audit is possible.

Comparison of individual coding charts from Phase I and Phase II, where after I recoded Phase I informants' data, enabled me to become more consistent employing the categories of goal consequences. Two peer reviews that addressed coding information from interview data to goal consequences (previously presented) promoted reliability. These were conducted with the Lead Teacher, who took the time to familiarize herself with the taxonomy. Categories that remained sometimes difficult to distinguish were entertainment and happiness, which reside in the same goal subset, and resource provision and resource acquisition, which often co-occur in informants' perceptions – often a reciprocal process in social exchange, according to Ford (1992). How much one is getting versus giving social support may be particularly unclear within friendship or spousal relationships, where one naturally engenders the other.

When data from Main Points and Code Contents were tallied into percentage tables, a co-worker helped me recheck approximately half of the figures I had compiled. We did this by looking at the percentage tables, noticing major differences between informant groups in specific subsets, and then verifying those percentages by recounting the informants in those goal subsets from information in the summary document, either Main Points or Code Contents. If the number we arrived at in rechecking differed from the number I had originally calculated, we refigured it again. Overall, from checking 11-12 differing sets of percentages, we found three errors, which did not change the difference from significant to insignificant, or vice versa.

Objectivity/Confirmability

Objectivity, the minimizing of researcher judgment, understandably becomes seriously compromised in qualitative work. However, the logic used to interpret data must be explicit, therefore this quality parameter converts to confirmability as being able to trace the data synthesis. In order to determine if my conclusions are supported by the data, I offer the same chain of evidence used above for the reliability audit. In particular, I believe the content of the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987) is sufficiently clear, with my added notes, to support the categorization of informant responses that led to my results.

Standards

Standards for qualitative work emphasize fieldwork. Geertz (1973) points out that descriptive analysis is intrinsically incomplete and worse than that, the deeper one goes, the less complete it is. This means that while credible, my account may raise suspicion about its completeness. Thankfully, Geertz also claims, “it is not necessary to know everything in order to know something” (p. 20).

My challenge then was not to provide *the* correct accounting, but *a* correct accounting. To this end, I propose the following standards suggested by Creswell (1998, p. 195) [adapted from Howe and Eisenhardt (1990)]:

1. research questions drove data collection (not vice versa),
2. data collection and analytic procedure are technically competent,
3. my assumptions and subjective views are explicit,
4. the overall study is warranted as theory-based,
5. findings present valuable information while ethically protecting subjects.

My goal overall has been to achieve a balanced view of informants’ perspectives that will be meaningful to laypersons and professionals alike. I hope that my presentation

has not been rendered dispassionate by my efforts for neutrality. As a result of this study, I also hope that instructors and program personnel will perceive the value of addressing a student's external life to integrate school with her education endeavors, rather than focusing solely on her in class performance. I personally feel better armed to encourage and advise adults who can only undertake school with a slate already full of personal and social responsibilities.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study was designed to investigate how adults who did not finish high school and are now enrolled in adult basic education (ABE) integrate this program into their everyday lives. It provides qualitative and quantitative results that describe how such integration distinguished those who persisted in the program (Persisters) from those whose attendance was marginal in comparison (Gray Zone Informants) and those who withdrew within the first six weeks (Withdrawers) – Gray Zone Informants and Withdrawers are referred to collectively as Non-Persisters.

According to expectancy-value theory, goals and perceived costs and benefits are deemed to be antecedents of expectations and subjective task values (importance, utility, interest and cost) (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 1998; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). I expected expectancy-value theory to suggest how students' perceptions of costs and benefits about returning to school would effect expectations and values about remaining in school. Of the four subjective task values, I expected cost to have a major influence on adults whose lives are already busy with jobs, family responsibilities, and established social networks. I also believed that multiple goal theory (Ford, 1992; Wentzel, 2000) would help explain students' coordination of their school goal with other valued goals in terms of goal content. Sustaining motivation and commitment to the pursuit of education would then rely on adjusting school goals to the personal and social contexts in which they were constructed. These contexts emerged as informants reported how participation in school was compatible or incompatible with other events that they valued.

I analyzed the benefits and costs of returning to school that informants expected and perceived by coding them as goal content, using the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1992). This taxonomy classifies the range of desired and undesired consequences people seek to achieve and avoid. In addition to the qualitative description of specific benefits and costs that informants experienced, percentage tables show how many informants reported benefits and costs across goal subsets. Goal subsets group the specific goal consequences that I coded as costs and benefits into fewer, more abstract categories: affective, cognitive and subjective organization goals within the major category of within-person consequences, and two types of social goals and task goals within the major category of person-environment consequences (Appendix F).

Students who persisted were compared to those who withdrew by the following research questions:

1. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic literacy students expect at the beginning of a program?
2. What are the personal and social costs and benefits that adult basic literacy students perceive after they begin a program?
3. How/Do differences between expected and perceived costs and benefits differ between students who persist and students who withdraw within the first six weeks of participation?

This chapter begins with a summary of results presented in Chapter 4, organized around each research question. Following this summary, findings are discussed and how they relate to existing research and theory. The last sections present limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Summary of Major Results

Informants in the study were classified as Persisters, Gray Zone informants, and Withdrawers, based on attendance percentages for the best five of six weeks participation after enrollment. Persisters were those who attended at or better than 80%; Gray Zone informants demonstrated marginal attendance, less than 60%, although they continued to attend through the six weeks of the study; Withdrawers were those who ceased participating altogether before the end of the study (Table 3 shows attendance percentages for informants and comparison students.) Six weeks was used as the cutoff for this study because *early withdrawal*, the event I wished to investigate, was defined by studies in Chapter 2 as occurring within the first 12 hours of instruction, or the first three to five weeks of participation. And since I knew of illnesses, hospitalizations, family emergencies, etc., I used informants' best five of six weeks attendance for the participation average as an equalizer.

With respect to the first research question, there were distinctions between informants who would persist and those who would not, even at enrollment. Persisters at this time, and throughout the study, reported benefits in more goal subsets than Non-persisters. Among within-person goals regarding their everyday lives, Gray Zone informants initially reported expectations more like Persisters than Withdrawers – that is, they anticipated fewer affective benefits and more cognitive benefits. Among person-environment goals regarding their everyday lives, a majority of all three groups of informants expected benefits for self-assertive and task goals; however, Persisters and Withdrawers differed from Gray Zone informants with more expectations for integrative

social relationship goals. Regarding informants' initial reaction to class, Persisters were more conservative in their expectations of cognitive benefits than Non-persisters. Significant differences in costs were not apparent at the beginning of the program, although it is noteworthy for future discussion that no costs were reported by Non-persisters with regard to their initial reaction to class in any subset.

There were also differences among specific expectations at the outset of the program between Persisters and Non-persisters, despite the vast uniformity of their initial outlook. Unique among Persisters-to-be were early self-disclosure, which describes an openness about the importance of the GED to oneself personally, and co-attending with a person of social significance (spouse, partner, or sibling).

With respect to the second research question, perceptions of benefits after enrollment tended to develop among more informants than perceptions of costs. More Persisters reported benefits than Non-persisters for all three subsets in person-environment consequences (self-assertive social relationship, integrative social relationship, and task goals). The two remaining subsets do not show significant differences, but Persisters' benefits outweigh Non-persisters: 17% more reporting cognitive benefits than Withdrawers, and 20% more reporting subjective organization goals than both groups of Non-persisters. While all groups of informants perceived more costs with respect to their everyday lives than they initially anticipated, Persisters suffered these less than Non-persisters. Specifically, fewer Persisters perceived costs among affective goals than Withdrawers, and fewer perceived costs among cognitive goals than Gray Zone informants.

Furthermore, comparing the initial expectations of each group to its own subsequent perceptions, more Persisters experienced differences in goal subsets showing increased benefits (affective, cognitive, and integrative social relationship goals), whereas more Non-persisters reported differences in goal subsets showing increased costs (affective, cognitive, self-assertive social relationship, and task goals). While Withdrawers did show an intra-group increase in cognitive benefits, both groups of Non-persisters had significant decreases in task benefits. In short, for everyday adjustments to school, Persisters experienced more benefit increases and fewer cost increases.

Informants' subsequent reaction to class was problematic to interpret, because only two Withdrawers made it to the second interview to receive this question. However, fewer Gray Zone informants than Persisters reported affective benefits, and more Gray Zone informants than Persisters reported affective and cognitive costs. Gray Zone informants also reported fewer benefits and higher costs in both of these subsets than in their own initial reaction to class. Persisters were half as likely as Non-persisters to describe their progress in class as strong, and three times more likely than Non-persisters to initially report schoolwork as hard.

At the level of specific goal consequences, there was an additional benefit associated with persistence and one subsequent cost associated with withdrawal that emerged from subsequent interviews. The perceived benefit that described Persisters was the new me, which describes the sense of being a different person, either changed or changing, as a result of being a student. All but one of the informants who had intimated that they wanted to feel or be different but had not achieved it were Non-persisters. The subsequent cost that described Non-persisters, and Withdrawers specifically, was lack of

preferred social support, a negative response to being asked directly about people who were important for them to be able to attend, despite reports of positive support in other parts of their interviews. This seemed to indicate that social support was not being received from those from whom they most wanted it.

While the first two research questions described initial and subsequent differences between Persisters and Non-persisters, the third research question addressed their perceptions of what was required to remain in school. Persisters were generally consistent in perceiving benefits in more categories than Non-persisters. Informants in all groups overwhelmingly felt that self-determination was required to stay in school. No Gray Zone informants reported cognitive goal consequences, and no Withdrawers reported affective goal consequences, in response to what they thought was necessary to avoid withdrawal.

Benefits associated with school appeared to more clearly distinguish Persisters from Non-persisters than did costs. Gray Zone informants shared two subsets with Persisters which showed a much higher number perceiving benefits (tranquillity and resource acquisition), but four subsets with Withdrawers that demonstrated a much lower number perceiving benefits (superiority, belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision – all social consequences). In six out of eight categories of social consequences, more Persisters enjoyed benefits than Withdrawers: self-determination, superiority, resource acquisition, and belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision. This difference was greatest within social responsibility, and resource provision, as well as tranquillity.

One difference at the level of specific consequences was Persisters' comments about daily guidance from a higher power, which was making a spiritual connection with

their struggle to remain in school. Other benefits fell uniquely into code subsets of integrative social relationship goals. The specific goal consequences of belongingness, social responsibility, and resource provision, supported the co-attendance noted earlier, and three other benefits that characterized Persisters' responses: pleasing family member(s) by attending school, tutoring, and service. Tutoring and service underscore an informant's finding opportunities to use the knowledge that they were gaining from the program.

To summarize, Persisters and Non-persisters were expected to differ in their initial expectations or in their subsequent experience of costs and benefits that would modify those expectations and the valuing of those expectations relative to one another. What resulted was finding that ABE students: a) return to school with long-term expectations of benefits associated with program outcomes, few expectations of short-term benefits, and underestimated expectations of short-term costs, b) experience short-term costs vastly beyond what they anticipated, and c) persist with the discovery of certain kinds of short-term benefits. It appeared that persistence was associated with the discovery, unexpected more often than not, of immediate, short-term benefits, and that particular kinds of benefits were anchors that integrated the school experience, either on a personal or social level, into the lives of informants who persisted.

Discussion of Major Results

The quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in this study present somewhat different perspectives on Persisters and Non-persisters. Discussion begins with the more abstract level of the goal subsets, which were quantitatively analyzed. Following discussion of goal subsets are differences between persistence from withdrawal at the

level of specific goal consequences within those subsets. These differences are presented by qualitative descriptions of the kinds of benefits and cost that informants reported in association with particular aspects of their lives.

Discussion of Quantitative Findings - Goal Subsets

At enrollment, persisters demonstrated only one kind of expectation that differed from Non-persisters – fewer Persisters anticipated cognitive benefits in their initial reaction to class. Rather than having different kinds of expectations, Persisters looked unique in *how* they reported expectations. Percentage tables overall suggest that Persisters seemed more perspicacious, consistently reporting benefits and costs in more subsets. On the other hand, that they were more conservative in their initial anticipation of benefits indicates that perhaps they were also more cautious. Persisters may have been less impetuous – they tended to register for fewer days a week, which probably incurred less disruption in their everyday lives. Other data indicate they rated their progress in the program more moderately (half as likely as Non-persisters to describe it as strong) and were more willing (three times more likely than Non-persisters) to describe the coursework as difficult. So what looks like a bias in greater perception of benefits seems to be counterbalanced with temperance in assessment. Yet if Persisters were more temperate than Non-persisters in responding to interview questions, then the perceptions of benefits shown for them in the percentage tables are perhaps even less than their actual experience.

Among subsequent perceptions, the strongest findings from the percentage tables are that a) benefits speak more to persistence and withdrawal than do costs, b) person-environment subsets dominate in showing the greatest differences of Persisters' benefits

outweighing Non-persisters' benefits, and c) affective, integrative social relationship, and task goal subsets show the greatest discrepancy between Withdrawers' subsequent perceptions of costs and benefits (where costs not only rose while benefits dropped, but where costs were also higher than benefits). The first of these findings suggests that students can manage costs if there are concomitant benefits to offset them. The second and third findings show that the benefits which mattered most were among task and social issues. All three groups of informants suffered a decrease from their initial, unanimous expectations of task benefits – an informant's sense of achievement and management of the adjustment to school. And besides suffering less loss of task benefits, Persisters met and exceeded positive social expectations, in contrast to Non-persisters. I submit that Persisters may not only have been more realistic regarding class progress and time management, as just discussed, but were also better able to socially integrate school into their lives via out-of-class people and events.

This suggests the possibility that since the non-social nature of the self-paced program contributed little to integrative social relationships, out-of-class social events may have been instrumental in doing so. Studies cited in Chapter 2 (Carns, 1995; Diekoff & Diekoff, 1984; Fingeret, 1983; Zieghan, 1991) indicate social-emotional influences outside of the classroom may be as important as those within. While none of the informants anticipated disapproval or alienation from social others for attending school, the influence of outside social events is corroborated by the fact that, regarding reactions to class, neither self-assertive nor integrative social benefits reflected benefits or costs above one or two people. This was true for both initial and subsequent reactions.

Recall also, Chapter 2 outlined that a major cause for withdrawal is often affective dissatisfaction with events that occur after enrollment (Barron-Jones, 1998; Malicky & Norman, 1994; Malicky & Norman, 1996; Merritt et al., 2002; Quigley, 1992; Quigley, 1997). Within intra-group differences, all informant groups showed increases in affective costs – stress and dissatisfaction, predominantly associated with time management and loss of family time. Noting that stress and anxiety within affective costs were invariably tied to other goal consequences, it is important to remember that categories of goal content within the Ford and Nichols taxonomy are often not perceived discretely. Thus there might be an underlying snowball effect which could explain Persisters' experiencing benefits in more subsets because one goal consequence often entails another. Similarly cost experiences may lead to more of a cost focus.

My coding did catch some linkages among specific goal consequences: recall Informant J feeling like a better grandmother (positive self-evaluation) and closer to her granddaughter (belongingness), when she was able to use the knowledge she had gained in the program (understanding) to read to her (resource provision). Another example is Informant B showed linkage between understanding, positive self-evaluations and individuality:

I want to take up computers. 'Cause I want to be, you know, some job searches. 'Cause I like to uh, the reason I came back is I want to advance myself... Well. everything is computerized now. This is the computer age. I want to learn the computer, 'cause if I start my business, I can do it.. This is my first time on the computer. Like, last week I did two tests on the computer. Last Thursday night, I did six. It's made me feel good about myself. Because, you know, I uh, you got so many people that's older than me that's younger than me, and they're not doing nothing with their life. A lot of them are smoking drugs, selling drugs. You know, doing this, that, and the other. And I done a lot of that before... I don't feel that I'm no better than them. I'm just different than I was in the past. I'm just trying to accomplish some things in my life. I take pride in it.

As has been shown several times already, costs that were related to issues of understanding, time management, or social responsibility often incurred concomitant costs in the affective subset for feelings associated with entertainment, tranquillity, or happiness. Whereas costs in understanding usually seemed to precede costs in tranquillity, Informant L encountered the opposite. He had looked forward to school as a respite from the group home he was temporarily in, but had found that the stress from it interfered with his ability to focus at school:

I can't really concentrate in class because of where I'm staying and stuff. Just too many... too much at once. I picked the nights to break up the day. I wanted it to be a positive step because staying (there) is a very negative, environment. It's just too crazy to do anything, really anything sort of... at least what I want. I just thought I could handle it at this time, and there're so many other things I have to get done. This place is really stressful... It, it just, the, it wears me out. I had to take my eyes off the, not take my eyes off, it's how much I can and can't do anymore. If I was in a little bit more control... I'd have to be in my own place, yeah.

Quantitative data indicate that would-be withdrawers might be able to sustain higher levels of participation by developing awareness of more kinds of possible benefits, finding avenues to enhance person-environment benefits, and specifically seeking integrative social and task benefits to reduce affective costs.

Discussion of Qualitative Findings - Specific Goal Consequences

Several of the specific benefits that distinguished Persisters and Non-persisters from qualitative analysis can be conceptually linked. This gave rise to umbrella categories that add coherence to the events that occurred and deepen the understanding of what may distinguish persistence from withdrawal. Umbrella categories are *personal growth*, and *social sharing*. *Personal growth* includes the three personal benefits: early disclosure of

self, the new me, and daily guidance from a higher power. *Social sharing* includes the four social benefits co-attending, pleasing a family member, tutoring, and service.

Underlying these was an informant's ability to use outside of class the knowledge they were gaining in class, clearly tied to the social benefits of tutoring and service. Personal applications of using new knowledge, which contributed to the new me, were being able to read faster or longer and figure out words, using maps, and just finding everyday, light reading easier.

I need to digress for a moment to discuss the role of literacy within the findings, inasmuch as low literacy was a defining feature of the informants. Within reports of knowledge shared by informants who persisted, via tutoring and service, and within declarations of the new me, were informants' improved reading, writing, and math skills. Because I did not want to lead informants, I did not question them directly about literacy, but allowed literacy issues to emerge as they were perceived. Therefore, I missed the opportunity to uncover feelings students may have about literacy skills specifically. Perhaps if I had asked about new opportunities with regard to reading and writing skills per se, rather than in general, then more informants than the ones who did would have had more to say about reading or writing. Also, informants entered the program expressing a focus on getting the GED, with no specific concern about literacy. Recall that low-literate adults typically are more aware of what they can do than what they can't (Fingeret, 1982). Therefore, informants may need to be brought to see a void in their literacy experience, in order to trigger better information of what they believe they stand to gain. Yet it is indisputable that much of the educational gain informants perceived was literacy gain.

Personal growth reflects coherence in celebration of oneself. Chapter 2 reported that Beder and Valentine (1990) found four of the five factors that accounted for the most variance within motivation for ABE enrollment indicated anticipation of intra-personal changes. Early disclosure of self is the finding that half of the Persisters named issues pertaining to self-evaluation at the first interview, in association with their reasons for seeking the GED. Early disclosure of self often co-occurred with the other two benefits captured by personal growth. The informant closest to being an outlier is Informant F, whose only reported benefit was early disclosure of self:

I wanted to finish what I started, and plus it just makes me feel good to finally get past that thing. Feeling of accomplishment, feelings of learning things that I really should know. And you feel you've accomplished what everyone else around you seems to have already done. So that's the main thing, to feel that I've accomplished it, because it's a feeling of self-esteem. And I'll feel better about myself.

Early disclosure of self may not be a benefit that informants perceive, but it prove to be beneficial by helping them better develop and perceive other benefits that address self-evaluation. Too, Informant F seemed to suffer the least amount of short-term cost: he had little difficulty from time management, logistic interference, and social conflict, primarily by the luxury of participating in the afternoon, rather than in the evening after work, and not being a parent. He was one of only five still in attendance after eight months. His lack of short-term cost may have precluded a need for short-term benefits, he may be a true outlier, or his perceived short-term benefit may be something I did not uncover in the study.

The second benefit within *personal growth*, is the new me, an informant's sense of being different. The benefit of having a sense of oneself as a different person, either

changed or changing, is different than, “I’m still the same me, just doing something different.” For all informants who reported the new me, I sensed that it spoke positively about their vision of the future. Recalling Beder and Valentine (1990) again, the authors also labeled a motivational dimension for ABE enrollment that related to life cycle phenomena as launching, which suggested a readiness to take control and restructure one’s life.

Unfortunately, I did not see this benefit emerge in time to ascertain from interview questions whether informants who experienced the new me expected it or not. My sense is that Informants P and S were taken totally by surprise – P by his overall success in the program and use of knowledge outside the class, and S by finding herself eager to attend. Informant E stated at the outset that “no more excuses” for not finishing school defined him as a new person; Informant P5 had found from her previous enrollment that school “complete(d)” her. Informant K sought the new me outright, almost desperately:

(I’m) trying to be patient about whatever sticks out from the past, and try to correct them. ‘Cause only I can do that... Me making a change in my life, realizing, that I can, make a change. I have to do it myself. It’s not waiting on change. Because it’s inevitable, you must change... As far as making the step, making a change, I’m striving for something. And that’s a sense of... who I am. To better my education so that I can dig a little deeper into myself, to know self. Just getting to know...mainly self.

The second personal benefit within *personal growth*, daily guidance from a higher power, represents the spiritual connectedness some informants perceived with their struggles to remain in school. And yet I wonder if it was serendipitous that this benefit occurred among Persisters, when Non-persisters may well have had spiritual or religious feelings that they did not feel had a place within the study. Spiritual connectedness would be difficult to study directly, especially in the rural south, where social desirability makes

religion a high priority. To put it forth as an assessment item would virtually guarantee a positive association. What might be fruitful would be to see if informants who withdrew also attached spiritual connectedness to their decision. Unfortunately, I did not consider this in time to make it a discussion point.

Four kinds of benefits that distinguished students who persisted can be conceptually linked as *social sharing*: co-attendance, pleasing family member(s), tutoring, and service. *Social sharing* shows coherence by complex connections among belongingness, social responsibility, resource provision and resource acquisition. Rarely did any of the integrative social relationship goals occur without being linked to another, especially regarding family issues. And within co-attendance, mutual exchange is so interrelated that resource acquisition and resource provision seem inseparable. These connections could have sharpened Persisters' awareness of others' approval and support in ways that the encouragement Non-persisters received could not. Social support is not only a primary resource for crossing boundaries (Fingeret & Drennon, 1997), but underlies many other kinds of stated motivation for school (Boshier, 1983, 1991; Malicky & Norman, 1994; Morstain & Smart, 1974; Fujita-Staark, 1996). The benefits of social sharing were framed by other people than the informant deriving value from her attendance and/or from the knowledge she was gaining.

The benefits that did not distinguish persistence from withdrawal (enjoyment of the learning experience, pride to be doing something different and meaningful with their lives, increased confidence for performing schoolwork, and a goal elevation from simply achieving the GED to seeking further education beyond the high school level) may have been associated with the classroom but not an informant's overall life. These personal

benefits may not have been sufficient to anchor the process of attending school into students' everyday lives if they only occurred in the classroom. They may have been of a more fleeting nature than the other personal benefits that prevailed among Persisters, or in need of being bolstered by the other personal benefits that prevailed among Persisters. In short, they may be precursors to perceptions of benefits that did not sufficiently take root to constitute a more enduring sense of personal growth.

Interpreting Results From Theoretical Perspectives:

Expectancy-Value Theory and Multiple Goal Theory

Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy-value theory provided an important framework for this study because of my focus on how costs and benefits could affect students' expectations for how school would fit into their daily lives and the subjective task values (importance, interest, utility and cost) that they associated with participation in the program. In this study, expectations were not people's expectancies to succeed at their schoolwork but about effect of the program upon their lives and being able to sustain attendance. My analysis associated benefits and costs with goal content, as specific events that people desire and wish to avoid. Goals and perceived costs and benefits are deemed to be antecedents of expectations and values (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992; Eccles, Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). In short, I expected perceived costs and benefits of returning to school, coded by a taxonomy of goal content, to elucidate underlying expectations and values that informants might not be able to articulate directly.

Inasmuch as cost highlights the trade-off faced when one choice eliminates other possible choices or when a desired event is tied to inevitable, undesired events, it soon

became clear that cost was a central issue for adults with busy lives to make the on-going commitment to remain in school. Although I was unable to discover exact conditions that strengthened and diminished perceptions of cost, students seemed to show a greater willingness to tolerate short-term costs if they realized short-term benefits, and particularly within the same context of concern. Thus, the interplay of costs and benefits was crucial to continued participation. This interplay is tied to expectations focused on the future. Perceptions of immediate benefits support ability-related beliefs that the informant is successfully managing school at present, which fuel expectations that she will continue to manage school and positive task values that she associates with participation. In this manner, present ability-related beliefs promote her performance, continued attendance, and choice, to remain enrolled.

What was unique about this study was the finding that *short-term* benefits were especially important to continued attendance. While informants entered the program with long-term expectations focused on the *outcome* of getting the GED, they persisted in accordance with task-specific beliefs that reflected expectations about their ability to participate. Furthermore, withdrawers did not express doubts about being able to attain the desired outcome, the GED (most of them found school easier than they expected). Rather, they reported a need for circumstances more compatible with attendance. This suggests that participation was not related to outcome expectancy, but to the expectation for successful participation.

Expectancy-value theorists state that the perceived cost of an activity can often make it not worth doing. Among Non-persisters, the cost finding that is associated with Withdrawers (but not Gray Zone Informants) was lack of preferred social support. The

people that these informants especially wanted and expected social support from were perceived as unsupportive. This perception clearly had a strong influence upon those informants, because they all disclosed social support elsewhere in the interviews, but when asked directly, focused upon their disappointment. Their complaints about the lack of preferred support indicate that the expectation remained in place, unmodified: they still sought support from specific people. Modification of their disappointment might have indicated modification of the expectation to recognize other people as sufficiently significant – instead we see withdrawal. This unmet expectation seems to have become a powerful cost, undermining ability beliefs about successful participation.

Yet some informants discovered that an unmet expectation was a benefit rather than a cost. Informants J and R had been concerned that they would not be well-received by younger students, but found that their fears were unbased – both reported that the relief they experienced from this made it easier to attend. Several informants, Persisters and Non-persisters alike, were surprised to find the work easier than they anticipated, or to find that they liked school after they thought they would have to force themselves to go. It is unclear if these negative expectations became positive expectations or simply disappeared. There may be something about the modifiability of expectations, positive or negative, that can increase our understanding of their influence on achievement choices and performance. Modifiability could address the rigidity with which it is held versus its amenability to be compromised, and how ability beliefs can bring about such compromise.

While expectations, which may remain intact or become modified, influence achievement-related choices, effort and persistence, they may also affect subjective task

values. What is suggested here is that unmet expectations may be desired or undesired, and bolster either positive values (importance, utility, interest) or the negative value of cost. This study clearly indicated that if a positive (desired) expectation is not modified but remains unmet, it may become a cost. What is unclear is if an unmet expectation which was undesired also produced an effect upon positive values. Expectancy-value theorists might consider expectations in terms of what is desired and undesired, and how their amenity to being modified might differently affect subjective task values.

This study found evidence in three areas that demonstrated informants' beliefs about importance and utility, which are two major categories of achievement values in expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). First, all but one of the informants returned to school with a sense of the usefulness and importance of the GED, due to its potential to enhance their future employment. At no time did this study attempt to separate these two values, utility and importance, since the real-world job-market makes the practical validity of their union with respect to the GED virtually unassailable. While students who withdrew opted to continue weathering their households with minimum wages, each of them maintained a belief in the importance for the GED and expressed a desire to return to the program as soon as possible or use an on-line service for schooling.

Second, many informants reported an increase in their ultimate educational goal. They enrolled with a simple wish for their GED, but after gaining confidence and seeing progress with their schoolwork, elevated their expectations to college classes or further vocational training. This indicates a strengthening of their utility/importance value(s) for attending school, as well as their considerations about choice.

Third, Persisters' *social sharing* also ties directly to the subjective task value of utility. The utility of school was realized for these informants, as opposed to those whose perception of utility remained tied to their expectation for long-term outcomes. Because immediate sharing of knowledge and strengthened belongingness within social sharing was such a pleasure to those who reported it, I was surprised that informants who remarked on it as a matter of personal importance did not also report it in association with their retrospective assessment of interest for participation. The distinction already noted between interest and importance/utility for informants is supported by the dichotomy between school and learning noted in Chapter 2 (Beder, 1991; Quigley, 1992; Zieghan, 1992).

With respect to interest, the results of this study showed that informants' rating of their interest in the program correlated at a moderately high level to the total number of distinguishing benefits experienced, and at a high level to long-term attendance. While interest did not seem influential in early persistence, it was associated with informants' experience of benefits and with sustained participation.

Interestingly, two informants who reported a complete absence of interest were Persisters. This may indicate that that importance alone is sufficient to sustain ABE persistence. What is not evident is how much the value of importance is tied to utility, as previously discussed. While informants expressed their belief in the utility of the GED for increasing their income via job potential, this study did not ascertain the relative strength of that claim. Facing different needs, individuals could vary greatly with regard how dire they considered their economic circumstances to be, and how crucial their sense of utility might influence the decision to participate.

All but two informants experienced personal/social costs associated with being able to attend school. Persisters reported no diminishment in their perception of cost over the six weeks (in fact, it often increased), but reported benefits related to their immediate lives, largely unexpected, which Non-Persisters did not enjoy. Therefore, within the checks and balances of expectations and costs, I suggest that the distinguishing benefits supported the positive task values (importance and utility for all, interest for some) and may have spawned new expectations. The effect of perceiving short-term benefits could bolster Persisters' willingness to tolerate cost. An important question is whether the short-term benefits that informants realized modified long-term expectations in tacit ways that I did not uncover, or if completely independent benefits had the effect of sustaining participation.

In conclusion, while I originally proposed that the *relative* valuation of costs and benefits would be crucial to understanding how low-literate students' expectations and values are modified, I found that it seems to be the cognitive *nature* of the costs and benefits that effect valuation. Rather than simply having expectations, it seems to be having expectations anchored in experience that enhances values. If benefits are perceived in the experiential contexts that concern students (i.e., incur costs), then ability beliefs seem to tip the scales for relative valuation of costs and benefits in favor of continued participation. Recalling that all informants, Persisters and Non-persisters shared a number of perceived benefits, it is therefore important for expectancy-value theorists to consider not just the existence of benefits that affect expectations and values, but the relationship of those benefits to perceived costs, in order to understand how students who sustain motivation for school tolerate costs.

Multiple Goal Theory

The content perspective of multiple goals defines goal context as socially constructed. Ford (1992) highlights the importance of a student's cognitive representation of what is being attempted by enrolling in school, in order to find compatibility between her school goals and other goals. One thing that was very clear from this study is that adult students are forced to juggle intra- and inter-personal priorities and goals. They are concerned about time management, finances, travel arrangements, child care, etc. The importance of social others and the requirement for self-evaluation influence a student's motivation to participate in a program as she considers the compatibility of school with other goals. Her decision to remain in school is made on-goingly within a synthesis of adjusted responses to new events.

Besides external logistics, one major conflict among benefits that I anticipated was that a student's participation in basic education might entail a risk of social disapproval (Fingeret, 1982; Fingeret & Drennon, 1997). However, all informants reported that they expected participation in the ABE program to have only positive effects upon their lives. A reason that informants in this study did not report conflict between participation in an ABE program and existing social networks may be that they were at a point in their lives where they had a greater willingness to modify social connections, roles and responsibilities. Fingeret (1983) found a high occurrence of transition with enrollment in adult programs, when lives and social networks are undergoing change. Beder and Valentine (1990) found students at transition points in their lives were more receptive to restructuring and taking control of their lives. While being in transition did

not distinguish Persisters from Withdrawers, it did account for 55-79% of informants, depending on the degree of their circumstances.

While the majority of informants a) viewed getting the GED as a means to a better job that would benefit their families, and b) suffered costs related to belongingness, primarily because they missed family time, Persisters were likely to discover ways to integrate their school goal into other parts of their lives, and primarily with family members. The family context, which was perceived to suffer from engagement in school due to lack of time at home, was simultaneously benefited directly from school engagement. At the same time, informants who felt they weren't living up to their social role by missing family time were able to retrieve social responsibility by being good providers from the social sharing they were able to deliver. Non-persisters with family concerns were not as successful balancing the goal for long-term family gain against the sacrifice of short-term family goals, as were Persisters who perceived experiences that were compatible with short-term family needs. Similarly, of the three informants who co-attended, all three remained in attendance only as long as (or in one case, only a short time after) their co-attendant ceased participation. For those informants, we may infer that the school goal was constructed as a shared event and could not be integrated into an overall goal framework otherwise. From these examples, we can see that the school goal was tied to certain social contexts, as Ford (1992) maintains. If attending school causes undesired behavioral changes in valued social contexts, then students must find and coordinate other, compensating behaviors within those social contexts, or fail to achieve the overall organization of her school goal that will sustain participation.

Wentzel (2000) suggests three goal relationships to describe coordination of multiple, personal/social goals with academic achievement. The most general, *one-dimensional* relationship, identifies the student's social and emotional needs as predominating over her school goals. If we take this to mean social belongingness and relatedness at school, the one-dimensional relationship did not apply largely to this study. In the self-paced program, there is limited social interaction: students interact with instructors briefly to get materials and more so only if they seek assistance; they interact with other students outside during breaks. Two informants felt like outsiders at school throughout all of their interviews. Two other informants anticipated feeling like outsiders but found that did not turn out to be the case. However, if we take this to mean social belongingness and relatedness to significant others outside of class after becoming a student, then the one-dimensional model finds more support. Most Withdrawers reported school as emotionally "too much" to handle at the time, predominantly because of conflict with family needs. The three Persisters who enjoyed the mutual support of co-attendance all ceased to attend when their partner ceased first, although co-attendance did sustain them for the first six weeks of the study.

The second relationship describes *complementary* coordination between goals that contribute independently to the school goal. If these are not pursued concurrently, then there is little likelihood of encountering conflict between them. Support for this relationship was found among informants who developed higher educational goals than they entered the program with or reported school to be fun/interesting/enjoyable, despite a) a perceived lack of personal support from significant others b) not finding occasion to use knowledge from the program in their daily, or c) experiencing (sometimes extreme)

costs related to time management and family belongingness in order to attend school.

Conflict from the latter did not seem to effect achievement of the former, indicating that for these informants, there may have been independent contexts.

The third relationship is that personal/social goals may be *hierarchical* and *reciprocal*. Students have idiosyncratic rationale when demanding situations require them to prioritize goals in accordance with hierarchical belief systems. This may be seen in Persisters' overall decision to persist with school in the face of undesired costs; however, reciprocity is more in evidence. For example, the social sharing which enabled Persisters to weather personal sacrifice in social arenas. Or the personal growth among informants who experienced stress and anxiety. Idiosyncratic differences are demonstrated by one informant believing that the value of school does not justify missing time away from her children, while a second informant believes that modeling the importance of school to her children outweighs the time she misses away from them – the first prioritizes family time over the value of school, the other just the opposite. The second informant demonstrates the reciprocal nature of goals – that attending school in turn helps the family. Reciprocity is also shown by the informant who would prioritize family time, except for the compensating benefit of being better able to help her children with their homework on the evenings that she is still available to them, thanks to her participation in school.

This study indicates that the three relationships Wentzel (2000) outlines describe abilities of goal coordination that can be associated with persistence and withdrawal, albeit loosely, since they are not mutually exclusive. Also, one must say, “loosely,” because interview questions targeted *what* students sought and failed to directly elicit *why* they perceived their prioritization of goals. Information about goal prioritization was

often inferred from reports of conflict that going to school caused in students' everyday lives and their subsequent levels of participation.

The one-dimensional model typifies most Withdrawers and a few Persisters. Without the giving or getting of social support they expected, these informants reduced or failed to sustain their participation. The complementary model reflects one Withdrawer, two Gray Zone informants, and several Persisters – overall, more participation than the one-dimensional model. For these informants, difficulty or frustration from lack of social support or time management stress were not reported or demonstrated to diminish motivation to participate. The hierarchical model encompassed a majority of the Persisters, although this was demonstrated more by reports of reciprocity than any hierarchy that I could detect. These informants described their school goal as contributing to or dove-tailing with other goals that they valued: responsibility to their children, spousal expectations, co-worker relations, or staying off the streets. The implication is that program retention may be improved by counseling with strategies that help students find reciprocity among their goals, and specifically cognitive representations of how school is compatible within the contexts that they value.

The Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1992) played a vital role in this study. It not only provided a sound and comprehensive framework to categorize costs and benefits, but also enabled me to consider multiple goals where I might not otherwise have thought to seek them. Of particular interest is the authors acknowledging that the ordering or hierarchy of goals in the taxonomy does not promote the importance of any goal over any other – people identify with their own combinations for what is motivating. And certain complexities of relations among goals exist, such as

having goals that are both integrative and self-assertive, and that exchange relations involve complex and often tacit reciprocity between getting and giving social support. Both of these were demonstrated in this study. I do not believe that the elaborations I made (italicized notes within Appendix I) need to be incorporated into the taxonomy – they simply applied to the circumstances of this study and helped me to be consistent with my coding.

Traditional Barriers to Retention

As discussed in Chapter 2, a major focus of the literature on ABE students is the kinds of barriers that these students face, which make it difficult for them to remain in ABE programs. Beder (1989) presents traditional barriers as *structural*, depicting the students' external experience and *attitudinal*, representing their inner experience. Cross (1981) elaborates these to *situational* circumstances like transportation, child-care, etc., *institutional* concerns about school programs, and *dispositional* influences from past experience. Quigley (1997) finds problems with these category systems. First, barrier categories may not be discrete. He suggests that a fear of failure may be situational and dispositional. I suggested that similarly, social circumstances commonly viewed as the circumstantial or external structure of a student's life may also reflect an experiential influence upon how she sees herself as a student. Second, barriers may arise after enrollment. I also concur with this and suggested that rather than looking for fixed barriers, we might do better to address how it is that some students overcome the challenges they perceive and others do not.

Results of this study provide evidence that barriers co-exist across traditional categories. Such evidence is found in perceived dichotomies between social role

obligations and issues like finding time to attend school and making do with less income. Time management is more than an external, circumstantial issue when it entails a concern about not meeting social obligations or loss of belongingness within the family. Conversely, the fear of not satisfying parental responsibility can influence a student to perceive time management problems beyond actual time constraints. Two Withdrawers were reluctant to attend school because they wanted to be available *if* their children's needs would conflict. Albeit in reference to graduate school, Battle and Wigfield (2003) found that women's commitment to family vis-à-vis career entailed a higher perception of cost associated with the pursuit of education. Other informants felt that missing church was something that needed to be balanced out with other kinds of church work or made them a poor role model to their children. Similarly, reducing work time in order to attend school can affect one's sense of being a good parent when there is less money to take children places and buy them things. These findings corroborate consideration that dispositional and situational barriers are not discrete.

What is interesting about how some informants were able to overcome these challenges, while others were not, is that the Persisters usually found short-term benefits within the same areas of concern that they perceived costs. As stated, loss of family time was often compensated by better homework tutoring that improved the quality of family time that remained in place. Having to leave day-care work in the hands of a substitute was redeemed by being recognized as an active role model for young mothers to return to school. Both informants who reported missing church believed that their school work had a spiritual connection. Students who had already enrolled several times or were reluctant about being able to make themselves attend found positive perceptions of themselves as

changed or changing people. On the other hand, offsetting benefits did not occur with monetary difficulties – informants with those costs had to quit or change their schedules in order to accommodate more job time. This is evidence that educators cannot simply expect in-class progress to sustain motivation for school, but need to include students' broader world and especially their social networks in order to improve retention.

A second problem with categorizing barriers is that they are not static, but often change. Participation in school is a decision that is continually revisited. For example, family and peer support is not a static, circumstantial factor, but a dynamic, experiential event. The results of this study indicated that in comparing the people that informants initially expected to be important for them to be able to go to school with whom they subsequently realized to be important, differences either bolstered or deflated their sense of support. These were also subject to change from week to week, often by little more than a phone call or casual inquiry about a student's progress. While most informants interpreted any interest in their attending school as supportive, two students reported friends' interest in their progress as "pushy." Dispositional influences, then, can change the perception of a situational circumstance, such that what one student sees as encouragement, another views as intimidation.

Recalling Cross' (1981) Chain-of-Response model, I suggested in the literature review that self-evaluation and attitude may arise directly rather than indirectly from family, friends and significant others, and that attitudes may be about returning to school as well about education in general. Results of this study supported this suggestion. Social sharing, an immediate consequence from participation in the program, comprises straightforward acts which produce direct feedback. The realization of personal growth

and the spiritual connectedness reported by the informants of this study are tied to the personal experience of returning to school, and not simply the attainment of education. Therefore, I believe both my claims have been met.

On a final note, *traditional barriers* may be better framed as student *challenges*, which has a connotation less purely external, and more a part of their internal perceptions and strategies for coping. Quigley (1997) cautioned educators to “pay more attention to the world as seen by students” (p. 168) and Comings, et al. (2000) reported students’ logic that suggests cycles of withdrawal and returning constitute “stop-out” rather than “drop-out.” All informants who withdrew before the end of this study maintained an interest in continuing their pursuit of the GED, either at a different time or by other means than the Department of Adult Education. There was no evidence that long-term expectations were in any way abandoned, but merely postponed. Informants who withdrew seemed to have a clear cognizance of what would achieve compatibility between internal and external needs.

Limitations of the Study

I must first and foremost acknowledge that the data of this study could be subject to other interpretations. In particular, other analyses than the mixed methods used herein, or even a different focus than early withdrawal, might produce distinctions among informants that would be valuable for improving student retention. I understand that reducing informant responses to a limited set of code categories in the Ford and Nichols taxonomy necessarily delimited the kind of description that could be made. This reduction did, however, make a large amount of data manageable. And I believe that

performing both quantitative and qualitative analyses upon those codings provided meaningful information about address early withdrawal.

Another issue that could have influenced findings is the requirement of the self-paced program to document the majority of students' learning by written post-tests. Such a requirement is probably greater than the writing required in a traditional program, because the latter allows for class participation to demonstrate knowledge and often permits other types of learning outcomes than written material. Therefore, people with low frustration thresholds regarding writing may withdraw early, and it is unknown if such students would recognize, or how they would conceptualize, that rationale.

There were also limitations concerning data collection. First, this study did not have access to informants before enrollment in order to more fully ascertain what they expected before they enrolled in the program, and to make a better comparison to what they encountered after enrollment. Specifically, I think that finding more patterns exclusive to Non-persisters would be better achieved if a researcher had access to students before they entered a program. There is a likelihood that there were perceptions preceding those I found to be the "initial" ones. Furthermore, the short time that I had with some of the withdrawers was not sufficient to get a solid description of their thinking about school. If they had not been strangers to me, perhaps I could have derived deeper meanings for not wanting to be "bothered," explained why thinking it was "pretty easy after all" was not sufficient for persistence, and figured out why a few months' discomfort was not worth years of anticipated benefits. I am not unaware that it might require more skill on my part to ask better questions sooner, but I also feel that being less of a stranger would mean getting more intimate information.

Even though the study endeavored to gauge informants' perceptions at regular intervals, many thoughts probably never emerged because they came and went between intervals. A methodology whereby informants kept a journal of their own might be more informative, although I believe that with the time constraints most of the informants already suffered, such a commitment could be difficult to obtain. Failing that, perhaps a chart of some kind on which informants would register a few major perceptions twice a week. Such a chart might be useful to gauge the four subjective task values (utility, importance, interest, and cost) relative to the last time they were in and to when they began the program. Such information in conjunction with shorter weekly interviews focused on fewer issues (personal growth, social sharing, social support) might result in more information about values.

A third issue regarding data collection is the lack of *why* questions to better uncover informants' thinking about goal content and goal priorities. This has been addressed in earlier sections, especially with regard to uncovering more linkage among goal consequences.

With respect to the nature of the sample, students who perceived themselves to be closer to achieving the GED, based on higher TABE scores, could well have produced different results. Proximity is a strong motivator among students at the higher level of GED instruction. Also, students with math deficits may perceive benefits and costs differently than those with literacy weaknesses. Clearly, women experienced costs related to lost family time more than men did, but not exclusively. I believe that people raising children warrant a study unto themselves, because the issue of nurturing makes their conflicts so deeply poignant and socially salient. Not only might differences in children's

ages may be an issue, but parenting typically entails age differences which could also impact findings.

The self-paced nature of the ABE program used in this study makes it particularly unique and perhaps not amenable to ABE populations in more traditional schools. First, it probably had a direct effect upon attendance, by exercising a more liberal policy than traditional programs have. Second, students' perceptions of what comprises school is necessarily different. Except for having separate classrooms for lower and upper curriculum work, there is virtually no social comparison that the student does not invite, and there is no social interaction within the coursework. Students have no time-progress constraints, and do enjoy some degree of self-governance in choosing the sequence of particular skills. Also, the program has an inherent bias in that most of students' work is documented in writing, which disadvantages people with writing weaknesses, and may influence early withdrawal. Such people would probably do better with traditional programs that credit class participation or on-line programs that do not require a lot of writing.

Finally, of course, there is always the possibility that another researcher would interpret and code the interview data differently than I have done. I probably would even do so, in a different time frame, or perhaps even now. I was throughout this study aware of myself being a person caught up in the flux of life, like the people I was interviewing. As I was only able to capture each informant's thoughts at the moment I tapped into the flow of her experience, so also was I only able to see things from the moment of my own.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study suggests several areas for prospective research related to expectancy-value theory. Expectations might be worth further investigation in a few ways. First, expectations may have distinct kinds of influence upon values when they are modifiable as opposed to either being met or unmet. Second, the relationship between benefits and expectations might be worth further investigation. There might be conditions that determine when benefits convert directly to expectations. Or benefits may have a different effect if they are perceived as related to long-term expectations from when they are simply perceived to offset short-term costs.

Teasing out differences among subjective task values within the ABE population bears scrutiny. While it may be particularly difficult to distinguish importance and utility, due to the extrinsic significance of the GED, I believe there is room for finding interest, despite my inability to uncover it among students who reported events that would logically seem to incur greater intrinsic motivation. Perhaps this entails a difference between interest in becoming educated vis-à-vis interest in the actual process that one must go through to become more educated. There may be a product versus process orientation that precludes or promotes the development of interest.

The subjective value of cost especially comes to the fore for future research, due to the observed interplay of costs and benefits. More information about relationships between overall cost value and short-term costs and benefits could address: How much cost is tolerable, in light of expectations for it and of available short-term benefits? Do short-term benefits need to be perceived as compensating directly for short-term costs or can they also be independent? Being independent, of course, suggests the coordination of

goal contexts, so this question also converts to: What happens to costs and values when goal contexts exchange priority in goal coordination? And finally, how much do short-term costs effect the overall subjective value of cost for the achievement task at hand?

There are also adult education issues which this study raised. One is how adults evaluate and prioritize extenuating circumstances in the management of their school goals. Another is what parameters are involved in the interplay between becoming educated or being educated, and whether such a distinction distinguishes a student's perception of costs and benefits. While lack of preferred social support from significant others seems overwhelmingly discouraging, knowing what kinds of benefits could compensate for it would be invaluable. Inasmuch as making time for school disrupts familiar rhythms in everyday life, persistence seems to depend upon being able to create new rhythms.

My own interest at this point lies in finding if an intervention at intake, when a student first approaches a program, can promote earlier recognition of the potential for personal and social short-term benefits. This study suggests that just having someone to talk to who respects educational goals and acknowledges personal struggles may prolong attendance long enough that short-term rewards might begin to flower. Informed by the costs and benefits revealed in this study, my next research endeavor will probably be as assessment of what students perceive as tipping the scales for persistence or withdrawal – what makes the difference when the decision to stay or leave is almost even, including more *why* questions and another attempt to measure the influence of interest.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Identification Of Project	Title: PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONAL/SOCIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS
Statement of Joanne	I am over 18 years of age, in good health, and wish to join a research project for
Age of Subject satisfy	Royce of the Dept. of Human Development, Univ. of Md., College Park, to her degree there.
Purpose	This research project will ask me to describe the costs and benefits that I feel about returning to school. I understand that this study may be published and may be used in other publications.
Procedures	I will be interviewed four times, approximately 10 days apart, from the time that I begin the Adult Education Department at St. Johns River Community College. The interviews will be audiotaped, with the promise that this research project will not influence my work at SJRCC and my name will not be revealed to other people. If, however, I am unable to begin the interviews within my first two days' of class at SJRCC, then I will no longer be eligible for the study.
Confidentiality	All information collected in this study is confidential, so I will not be identified in any publication. The summary report will combine information about me with information from several other students. If any specific reference is made to something I say, it will be with a name entirely different from my own.
Risks	These interviews may cause me to realize that school does not provide the benefits I expected, or that there are costs of going to school I did not anticipate. This information may weaken my feelings as a student.
Benefits	These interviews may cause me to realize that school has benefits I did not expect, or that the costs I was concerned about are not a problem. This information may strengthen my feelings as a student.
Freedom to Withdraw and Ask Questions	I understand that I am free to ask questions or to withdraw from this research project at any time without penalty.
Candidate	Joanne Royce, 1308 Harding Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20905 Ph: (301) 879-8860 Email: danjoroy@gbso.net
Faculty Advisor	Dr. Allan Wigfield, Department of Human Development, College of Education, 3304 Benjamin Building, Univ. of Md., College Park, MD 20742 -1131 Ph: (301) 405-2827 Fax: (301) 405-2891 Email: aw44@umail.umd.edu

 Name of Informant

 Signature of Informant

 Date

APPENDIX B: GRAND TOUR QUESTIONS AND INTERVIEW GUIDES

Grand Tour Questions

1. May I ask how it is that you find yourself going back to school? What are the kinds of things that influenced you?
2. Why is now the time? What makes this different than other times in the past?
3. How long did it take you to decide? Were there particular people who encouraged you? Were there particular people who discouraged you?
4. Looking ahead to the future, at the long-term benefits, say after you've got your GED: How do you think things will be different at that time? How do you see your life changing?
5. Are there other ways that you also hope the GED will make a difference?
 "Another good thing about having the GED is..."
6. Most people know what they do want to be different. Some people also know that there are certain things they don't want to change by having their GED. They've thought about things they want to make sure they don't lose along the way, like certain personal characteristics or relationships with other people. Have you thought there's anything that you don't want to see change about yourself or your everyday life, even though you have your GED?
7. Let's shift now and look at your day-to-day stuff and what's going to happen now while you're in the program. Certainly, going to school requires some kinds of adjustments in your everyday life. What kinds of changes are you having to make?
 "Going to school for the GED might make my day-to-day life now better if..."
 "Going to school for the GED might make my day-to-day life now more difficult if..."
8. Which people are going to be important for you to be able to go to school? (Who will make the difference between whether you go or don't go to school?)
9. What kinds of events need to happen or keep happening for you to be able to go to school?
10. To understand your personal experience going back to school, what else do you think I need to know? Or what more would you like to mention about how you feel?
11. Have you been in a GED program before? How did it go? How long did you participate?

12. Do you mind if I ask why you withdrew? Were those the reasons you had in mind at the time you withdrew, or do you think you were focused on other reasons at that time?
13. How does it compare to what you expected?
 “One thing I didn’t expect about being in school is...”
 “Another thing I didn’t expect about being in school is...”
14. How does being in school make you think about yourself?
15. How does being in school make you think about yourself regarding other people?
16. What do you like most about being in school?
17. Do you have a sense of progress? What hinders your progress?
18. Are you already able to use any of the things you’re learning?
19. What are you not liking or find uncomfortable about being in school?
20. Looking back at what you hoped to get from school, do you feel differently now?
21. Thinking about the time it takes to go to school, what do you look forward to having the time to do when you’re finished with school? (hobbies / other goals)
22. Do you always feel like you’re getting closer to the GED, or does it sometimes, in certain situations, feel like you’re further away? (Is it constant, or are there peaks and valleys?)
23. Are there opportunities opening up for you already, even though you don’t have the GED, because you’re in school?
24. Let’s look at your experience from another point of view. Suppose you know someone who’s thinking about going back to school, but is undecided if they should join a program and go to school or say, study on-line or get a tutor or just study a GED book. They know they need the GED, you don’t have to convince them of that. But they’re not sure about the school route. And that person asked you to help them prepare for the plusses and minuses of going back to school, because they know you’re doing it. To advise them, what would you say they need to expect? What would best prepare them for being able to go back to school?
 “Going to school is mostly a matter of...”
25. What does it take to stay in school as an adult? How do you keep that?

26. Have your reasons for coming back to school changed any, now that you've been back for a while?

27. I'd like you to think about this next one for a minute. Is there anything about being in this study that influenced your thinking about going to school. About continuing to go or not go?

So you think that if you hadn't been in this study, you would have the same thoughts about school that you have now?

(or)

"If I hadn't been in this study, I probably would have thought..."

28. Have you set aside a certain amount of time to get the GED? If it takes more time than that, what kinds of problems would that cause?

29. Who do you talk to about school?

If people are named: Do you talk about the things you are learning, or just the organizing time to get to class?

If no one is named: Do you wish you had someone to talk with?

(The following interview guides show how the Grand Tour Questions were distributed among the interviews.)

Interview Guide -- First Interview

I'd like to remind you that everything you say remains confidential. If anyone else notices us talking, they have no idea what you're telling me and no one will be told which things in my study are the ones that you said. When I transcribe the tape to paper, your name is not on it.

1. May I ask how it is that you find yourself going back to school? What are the kinds of things that influenced you?

2. Why is now the time? What makes this different than other times in the past?

3. How long did it take to decide? Were there particular people who encouraged you? Were there particular people who discouraged you?

4. Looking ahead to the future, at the long-term benefits, say after you've got your GED: How do you think things will be different at that time? How do you see your life changing?

5. Are there other ways that you also hope the GED will make a difference? How would you finish this sentence: "Another good thing about having the GED is ..."

6. Most people know what they DO want to be different. Some people also know that there are certain things they DON'T want to change by having their GED. They've thought about things they want to make sure they don't lose along the way, like certain personal characteristics or relationships with other people. Have you thought there's anything that you don't want to see change about yourself or your everyday life, when you have your GED?

7. Let's shift now and look at your day-to-day life and what's going to happen now while you're in the program. Certainly, going to school requires some kinds of adjustments in your everyday life. What kinds of changes are you having to make? How would you finish this sentence:

“Going to school for the GED might make my day-to-day life NOW better if ...”

“Going to school for the GED might make my day-to-day life NOW more difficult if ...”

8. Which people are going to be important for you to be able to go to school?

(Who will make the difference between whether you go or don't go to school?)

9. What kinds of events need to happen or keep happening for you to be able to go to school?

10. To understand your personal experience going back to school, what else do you think I need to know? Or what more would you like to mention about how you feel?

11. Have you been in a GED program before? How did it go? How long did you participate?

12. Do you mind if I ask why you withdrew? Were those the reasons you had in mind at the time you withdrew, or do you think you were focused on other reasons at that time?

28. Have you set aside a certain amount of time to get the GED? If it takes more time than that, what kinds of problems would that cause?

Interview Guide -- Second Interview

I want to clarify that even though I'm a teacher, I'm not representing the school. Remember, I'm a student, too! I want this study to represent students, so that together we can tell schools how to understand students better, and what it's like for us to accommodate our lives to go back again.

7. How is your everyday life different now that you're a student again?

13. How does it compare to what you expected? How would you finish this sentence:

“One thing I didn't expect about being in school is...”

“Another thing I really didn't expect is...”

14. How does being a student make you think about yourself?
15. How does being a student make you think about yourself regarding other people?
(friends, family members, coworkers, neighbors, community involvement)
29. Who do you talk to about school?
(If people are named:) Do you talk about the actual things you're learning, or just organizing things to be able to get to class?
(If no one is named☺ Do you wish you had someone to talk with?
16. What do you like most about being in school?
17. Do you have a sense of progress? What hinders your progress?
18. Are you already able to use any of the things you're learning?
19. What are you not liking, or find uncomfortable, about being in school?
8. Who's turning out to be important for you to be able to go to school?
(Who's making the difference between whether you go to school or not?)
9. What kinds of events are making a difference, helpful or not helpful, for going to school?
20. Looking back at what you hoped to get from school, do you feel differently now?
21. Thinking about the time it takes to go to school, what do you look forward to having the time to do when you're finished with school? (hobbies / other goals)

Interview Guide -- Third Interview

Let me remind you that we're talking student to student here. I went through this, too, when I went back to school. After the 4th interview, you can ask me any of these questions you like - fair enough?

7. Let's review again – how would you say your everyday life is different from what it was like before you started going to school? How would you finish this sentence:
“Something I didn't expect about being in school that I didn't realize right away, but I've started to notice lately is...”
16. How many different things can you name that you like about being in school?
19. How many different things can you name that you don't like about being in school?

22. Do you always feel like you're getting closer to the GED, or does it sometimes, in certain situations, feel like you're further away? (Is it constant, or are there peaks and valleys?)

7. How many different kinds of adjustments can you name that you've had to make for school?

8. a. Who do you feel more approval or respect from, since you've become a student?
- b. Who are you better able to help or to interact with?
- c. Who would you like more encouragement from?

23. Are there opportunities opening up for you already, even though you don't have the GED, because you're in school?

14. Do you have any new insights about yourself?

24. Let's look at your experience from another point of view. Suppose you know someone who's thinking about going back to school, but is undecided if they should join a program and go to school or say, study on-line or get a tutor, or just study a GED book. They know they need the GED, you don't have to convince them of that. But they're not sure about the school route. And that person asked you to help them prepare for the plusses and minuses of going back to school, because they know you're doing it. To advise them, what would you say they need to know about going back to school?

How would you finish this sentence: "Going to school is mostly a matter of..."

25. What does it take to stay in school as an adult? How do you keep that?

Interview Guide -- Fourth Interview

This last interview is basically a review. I'm hoping you can fill in some more details and elaborate what we've already gone over. It will also be important for me to know if you've changed your mind about anything, so I get the whole picture, or if you think I misunderstood anything.

(Review specifics) adjustments in everyday life
 expected/unexpected people/events
 likes/dislikes

26. Have your reasons for coming back to school changed any, now that you've been back for a while?

(HAVE-TO / LIKE-TO chart)

Let's look at this chart. When you decided to go back to school, you said it was because you need school to help you get the GED. It's important to get you closer to the things

that you want to be able to do. And that's the same for most -- being important makes it feel like something they just have to find the time to do. That's this dark area. Then, they sometimes start to feel that they actually like it and besides being important, it becomes interesting. That's the white area. Now, you see how it can go for different individuals: some only come to like it gradually, some go back and forth with how much they like it, and others might start to like it a whole lot at the beginning, and then fall back to mostly feeling that's it's something that they have to do. This doesn't mean that it becomes less important, but that it can be interesting as well as important. If we were to look at you, let's review how you think your feelings went from week to week. Say at the beginning, you came in like most people, feeling that this is something you have to do because it's important. How would you say things felt after the 1st week?

(Review sense of progress, and what influences that.)

(Get any demographic information still missing – usually only need last grade of HS completed.)

27. I'd like you to think about this next one for a minute. Is there anything about being in this study that influenced your thinking about school? About continuing to go or not go?

So you think that if you hadn't been in this study, you would you have the same thoughts about going to school that you have now?

(or)

"If I hadn't been in this study, I probably would have thought..."

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Interview Guide -- For Students Who Have Withdrawn

Even though you've withdrawn, your thoughts and feelings are an important part of this study. Your contribution is just as important as the peoples' who are still going to classes.

7. How would you say your life is different now that you've left the program, compared to how it felt when you were attending?

13. How did that compare to what you expected?

- 8. a. Who would you have liked more approval or respect from?
- c. Who would you have liked more encouragement from?

14. Do you have any new insights about yourself?

16. What things about being a student did you like?

19. a. What things about being a student didn't you like?
 b. What things did you have to give up to go to school?
 c. What would make it more acceptable to give them up, if you decided to enroll again?

20. Looking back to what you'd hoped to get from school, how do you feel differently about those things now?

24. Let's look at your experience from another point of view. Suppose you know someone who's thinking about going back to school, but is undecided if they should join a program and go to school or say, study on-line or get a tutor, or just study a GED book. They know they need the GED, you don't have to convince them of that. But they're not sure about the school route. And that person asked you to help them prepare for the plusses and minuses of going back to school, because they know you're doing it. To advise them, what would you say they need to know about going back to school?

How would you finish this sentence: "Going to school is mostly a matter of..."

25. What does it take to stay in school as an adult? How does a person keep that?

Get any demographic information still missing – usually only need last grade of HS completed.

27. I'd like you to think about this next one for a minute. Is there anything about being in this study that influenced your thinking about school? About continuing to go or not go?

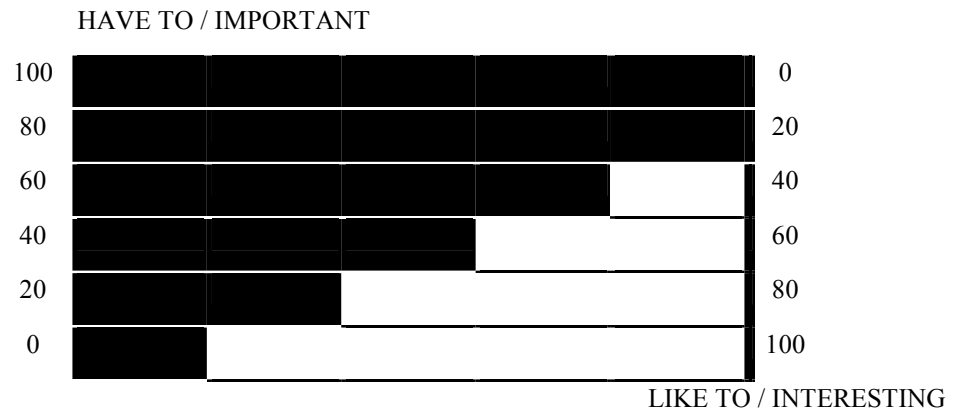
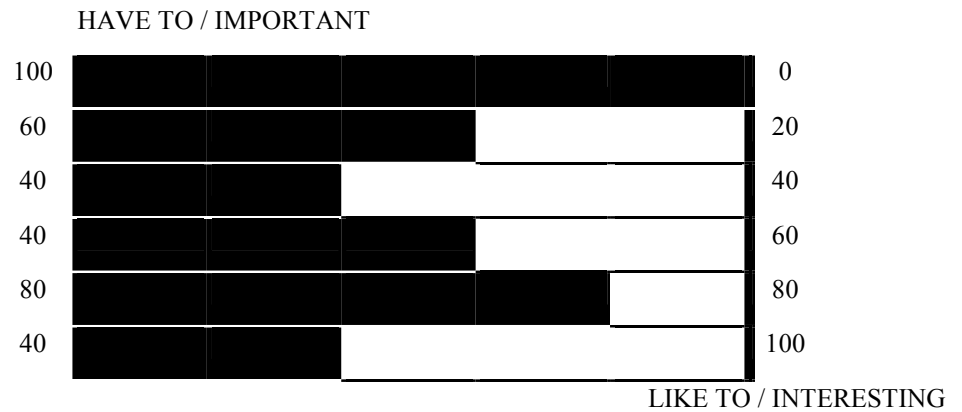
So you think that if you hadn't been in this study, you would you have the same thoughts about going to school that you have now?

(or)

"If I hadn't been in this study, I probably would have thought..."

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APPENDIX C: HAVE-TO / LIKE-TO CHARTS

WANT TO GO TO SCHOOLWANT TO GO TO SCHOOLWANT TO GO TO SCHOOL

APPENDIX D: ATTENDANCE RECORDS

							6 Wk Act'l.	5 Wk Adj'd								
	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Aver	Aver			Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk10	Wk11	Wk12
INFORMANTS																
P1	100%	100%	0%	66%	0%	30%	49%	59%	P1	50%	out					
P2	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	83%	90%	P2	100%	50%	0%	50%	out		
P3	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	83%	90%	P3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
P4	100%	33%	100%	66%	100%	100%	83%	93%	P4	100%	100%	66%	66%	100%	66%	
P5	100%	100%	66%	66%	66%	66%	77%	80%	P5	66%	66%	33%	0%	33%	0%	
P6	100%	0%	66%	33%	33%	0%	39%	46%	P6	33%	33%	0%	33%	out		
A	100%	50%	out						A							
B	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	B	100%	100%	100%	66%	100%	100%	
C	66%	33%	out						C							
D	66%	66%	33%	33%	33%	66%	50%	53%	D	33%	33%	66%	33%	out		
E	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	100%	83%	90%	E	100%	100%	50%	50%	out		
F	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	92%	100%	F	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	
H	100%	75%	50%	out					H							
I	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	75%	80%	I	out						
J	100%	100%	50%	100%	0%	50%	67%	80%	J	50%	0%	100%	50%	50%	50%	
K	100%	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	92%	95%	K	100%	66%	33%	66%	66%	33%	
L	100%	50%	out						L							
M	100%	out							M							
N	50%	0%	50%	50%	100%	out			N							
O	100%	0%	100%	50%	100%	50%	67%	80%	O	25%	50%	50%	50%	out		
P	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	0%	79%	95%	P	25%	75%	66%	50%	100%	0%	
Q	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	83%	100%	Q	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	100%	
R	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	R	100%	0%	100%	100%	50%	0%	
S	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	83%	90%	S	50%	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	
COMPARISON STUDENTS																
(G)	100%	66%	100%	66%	100%	100%	89%	93%	G	66%	100%	100%	100%	100%	66%	
C1	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	25%	83%	95%	C1	100%	50%	0%	33%	out		
C2	100%	66%	33%	66%	out				C2							
C3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	C3	100%	75%	100%	100%	75%	75%	
C4	100%	out							C4							
C5	100%	100%	100%	33%	66%	66%	78%	86%	C5	30%	out					
C6	100%	100%	75%	25%	75%	50%	71%	80%	C6	75%	25%	100%	50%	50%	75%	
C7	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	100%	96%	100%	C7	100%	75%	100%	50%	50%	out	
C8	25%	out							C8							
C9	25%	out							C9							
C10	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	50%	75%	80%	C10	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	out	
C11	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	83%	100%	C11	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	
C12	100%	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	92%	95%	C12	75%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	
C13	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	83%	90%	C13	100%	0%	75%	100%	out		
C14	50%	75%	out						C14							
C15	50%	out							C15							
C16	75%	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%	92%	95%	C16	50%	50%	50%	out			
C17	100%	100%	100%	25%	75%	50%	75%	85%	C17	75%	75%	75%	out			
C18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	92%	100%	C18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
C19	50%	0%	100%	out					C19							
C20	100%	0%	100%	100%	50%	50%	67%	80%	C20	out						
C21	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	83%	90%	C21	100%	100%	100%	50%	0%	100%	

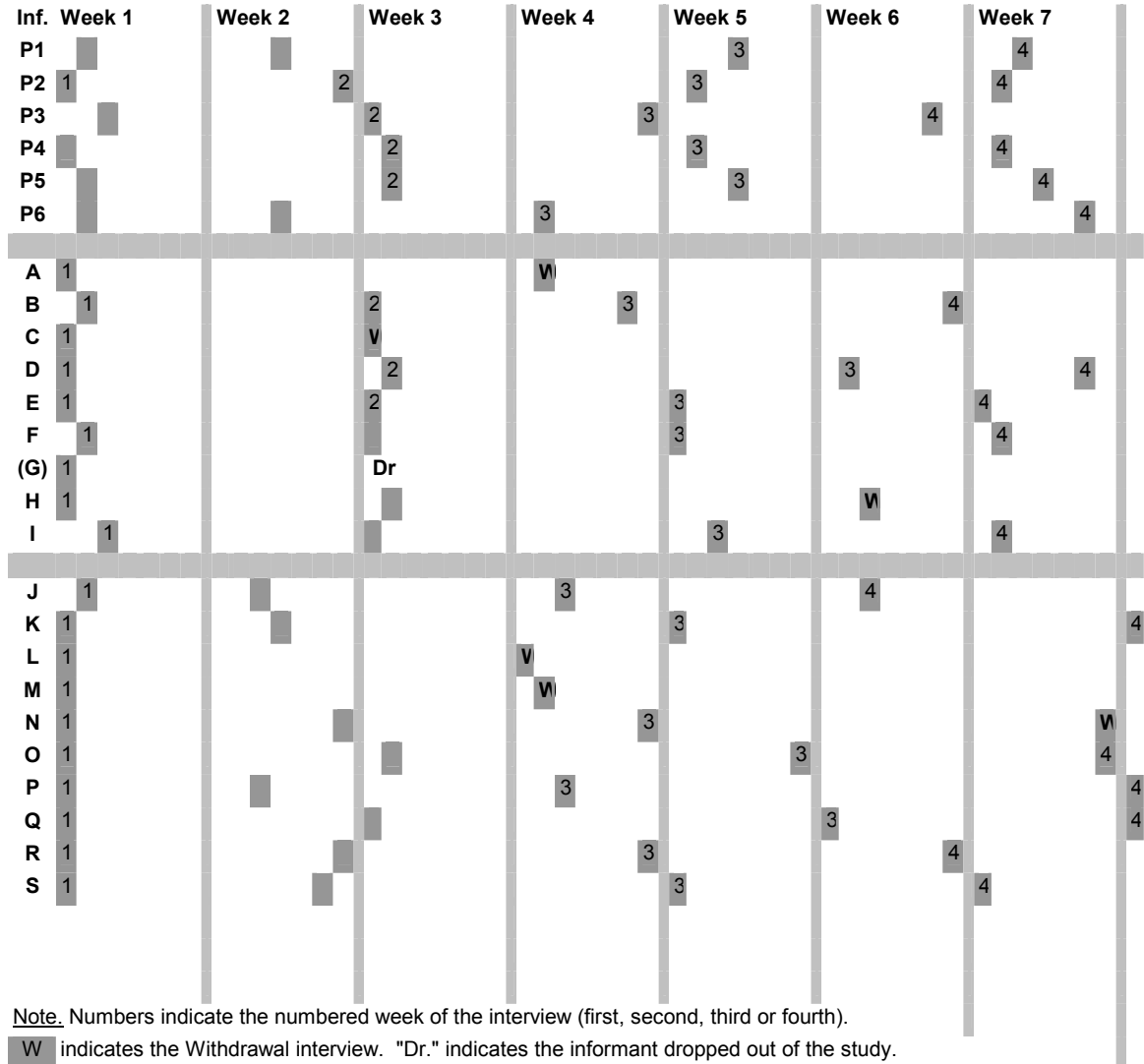
Note. "Out" indicates when the student left the program

"GED" indicates that the student ceased attending to challenge the GED test.

"Act'l Aver." is the actual six-week attendance average.

"Adj'd. Aver." is the best five of six weeks attendance average.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW INTERVALS



APPENDIX F – CONTENT OF THE FORD AND NICHOLS TAXONOMY OF HUMAN GOALS

The following list shows the contents of coding categories from the Ford and Nichols Taxonomy of Human Goals (Ford & Nichols, 1987, Ford, 1992). What the taxonomy defines as desired consequences are benefits; what is defined as consequences that people seek to avoid are costs. Italics show elaborations of my own that emerged as interviewed were conducted. Abbreviations shown are those used in Main Points (Appendix G).

DESIRED WITHIN-PERSON CONSEQUENCES

Affective Goals

Entertainment (ENT)

Benefit: Experiencing excitement, heightened arousal, *or surprise to like school.*

Cost: Boredom or stressful activity.

Tranquillity (TRANQ)

Benefit: Feeling relaxed, at ease, *or relief.*

Cost: Stressful overarousal *or anxiety.*

Happiness (HAPP)

Benefit: Experiencing feelings of joy, satisfaction, *including satisfaction to return to school, well-being, or surprise to be able to do school work.*

Cost: Feelings of emotional distress or dissatisfaction.

Physical Well-Being (PHYS)

Benefit: Feeling healthy, energetic, physically robust, *or wanting the GED for a less physically-demanding job.*

Cost: Feelings of lethargy, weakness, or ill health.

Cognitive Goals

Understanding (UND)

Benefit: Gaining knowledge or making sense out of something; *enjoying figuring things out, feeling “I can do it.”*

Cost: Misconceptions, erroneous beliefs, feelings of confusion, *or difficulty remembering the work.*

Intellectual Creativity (INT CR)

Benefit: Engaging in activities involving original thinking or novel or interesting ideas; *enjoying the newness of information or different ways of thinking.*

Cost: Mindless or familiar ways of thinking,

Positive Self-Evaluations (POS SELF)

Benefit: Maintaining a sense of self-confidence, pride, or self worth; *experiencing satisfaction to even “just try” or wanting to “finish something I started.”*

Cost: Feelings of failure, guilt, or incompetence.

Subjective Organization Goal

Unity (UNITY)

Benefit: Experiencing a profound or spiritual sense of connectedness, harmony, or oneness with people, nature, or a greater power; *satisfying a higher purpose by being in school, or thinking school was “meant to be.”*

Cost: Feelings of psychological disunity or disorganization.

DESIRED PERSON-ENVIRONMENT CONSEQUENCES

Self-Assertive Social Relationship Goals

Individuality (IND)

Benefit: Feeling unique, special, or different; *distinguishing oneself from another or even a previous self, feeling that school is “finally something for me” or “for me” as opposed to taking care of other people’s needs.*

Cost: Similarity or conformity with others.

Self-Determination (SD)

Benefit: Experiencing a sense of freedom to act or make choices, *seeking greater independence from others, or wanting social support not to feel “pushy.”*

Cost: The feeling of being pressured, constrained, or coerced.

Superiority (SUP)

Benefit: Comparing favorably to others in terms of winning, status, or success.

Cost: Unfavorable comparisons with others.

Resource Acquisition (RA)

Benefit: Obtaining approval, support, assistance, advice, or validation from others.

Cost: Social disapproval or rejection.

Integrative Social Relationship Goals

Belongingness (BEL)

Benefit: Building or maintaining attachments, friendships, intimacy, or a sense of community. Cost: Feelings of social isolation or separateness.

Social Responsibility (SOC RESP)

Benefit: Keeping interpersonal commitments, meeting social role obligations, and conforming to social and moral rules.

Cost: Social transgressions, unethical or illegal conduct, *or bothering others.*

Equity (EQU)

Benefit: Promoting fairness, justice, reciprocity, or equality.

Cost: Unfair or unjust actions.

Resource Provision (RP)

Benefit: Giving approval, support, assistance, advice, or validation to others.

Cost: Selfish or uncaring behavior; *accepting help from others to boost their self-esteem.*

Task Goals

Mastery (MAST)

Benefit: Meeting a challenging standard of achievement or improvement; *wanting to have the GED so as to not have “unfinished business.”*

Cost: Incompetence, mediocrity, or decrements in performance.

Task Creativity (TASK CR)

Benefit: Engaging in activities involving artistic expression or creativity.

Cost: Tasks that do not provide opportunities for creative action.

Management (MNMT)

Benefit: Maintaining order, organization, or productivity in daily life tasks.

Cost: Sloppiness, inefficiency, or disorganization.

Material Gain (MATL)

Benefit: Increasing the amount of money or tangible goods one has.

Cost: The loss of money or material possessions.

APPENDIX G: MAIN POINTS

1/2 Reasons for returning to school at this time		In transi- tion now	11/12 Reason(s) for previous withdrawal	...current with- drawal
PERSISTERS				
B	pastor enc me	N	<i>MAST, RA</i>	N/A
R	curr night job,distance, fatigue	(Y)	<i>MAST, MATL, TRANQ</i>	N/A
F	moved back, wanted to finish	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT, HAPP</i>	moved away N/A
Q	have all GED but math	N	<i>MAST, SELF</i>	N/A
K	want to change self, grow	Y	<i>MAST, SELF</i>	relocated N/A
P	new in town, have time	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	wasn't learning, frustr'd MAST, TRANQ
P4	free time - daughters have graduated	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	thot already passed GED MAST
S	finally got a car, want to finish	(Y)	<i>MAST, MNMT, SELF</i>	transp, lack of commitm't MNMT, SD
P3	recuper'n	(Y)	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	changed jobs, no time MNMT
P2	quit job, betw jobs	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	reacquired job, had enough \$ MATL
E	in a rut, have time now	(N)	<i>MAST, ENT, MNMT</i>	N/A
J	kids grown, have time	N	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	kids' needs interfered SOC RESP, MNMT
P5	kids older - no sitter,	(Y)	<i>MNMT,SOC RESP</i>	problem teen SOC RESP,
O	want to finish work sched - time	Y	<i>MAST,HAPP/ENT MAST, MNMT</i>	job sched erratic, tired MNMT MNMT
I	moved back, have time	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	N/A
GRAY ZONE				
P1	laid off, betw jobs	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	too tired, no time PHYS,MNMT
P6	work sched - time, want to finish	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT, HAPP</i>	parent care, job sched SOC RESP, MNMT
D	work schedule - time [still irreg]	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	job sch erratic, no focus MNMT, TRANQ
WITHDRAWERS				
N	free program, wanted in	Y	<i>MAST, MATL</i>	N/A
H	new in town, have time	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	N/A
				medical PHYS lazy

					POS SELF
A	son now 3 yrs - WS req's job	Y	<i>MAST, MAT'L</i>	needed \$ / work, no time	MATL,MNM T same
C	pushing sister back in town motiv's me	(Y)	<i>MAST, RA</i>	baby daugher's asthma	SOC RESP same
L	geog access - no transp req'd	Y	<i>MAST, MNMT</i>	heart attack	PHYS same
M	just have to do it for a better job	N	<i>MAST, MATL</i>	had baby	SOC RESP, MNMT same

	4/5/6 Initial expectations about having GED	Something's Missing <i>MAST+=educ>GED</i>	Role Modl	Subsequent expectations about having GED	
PERSISTERS					
B	diff job opp's (\$), self impr,			tutor wife for GED	RP
R	comp cl's, own bus day job closer to home, \$			more conf to take other classes	MAST+
F	finish, diff job opp's, would	Y	<i>MAST, MATL,SELF</i>	willing to take more classes	MAST+
Q	feel good to get past this job, role model (RM) to ch,		<i>MAST, MATL,SELF SOC RESP</i>	more sure abt educ'n	MAST+
K	personal imp better job, change self, RM		<i>MAST+, MATL, SELF, SOC RESP</i>	know self, th's coming	TRANQ
P	college classes job, less fear of oth people		<i>MAST, MATL, SUP</i>	together slowly imagine myself in college	MAST+
P4	grad'n cerem, diff job opp's	Y	<i>MAST+, MATL, HAPP, SELF</i>	(act) T'g dc ch, enc'g teens stay in sch	RP, SOC RESP
S	personal satisf'n, doing it for my kids		<i>MAST, SELF, SOC RESP</i>	pass just more deter'd, want Flo Arts	SD
P3	diff job opp's (techn'y) promot's, pers dev		<i>MAST, MATL, UND, SUP, SD/INT CR</i>	pass 0	
P2	finish, better job (benefits)		<i>MAST, MATL</i>	0	
E	diff job opp's (satis), self esteem	Y	<i>MAST,MATL,SELF</i>	more spec goal - radiology tech'n	MAST+
J	job mobility, help gr kids		<i>MAST, MATL, SD, RP</i>	higher job goals: CNA/RN	MAST+
P5	help kids, better job, feel complete	Y	<i>MAST,MATL,SELF RP/SOCIAL RESP</i>	more specif job/ ed'l goal - RN	MAST+
O	better job, \$, someth diff		<i>MAST, MATL,ENT</i>	0	
I	diff job opp's (RN), more		<i>MAST+, INDIV</i>	failed convinced sister to	RP(lost it)

	ed, be more th mother			attend	
GRAY ZONE					
P1	need job, conf (wk), focus, org'z	Y	<i>MAST, MATL, SELF MNMT, SUP</i>	passive pride	SELF/MAST
P6	better job (less effort), status, self conf	Y	<i>MAST, MATL, PHYS, SELF, SUP</i>	0	
D	finish, more ed, diff trade, own bus		<i>MAST+, MATL, SD</i>	0	
WITHDRAWERS					
N	better provider, closer to sib's, college, feel = oth's		<i>MAST+, MATL, BEL SUP, SOC</i>	sure abt more ed, do wh set mind	MAST+, SD
H	need GED for job (time/\$/effort)		<i>MAST, MATL, PHYS</i>	0	
A	better job (\$), help kids		<i>MAST, MATL, RP/ SOC RESP</i>	0	
C	better job (\$), field I like		<i>MAST, MATL, ENT</i>		
L	job, prove I'm trainable, RM, comp cl's, relief fr gr home		<i>MAST+, INDIV/SD, SOC RESP, TRANQ</i>	cannot commit, gr home too crazy	TRANQ
M	better job (\$), maybe college something different		<i>MAST(+), MATL, ENT</i>	0	

7 Logistic adjustments expected

7 Logistic adjustments realized

PERSISTERS

B	0 (no problem rearranging time)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	0, miss church	SOC RESP
R	lose sleep	<i>MNMT(time)/ PHYS</i>	lose sleep, but it's a routine	MNMT(time), TRANQ
F	0 (have free time - working less)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	0	
Q	readjust family time - no big deal	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	readjust family time, harder than exp'd	MNMT(time), BEL, SOC RESP
K	have to work around kids' needs	<i>MNMT(time)/SOC RESP, TRANQ</i>	trying to get routine oversee kids	MNMT(time), SOC RESP, TRANQ
P	sched around possible job have to make self come	<i>MNMT(time), SD</i>	0, roommate asks when I'll be done	TRANQ
P4	0 (can make time)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	time/resp mnmt diff, no time for pers life	MNMT, TRANQ, BEL
S	have to make myself come	SD	find myself anxious to come	HAPP
P3	0 (have time, off for PT)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	conflict w/ time for Internet business	MNMT(time/\$)
P2	0 (if find job, can resched)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	new job - more tired	PHYS

E	work around job/family	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	time/resp mnmt, miss fam/ church, fatigue	MNMT,SOC RESP
J	0 (have free time)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	kids supportive	BEL,PHYS,TRANQ RA, TRANQ
P5	work around fam, kids' indep, husb's insecurity	<i>SOC RESP/ MNMT</i>	family coop'g for school time	SOC RESP/MNMT
O	to bed earlier, less time w/ mother	<i>MNMT(time), BEL</i>	kids' sch, med prob's need kids' fun \$	MNMT(time/\$), SOC RESP
I	work around job	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	0	

GRAY ZONE

P1	0 (have time/\$ planned)	<i>MNMT(time/\$)</i>	need job sooner than exp'd	MAT'L, TRANQ, MNMT(time/\$)
P6	parent care	<i>MNMT(time),SOC RESP, PHYS</i>	fatigue	PHYS
D	0 (have work schedule I need)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	overtime	MNMT(time)

WITHDRAWERS

N	0 (if find job, can resched) short term transp issue	<i>MNMT(time/trans)</i>	rush/rush/rush, hectic	MNMT(time)
H	0 (have free time - no job)	<i>MNMT(time)</i>	job search, school, mental toll no WS \$ w/o working	TRANQ
A	have to work around WS	<i>MNMT(time), TRANQ</i>		MAT'L, MNMT (time/\$)
C	child-care conflicts	<i>SOC RESP</i>	daugh in hosp again (asthma) can't handle so much	SOC RESP
L	just have to be careful not not to overdo stress	<i>PHYS/TRANQ</i>		PHYS/TRANQ
M	job + child care	<i>MNMT(time), SOC RESP</i>	kids' after-school sch sometimes conflict	MNMT(time), SOC RESP

**3/8 People expected to
be important**

**Co-attend-
ing**

**8 a/b/c People realized
to be important**

PERSISTERS

B	just ask the Lord	<i>UNITY</i>	same + wife/work/church	UNITY, RA
R	0 (just my wife)	<i>RA</i>	same: wife gets me up	RA
F	just me, mother supp	<i>SD, RA</i>	same	SELF, RA
Q	0 (everyone supportive)	<i>RA</i>	same, miss time w/ kids	RA/BEL
K	myself, my kids	<i>SD, RA/ SOC</i>	same, friends support sometimes pushy	SELF, RA/SOC

			RESP		RESP,TRANQ
P	0		0	would like more enc fr	BEL/RA,
				brothers, roomie not push	TRANQ
P4	just me, daugh helps,		SD, RA	same, daycare ch/mothers,	SELF, RA, RP
	grkids say they're proud			grkids proud of me	SOC RESP
S	my kids		RA/SOC	same	RA/SOC RESP
			RESP		
P3	wife, kids supp	wife	RA	wife alw talks abt sch, says:	RP/RA/BEL,
				"take care of bus"	SOC RESP
P2	kids supp, moth enc	girlfr	RA	0	(RP/RA/BEL)
E	myself - no excuses, fam		SD, RA	same, fam proud - don't	SELF, RA
	supp			want to let them down	
J	boss supp		RA	kids supp, help grandkids,	RP/TRANQ
				want fr's "don't push me"	
P5	me, my kids - their HW		SD, RA/RP	kids/husb appr'l, help kids'	SELF, RA/RP
			SOC		
			RESP	HW	SOC RESP
O	0		0	just me	SELF
I	myself	(sis)	SD	motiv lost when not bring'g	RP to RP
				sister anymore	
GRAY ZONE					
P1	wife supp, always wanted		RA	same	RA
	this for me				
P6	me, mother		SD, RA	same, more conf interact'g	SELF/SUP,
				w/ others	RA
D	0 (keep to myself)		0	0	0
WITHDRAWERS					
N	just me		SD	didn't exp fam to be so cold	RA/BEL/HAPP
H	myself, wife supp		SD, RA	I'm lazy, wish more supp	SELF, RA
				from wife	
A	mother d.c./\$ supp		MNMT(\$)	mother can't help w/o	MAT'L(time/\$),
				WS \$	RA
	sis supp, boyfr maybe				
C	neg		RA, (RA)	have to take care of daugh,	SOC RESP,
				can't depend on mother	(RA)
L	me		SD	group home environment	BEL/TRANQ,
				too distracting/negative	RA
M	myself, my family		SD, RA	same and oth people enc'g	RA
				me	
	9 Events expected			9 Events realized to be	
	to			important	
	be important				
PERSISTERS					
B	0	0		tested closer to GED than	HAPP/UND
				exp'd	
R	lose sleep	PHYS		same	PHYS
F	occas job conflict	MNMT(time)		more confident abt classwork	UND, SELF/

Q	0	0	per se hard to be away from family	MAST BEL
K	kids' needs	SOC RESP	same	SOC RESP
P	expect boring, have to force self to go	ENT, SD	not bored! can't believe I missed going to school	ENT, SELF/ HAPP
P4	have job help to get time off	MNMT(time)	hard to manage resp's/time at home	MNMT, TRANQ
S	work hours coop, have to force self	MNMT(time) SD	same (wk), but I'm anx to go to sch: design class	MNMT, ENT
P3	keep current job	MAT'L	same, tested closer to GED than exp'd	HAPP/UND
P2	job not conflict	MNMT(time)	new job - intermit overtime, more tired from work	MNMT/PHYS
E	occas job conflict	MNMT(time)	same, schwork diffic, ask'g for help, feel like outsider	MNMT,UND,RA BEL/SUP
J	0	0	0	0
P5	family stability	MNMT(time)/ SOC RESP	same, fam coop'g for sch	SOC RESP/ MNMT, HAPP
O	0	0	kids' sch prob's and dr's app'ts	MNMT
I	0	0	grade levels lower than exp'd	HAPP
GRAY ZONE				
P1	0	0	orig plan changed, ext distr's	MNMT,TRANQ, HAPP
P6	job stays stable	MNMT(time)	job sometimes tires me out	PHYS
D	just job schedule	MNMT(time)	0	0
WITHDRAWERS				
N	possible job conflict	MNMT(time)	didn't expect family to be so cold, self conscious at sch	BEL/HAPP, SUP
H	0	0	didn't get prom'd fam job	MAT'L, TRANQ
A	school w/o having to work, daycare	MNMT (time/\$)	work 1st, school 2nd	MAT'L, MNMT, TRANQ
C	daugh's asthma	SOC RESP	daughter in hosp w/ asthma	SOC RESP
L	stress level	PHYS/ TRANQ	stress level	PHYS/TRANQ
M	0	0	0	0

13/20 Initial reaction to class

13/20 Subsequent reaction to
class**PERSISTERS**

B	like it, wished I'd started	ENT	proud of progress, pride to do by	SELF/MAST
----------	-----------------------------	------------	-----------------------------------	------------------

R	sooner not uncomf around peo you don't know	TRANQ	best hard, easy, harder than expected	UND/UND
F	more focused thinking	UND/INT CR	thinking more clearly and quickly	UND/INT CR
Q	no biggie - just have to manage time just trying to ease in slo,	MNMT	not going as quickly as expected, this is for ME	TRANQ/ MAST, IND
K	get get adj'd to routine	MNMT/ TRANQ	feel self-change, want that flicker more when things kick in	SELF, (UND)
P	harder than exp'd, thot I knew more	UND/ TRANQ	didn't expect it to be this easy, th'gs I'm learning - it's pretty good	UND/HAPP
P4	sch already helps w/ daycare ch	RP/SOC RESP	study so hard, hard to remem	UND/TRANQ
S	easier than expected	UND/HAPP	didn't expect to like it, want to come	ENT
P3	surp'd I'm sticking to it, enjoy it	HAPP, ENT	0	0
P2	easier than exp'd, more int'd now, L quicker	UND/HAPP	time management - no big deal	(MNMT)
E	I see the way they look, feel like an outsider	SUP/BEL	frust'g, harder than exp'd	UND/TRANQ
J	self-cons, looking at me? can I do this again?	SUP/SELF	excitem't of accomplm't overriding the fear	MAST/ENT
P5	this is more for "me" than prev attend	ENT, INDIV	more energy to learn	ENT/HAPP
O	more fun than HS, can work w/o distractions	ENT/TRANQ	fun	ENT
I	0	0	tough to stay inter'd	ENT
GRAY ZONE				
P1	easier than exp'd, reliev'd surpris'd to like sch	UND,TRANQ ENT,HAPP	want hi grades, brings back frust'n, lost initial int and joy in learning	MAS,UND/TR, ENT/HAPP
P6	happy can L, self conf, enjoy the challenge	HAPP/UND, SELF,IN CR	being so tired, wish full time	PHYS, MNMT
D	0	0	so many tests, so much to accom, learning things I forgot about	UND/TRANQ UND
WITHDRAWERS				
N	1st day - read a map	UND/ENT	may as well do it, everyday I learn someth I didn't know	UND/ENT
H	easier than exp'd, peo look at me better	UND, SUP	exp'd more stud's my age, harder ev day to L, rememso many rules	BEL, UND/ TRANQ
A	just glad to be trying	HAPP		
C	easier th exp'd, like chall doing something diff	UND, INT CR SELF		
L	enjoyed seeing how much I knew	UND/ENT		
M	like getting things right felt good to be trying	UND/HAPP SELF		

	14 How informant thinks about self as student	No w	Future	15 How informant thinks about self in rel'ship to others	
PERSISTERS					
B	more conf, feel good about progress	Y	SELF/UND INDIV	get ahead \$\$ like others	MAT'L
R	feels good co-W's ask for my help, help'g my wife		SELF/RP	coworkers ask for help, I know more th them	SUP
F	alw saw self as st of life, trad'l think'g again good proud to follow thru w/ this		SELF/INT CR	will be like succ others	SUP
Q			SELF	showing ch that they can stick to someth'g	SOC RESP
K	proud - making a change, striving for something	Y	SELF, MAST INDIV	0	0
P	I'm smart, actually L'g	Y	SELF/UND INDIV	more confident writing job app's & w/ others	SUP/MAST
P4	increased self-esteem, decreased shame		SELF/SUP	will be like others w/ GED on the wall	SUP
S	smarter than I thot I was, stronger than I thot I was	Y	SELF/UND INDIV	0	0
P3	feel little more conf		SELF/UND	no different	0
P2	no diff, better abt self, feels good to L more easily		SELF/UND	no different	0
E	proud to make this dec'n, more ag'st me to come in	Y	SELF/INDIV SELF SUP	don't belong at school	BEL/SUP
J	are they looking at me?			better grandmother	SOC RESP
P5	feel more complete, sense of imp	(Y)	SELF/INDIV	better parent to kids	SOC RESP
O	happy to be back on track, getting something I want		HAPP/MAST	getting ahead like oth's	SUP
I	want more, not like moth, more SE from learning	Y	SELF/MAST+ SUP	will be conf like oth students	SUP
GRAY ZONE					
P1	feel more complete		SELF	son may see me diff'ly	RP
P6	more conf, learning things I didn't think I'd catch more conf, proud -		SELF/UND	will be less embarr'd around other people	SUP
D	sticking to it		SELF/UND	0	0
WITHDRAWERS					
N	proud of myself for moving, to be here		SELF	thin family deep down is proud, st's look at me	RA/BEL, SUP
H	feel good/conf abt myself to be L'g, knowing I can do it, just lazy I guess		SELF/UND SELF	0	0

A	0	0	0	0
C	more conf that I can do it	Y SELF/UND	want to be like sis - not give up	SUP
L	that I can't manage the stress like I thot I could	Y TRANQ/PHYS	need my own place, can't handle gr home	TRANQ/ PHYS
M	I'm happy when I got what I didn't know	Y UND/HAPP	it's good to know I tried, a lot don't try	SUP/SELF

**16 What informant likes
about**

school

**19 What informant doesn't
like about
school**

PERSISTERS

B	do'g someth w/ life, unlike oth's, (different than previous self)	INDIV/SUP	0	0
R	will get diploma and closer job	MAST, TRANQ	0	0
F	impr self, exer mind, meet peo	SELF, INT CR, BEL	0	0
Q	will get GED and show kids	MAST, SOC RESP	just having to do it, miss fam time	MNMT, BEL
K	knowledge to help me grow	UND/SELF	having to rush, loss of fam time	MNMT, BEL/SOC RESP
P	learning, using knowledge	UND	0	0
P4	knowledge to share	UND, RP	hard to remember things	UND
S	just that I'm gonna get GED	MAST	0	0
P3	knowledge, self-conf	UND, SELF	time mnmt - no big deal	MNMT
P2	learning, finding out th'gs I didn't know	UND, INT CR	harder to learn when tired	PHYS/UND
E	getting closer to the GED, feeling of purpose (relig)	MAST, UNITY	less conf, fatigue, miss me time	SELF, PHYS, SD
J	teaches me whatever I've lost or forgotten	UND	0	0
P5	self-conf, knowledge	SELF, UND	0	0
O	I'm back on track, doing what I want, doing someth for me	SD/HAPP/ INDIV	0	0
I	chall of fig'g things out, getting knowledge	INT CREAT/ UND	tiring, stressful making time	PHYS, TRANQ/ MNMT
GRAY ZONE				
P1	enjoy learning	ENT/UND	0	

P6	learning, knowledge	UND	going in when tired	PHYS
D	info, challenge of learning	UND, INT CR	reading, spelling	UND
WITHDRAWERS				
N	learning, furthering my educ so I can get ahead	UND	miss fam time,	BEL, MNMT
H	learning new stuff, chall of figuring out things out	UND, INT CR	rougher every day, so many rules	TRANQ/UND
A	just glad to be trying	HAPP	0	0
C	doing something w/ my life not life everyday	INT CR	miss TV shows	ENT
L	liked working toward a goal	SELF/SD	just my health conditions	PHYS
M	like L'g, getting things right	UND	0	0

22 Sense of progress			17 What hinders prog		Sch easy/hard	18 Able to use new knowledge now	
PERSISTERS							
B	UP	UND/	0	0	e	no (will help wife) read better/faster	MAST
		MAST					
R	up and down	MAST	writing down - math up	UND	h-e-h	(math at work)	
F	up	UND/	forgetting things	UND		not really	
		MAST					
Q	not yet, then up and down easing in	(MAST)	not as quick as exp'd,	MNMT/	h	kids' homework	BEL/SOC
			how much still left	TRANQ			RESP
K	(0)	0	hasn't kicked in yet	no ENT w/ UND		yes, no, no	
P	up down UP	UND	time on task, work to pass a test	UND	h-e	reading more and better	SLF/UND
			no focus,not enuf				MAST
P4	UP down	UND/	time,	UND, MNMT,		YES - daycare	SOC RES
		MAST	stuck in curric, tired	TRANQ,PHYS			
S	up	MAST	0 (easy)	0	e	no	
P3	constant	UND	0	0		little things	MAST

P2	up down	MAST	fatigue, stuck in curric	PHYS, UND	e	(maybe will w/ kids)	
E	inching along	0	remembering	UND	h	no	
J	up and down	UND/ MAST	have to go back and rework a lesson	UND		writing at work reading: gr-kids	UND, BEL/SR
P5	UP down	UND/ MAST	not enough time	MNMT		YES - my kids	SOC RES
O	up and down	MAST	reading/writing up, math down	UND		kids' homework	BEL/SOC RESP
I	up and down	UND/ MAST	diffic remembering	UND		no	
GRAY ZONE							
P1	UP DOWN	UND/	distrac's ruined plan,	MNMT/	e	no	
P6	up down	MAST MAST/ SUP	lost joy of L / focus missing class	TRANQ MNMT		no	
D	UP DOWN	MAST	0	0	h	using w/ kids then not = no	
WITHDRAWERS							
N	not yet	0	I'll need a month of coming to feel that	MNMT	e	yes - little th's (map)	UND/ SELF
H	up DOWN	UND/ MAST	diffic remembering	UND	e-h	no	
A							
C					e		
L							
M							

**21 How use school
time later**

**23 Have new
opp's
yet (w/o
GED)**

**What's needed to
return to school**

PERSISTERS

B	computer classes	UND/MAST+	not w/o GED
R	sleep	PHYS	not w/o GED
F	L more music	ENT/MNMT	not w/o GED
Q	more classes	UND/MAST+	0

K	college classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	not w/o GED			
P	working, college	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	better job app's, handle peo	SUP/		
P4	child dev classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	better help kids, preg teens	MAST RP		
S	working and design classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i> <i>MAT'L</i> <i>TASK</i> <i>CREAT</i>	0			
P3	work on bus'nss		not w/o GED			
P2	home projects	<i>MNMT</i>	not w/o GED			
E	more classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	not w/o GED			
J	CNA/LPN classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	helping granddaug	RP		
P5	RN classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	help kids' homewk	RP		
O	(shrug)	<i>0</i>	0			
I	RN classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	not w/o GED			
GRAY ZONE						
P1	recr'n, time w/ son	<i>TRANQ,</i> <i>BEL/</i> <i>SOC RESP</i>	not w/o GED			
P6	comp classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	not w/o GED			
D	college classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	not w/o GED			
WITHDRAWERS						
N	more classes	<i>UND/MAST+</i>	store empl's resp I'm in school	SUP	will return after operation	<i>TRANQ</i>
H	find job	<i>MAT'L</i>	not w/o GED		need someone push'g me	<i>RA</i>
A					need \$ supp to have the time	<i>MAT'L,</i> <i>MNMT</i>
C					not to be w/ daughter	<i>SOC</i> <i>RESP</i>
L					need my place, less distrac's	<i>TRANQ</i>
M					less busy w/ kids and fam	<i>TRANQ,</i> <i>MNMT</i>

PERSISTERS

B	got to have patience	<i>TRANQ</i>
R	just get up and come, buckle down and do it, can't let people tell you not to	<i>SD</i>
F	clear their schedule, be ready to delve into it, and go from there	<i>MNMT</i>
Q	have to plan time and stick to it	<i>MNMT/SD</i>
K	you would never know until you try, you got to make that first step	<i>SD</i>
P	have to take the first step	<i>SD</i>
P4	just keep focusing on marching across that stage & graduating	<i>SD</i>
S	once they start they'll see it's not hard at all	<i>TRANQ/UND</i>
P3	faith is the only way anybody can make it	<i>UNITY</i>
P2	no matter what, just stick with it	<i>SD</i>
E	you gotta follow thru like a job	<i>MAST</i>
J	come and don't feel uncomfortable, not worry like I did	<i>TRANQ</i>
P5	homelife has to be arranged to make sch fit; have to get the support of your fam	<i>MNMT, RA(fam)</i>
O	just put it in your head that you really want to do it	<i>SD</i>
I	have to make the time	<i>MNMT</i>

GRAY ZONE

P1	keep your focus or you'll lose what you started, just keep your mind set on doing it	<i>SD</i>
P6	gonna be tireded, less time for... gallavanting	<i>MNMT/PHYS</i>
D	expect to put in the effort to have time	<i>SD/MNMT</i>

WITHDRAWERS

N	you have to know you want it, have to want it to do it	<i>SD</i>
H	you got to know what you want to do	<i>SD</i>
A		
C		
L	commit yourself to it	<i>SD</i>
M	just do it, learn to do things the right way	<i>SD/MAST</i>

25 What it takes to stay in school, what school is about		26 How a person keeps/gets what it takes to stay in school		
PERSISTERS				
B	pray	UNITY	prayer	UNITY
R	put it in your head to do it	SD	just put it in your head that you're gonna do it	SD
F	wanting self improv't,	SELF/	you just really got to want to	SD
Q	want more, do more have to stick with it	MAT'L SD	you simply have to go thru the steps if I can do it and my kids can see	SOC RESP 0
K	persistence, dedic'n, stay focused	SD	(don't know)	
P	have to take the first step, be willing	SD	look at it like a job	MNMT
P4	patience, hard work	MNMT,	keep focusing on graduation	SD
		TRANQ		
S	will, got to be pers't, keep going	SD	nothing to do but do it, get it over with	SD
P3	will power, determ'n	SD	faith, prayer	UNITY
P2	want it bad enough	SD	just stick with it	SD
E	a lot of commitment	SD	can't let fam down, look self in the mirror, stop making excuses	SOC RESP, SELF
J	want to, will power, no excuses	SD	look at it as another job	MNMT
P5	just stick with it, get priorities in line	SD	have clear goal(s)	MAST
O	to really want it	SD	just put it in my head that I really want something	SD
I	motivation and spirit	SD/ INDIV	have to want it, to want to learn more tell self it's for the best in the long run	SD, UND
GRAY ZONE				
P1	determination	SD	have to see the need, keep your mind set	SD
P6	make up your mind...	SD	make it #1 outside of job	MNMT
D	being motivated	SD	have to make yourself willing to go just put it in my mind that day	SD
WITHDRAWERS				
N	need patience, self-est, want'g it bad	SD/ SELF	keep thinking about the past and the future, I don't have enuf income	SELF/ MAT'L
H			need someone to push me, get some-one to go in with	RA

A	getting \$\$\$ help	MAT'L	lottery/rich man, wait for stable schedule, free time	MAT'L, MNMT
C	just... setting your mind to it	SD		
L	personal achievem't, determination	SELF/SD	need an out-of-class encourager	RA
M	have to really want it, don't quit	SD	don't quit even if you can't go for awhile	SD

27 Influence of study

PERSISTERS

B	yes - I have higher expectations, am probably more aware of my progress	MAST, UND
R	no	
F	yes - more conf abt taking (more) classes for someth I'll be happy with	MAST, SELF
Q	no - feels positive talking about it	BEL
K	no - but I liked having somebody to talk to about school	BEL
P	no	
P4	yes - enc me to finish, things more clear, going faster, "I'm not the only one"	RP, UND, BEL
S	no, 'cause I was determined anyway	
P3		
P2		
E	yes - helped me to und myself, made me think a little bit more and that I'm serious	UND, SELF
J	no - it made me more aware of what I think	UND
P5	no	
O	no - it makes you think abt why you're here, how important S school is, less likely to skip class	MAST
I	no	

GRAY ZONE

P1		
P6	no	
D	no - I probably wouldn't think abt sch as an imp factor, like I do	UND

when I talk abt it

WITHDRAWERS

N yes, a lot - seeing older teachers going to school, role models
and looking more ahead than behind

SUP

H no

A no

C no - if anyth it makes me feel a little bit spec, like I'm glad I'm
gonna actually do it

**INDIV,
HAPP**

L no

M no, but it helped me bec it's something you sort of looked
forward to, someone you can tell about school

BEL

APPENDIX H: CODE CONTENTS

	Entertainment	Tranquility	Happiness	Physical Well-Being	PERSISTERS
	PERSISTERS				
B	surprised I like it, wish I'd started sooner	have patience from prayer	enjoying challenge, feel alive		B
R		not bothered around str's, work harder		lose sleep, but routine now	R
F	good to do trad'l thinking again	can go mid-day, why can't I remember? time to myself,	glad abt envir of progress for future	sense of age	F
Q		frust'g it's not going faster try'g to focus, at	enjoying my time - closer now	sense of age	Q
K	every once in a while spark kicks in	peace with myself		sometimes tired	K
P	I enjoy sch - it's fun! (wh out) wh's missing?	not worried abt L'g roommate too pushy	look forward to sch, bett than I expected I owe it to myself to grad want to see wh it's like	thot I was too old, feel great feel less progr when I'm tired	P
P4	init int greater, hard to remember things didn't expect to like it,	need to focus, hectic, hard to org'z resp's easier than thot, don't	like satis'd doing this, I look		P4
S	anxious to finish	have to force self	forward to coming TABE higher than exp'd surprised to stick w/ it		S
P3	anx to be close to completion				P3
P2		easier to L than exp'd	sch easier this time	tired from work, hard to learn miss sleep/dinn "stay" / "go" when tired, fr's feel pushy	P2
E		sch like job - frustr'g, time-consuming	kicking self for not going days wh worked nights		E
J	excitm't of accompl't is overriding the fear for 'me' wh I alw want'd	don't want to push it, fr's too pushy			J
P5	want stag life change didn't expt it to be fun,	everyth's falling into place, not fighting it can work w/o distract's	very happy to go to sch have energy to K more back on track, help ch		P5
O	L'g th's I didn't	<i>used to love school</i>	with their	<i>want sitting</i> <i>job</i> need more	O

	know		homework	rest	
I	tough to stay int'd	making time for sch - stressful	grades lower than exp'd	school is tiring	I
	GRAY ZONE				GRAY ZONE
	init fun/excmt abt	relieved - easier th			
P1	L'g,	exp no	happy w/ self for L'g surp'd to pick up on it	<i>stay off tools,</i> <i>superv</i> <i>again</i>	P1
	sched, distrac's, less fun	recr'n,distr's=frus'g			
D		not tired/stressed		easier sched to go, <i>feel</i> <i>age</i>	D
		like before			
P6	love school - would be here evday if I could		happ to L, <i>wish full</i> <i>time,</i> not emb'd wh K more	<i>need sitting</i> <i>job</i> <i>tired, feel</i> <i>age</i>	P6
	WITHDRAWERS				WITHDRAWERS
	evday I learn	uncomf around	now I get th's done to		
N	someth	younger	go	sense of age	N
	I didn't know before	students	no more "whatever..." getting harder every		
H		trying to remem th's, sch/job srch = mental toll	day, trying to remem (rules)	sense of age	H
A		too much all at once	just glad to be trying		A
	better than evday				
C	noth, miss TV shows				C
				<i>my own</i> <i>bus,too</i>	
L	school gets me away from the group home	too much going on, can't concentrate			L
				<i>much stress</i>	
M		just didn't feel like being bothered	getting th's right instead of wrong		M

Understanding	Intellectual Creativity	Positive Self-Evaluations	PERSISTERS
easier than exp'd, surp'd to like it getting more knowledge, I'm		take pride abt school, new conf abt sch work, feel good abt self <i>getting GED will make me feel</i> <i>good</i> feels good to help wife, co'workers	B
learning a lot like L'g, fig'g things out, th'g clearer, faster, more	like exerc'g my mind - book th'g/exper'l supp @	new resp for self, would regret not finish'g, milestone to others	R
			F

detail			
learning things that I forgot,		proud of self, <i>more than pc of pap,</i>	Q
thot it'd be quicker		<i>will show I finished,</i> help my kids	
enjoy K for change,		making a change in my life,	K
want that		proud to	
flicker to kick in more		strive for something	P
harder/easier than exp'd,		proud of myself for taking this step,	
I'm		like second life, I'm smart!	P4
actually learning!		SE fr contr'g to d.c. ch & mothers,	
hard to remem, I forgotso	1st, liked new/chall	<i>want GED on wall w/ daugh's dipl's</i>	S
		someh I've alw wanted, feel good	
		again, I feel different, stronger	
much, like sharing K	then lost some int		
easier than I exp'd, I'm	<i>design class motivates me</i>		
smarter than I thot	look forward to new	pers developm't, K, and conf	P3
sch helps w/ evday things	tech'y and internet	feel good: hi'r scores than exp'd	
want to L all I can, get K	more int'd in sch now,	more conf, feel better abt myself	P2
finding out th's I didn't know	like L'g	bec of L'g, I'll still just be me	E
L'g quicker unless tired	feel someth's out there	new resp, proud of myself, <i>but more</i>	
	for me	<i>neg th pos, should'a been done</i>	
scared, harder th exp'd,		<i>I can't do this again,</i> feel now I can	J
making it harder than it is	I'll be able to do some-thing diff - job	do it, confident and exciting	
remem'g old/new is accom'n,	want my life to change, been stagn	sch completes me, feel imp, conf,	P5
exciting to get K back like L'g things I didn't K,		feel bett wh I can help w/ HW	
	like L'g, challenge		
energy for knowledge learning more, I know more		happy I'm back on track, doing someth for me	O
now		<i>want to better myself (not turn out</i>	I
like K, L/g but exp'd hi'r level	tough to stay int'd	<i>like mother)</i> more SE from L'g	
hard to remem, get stuck	like K, L'g new th's		GRAY ZONE
enjoy L'g, helps att'n to focus	like learing	conf about abil to L, fin'g part of life	P1
easier than exp'd, lost focus		compl'g a missing element, proud,	
		bolder	
harder than I thot,		proud of self this time bec I'm t	D
getting clearer	love L'g, want to L things I forgot about	sticking to I	
L'g wt I thot couldn't,	love L'g th's I figured I	SE to have knowledge, not	P6

but slo		look	
need K: not look stupid	could never catch	stupid, want to better myself	WITHDRAWERS
like L'g someth every day,		more conf to do it, proud of myself,	N
like learning process		doing someth with my life	
like getting more K,		feel good abt L'g, just didn't	
fig'g th's	like doing new things,	want to go	H
		out of sorriness - I'm lazy, I	
out, hard to catch on	stuff I've never done	guess	
		<i>will feel better to have done</i>	
I'll know a lot more		<i>someth</i>	A
		WS wont help me better myself	
once I started, I			
remem'd th's,	don't want to settle	actually doing it gives me conf	C
not as hard as I exp'd	hands-on, challeng'g		
enjoyed seeing how		like facing prob's, working tow	
much I	have an act mind, don't	a	L
retained, can't			
concentrate	want it to deteriorate	goal, glad to know you did try	
get what I didn't know			
right			M
instead of wrong			

Unity

	PERSISTERS
all my struggle is from the Lord and now it's here in school,	B
this is someth I've asked the Lord to bless me with	R
	F
	Q
I know God don't give me more than I can bear	K
	P
	P4
	S
(how to keep/get what it takes to stay in school) faith, prayer	P3
	P2
this is the time and place where God wants me to be and it's not a matter of	E
like or dislike, feel I'm here for a purpose, where I'm supposed to be	J

it's like it's a meant-to-be deal when I don't have to struggle to make it work out,
everybody's cooperating, it must be right

P5

O

I

GRAY ZONE

P1

D

P6

WITHDRAWERS

N

God showed me this vacation and opened my eyes to come down here

H

A

C

God put me here at the group home to maybe get my GED, he puts things in your path

L

M

Individuality	Self-Determination	Superiority	Resource Acquisition	PERSISTERS
diff now than	<i>want own bus, hours</i>	doing someth w/ my life	wife/church assoc's supp	B
in the past	ain't giving up, guess	unlike oth's (past self)	& pray for me	
	I'm a fighter	more resp fr wife,	wife supp, helps me (Eng),	R
	thk'g abt not	co-W's ask for help	daughter helps me	
	cont'g	<i>want more like succ'ful</i>	mother supportive	F
	isn't an option	<i>oth's, judge by GED</i>		
sch time for me	even if it gets worse,	<i>it'll show that I finished</i>	husb/kids/fr's/boss/co-W;s	Q
than oths' needs	I won't quit		all supp, pround of me	
it's about me,	only I can make	as grow, see self with	kids/g.fr supp, peo I deal	K
where I am	change happen	fr's who have goals	with have no goals	
new life, new	want it not bec	not so afraid of		
me	oth's	people,	fr/fam supp, maybe	P
	want me to do it	handle people better	more enc fr brothers	
	<i>want own</i>	open w/ grandch, less	fiance/daughters	P4

	<i>business</i>		enc/help,	
sch dist's me	I'm more focused,	shame, want grad'n	moth's say I help them	S
fr fr's, bett	determined	feels good to tell peo	mom/boss supp, it's	
dec's	can't stop, may not	"I gotta go to school"	touching everybody	P3
	start again	<i>kids already in college</i>	fam supp, "you're so brite"	
			co-att w/ wife, alw talk	P2
			mother/kids supp, (co-att	
			with girlfriend)	
no more	have to make it	<i>feel don't belong at sch</i>	wife/kids supp, <i>wife wants</i>	E
excuses,	happ	<i>I see them look at me</i>	coll class too, need help	
(the old me)	<i>miss "me" time</i>	<i>peo will think I'm old, but I push that aside</i>	husb/kids/boss supp, fr's	J
	like to think th's out,		<i>sometimes too pushy</i>	
	go at my own pace	feel less infer (at home)	kids helping more, <i>husb insecure</i>	P5
feels imp, I'm #1,	firmer to make fam	all fam has GED	boyfr gets me to go when I	O
sch a dream	sit'n compatible	getting ahead like oth's	don't want to, enc's me	
doing someth, bett th	someth		<i>fam overtly supp, tacit neg</i>	I
nothing	I really want for me		<i>easier to go w/ someone</i>	
<i>not be like moth</i>	I want to do more,	want conf like oth st's		GRAY ZONE
(fam disp)	be more	be someth bef I'm 50	wife always wanted sch for	P1
	insisted on days off	<i>feel insec in job sit's</i>	me, <i>would like job supp</i>	
	work for sch	bolder w/ K'ble peo		
	<i>want own business, hours</i>		<i>all supp but I don't deal with people</i>	D
	would not go if forced	<i>peo don't know I don't know things, I 'cover'</i>	sch pleases moth, 1 son supp, <i>oth son doesn't K</i>	P6
				WITHDRAWERS
	<i>hate dep'g on sib's,</i>	<i>feel old wh I see young</i>	<i>mom supp but doesn't call</i>	N
	will go til conf w/ ed	<i>st's, I know they talk</i>	<i>enuf, aunt/boyfr supp</i>	
		<i>peo look if no GED,am</i>	wife supp, <i>want appr fr wife</i>	H
		<i>I really that stupid?</i>	<i>need to be pushed</i>	
	WS wrong to decide		<i>mom wants to help, can't,</i>	A

	abt school for me		supp boyfr not around mom/sis supp, boyfr OK	C
	want to take \$\$ care of	want to be like sis, not give	can't trust anyone w/ baby	
show VR they're	my ch want to decide if can	up VR says I'm untr'able	only told son (too young	L
wrong maybe go further	learn someth new just set it in my mind	being around oth peo, doing the same thing	to und), need enc'm't mother/kids supp, oth peo	M
than oth's,	to go		enc'g me	

Belongingness	Social Responsibility	Equity	Resource Provision
miss church assoc's	trying to get wife to go for GED		read Bible to elderly, will help wife - GED I help my wife and co-workers
I like meeting new people meeting new peo, miss family time less fam time, like sch env'm't maybe more enc'm't fr brothers	taking care of mother miss h/w w/ kids, socc, games, imp of educ less time to s'vise ch, want examp to kids	don't want to lie, "cover"	helping kids more w/ homework want to help kids not make my mistakes
share h/w time w/ grson, no pers life want to be w/ my kids in summer co-att w/ wife, more respect fr her co-att'g w/ girlfr helps motivate me miss fam/church, feel	lang model - dc contrib, RM to grandson it's someth for my kids, for them and me wife says "take care of bus"	give young moth's encm't	T day care children, RM & counsel'g mothers making mother happy
like an outsider can coach grkids, they like it	time away fr kids, hope I'm RM to kids want to help kids' HW, quitting would let dwn I'm a better grmoth, couldn't help my own better parent to help kids	call could get GED, but I want to do it	wife proud, we motivate each other, co-att co-att w/ girlfr, enc @ hope help kids' h/w enc'd wife, friend to
maybe prob when I earn more \$ doing h/w w/ kids, less time w/ moth	dwn I'm a better grmoth, couldn't help my own better parent to help kids	doing it for kids as well as myself	go to sch for GED coaching grkids, esp grdaug
sister coming in too, sister quit	with homework doing h/w with kids, want more \$ for them succ'd/failed to get sis to sch, can't see neg'y		T own kids, ask me ?'s provide better life help daugh w/ h/w, can do more than before bringing sister in mot'd me felt good

<i>sch takes time away fr son</i>	<i>fam/moral priority comes before sch</i>	<i>would like older son maybe RM to younger</i>
<i>I just keep to self</i>	<i>can teach my kids, really not yet</i>	<i>teach kids I babysit, too little to teach</i>
<i>I hold back fr people, I'll speak up more</i>		<i>sch pleases mother would like to help peo</i>
<i>lose time - boyfr/son, read w/ son more felt all alone = no one to help me</i>	<i>want to give my kids the best</i>	<i>spend time - son while he's studying</i>
<i>giving up too much fam time w/ mother boyfr might be mad if I earn more \$ living at group home, I</i>	<i>hard to let go of 3-yr- old</i>	<i>will help me push ch to get their ed want to be there when daugh gets sick</i>
<i>don't see son around other st's, not the only one</i>	<i>I'm the only one can take care of my baby want to keep son in sch, teach him th's</i>	<i>tired of hiding behind the curtain want keep son in sch, still teach him things</i>

	Mastery	Task Crea	Management	Material Gain
PERSISTERS				
B	reading better, longer, more often math up, lang down,		<i>miss prayer at church (NBD)</i>	<i>forsee better job opp's</i>
R	will give me what I want want to fin what I			
F	started more conf for more cl's		<i>working less now</i>	<i>need future \$\$ security,</i>
Q	want to further in job, more classes doing what I should		<i>more focused falling behind, harder and harder</i>	<i>want better life style</i>
K	have done a long time ago		<i>tight trying to get into a routine</i>	<i>want better job</i>
P	want K I don't have, thinking abt college!		<i>nice to have sch for structure</i>	<i>need job less physically demanding</i>
P4	want to complete somth I did not finish		<i>time mnmt harder than exp'd</i>	<i>expand day care, access to other jobs</i>
S	feels good to accompl wh always wanted	<i>didn't know des cl here</i>	<i>fewer distrac's, rout hard to keep</i>	<i>\$ is tight, have to budget bec of car</i>
P3	will take part GED soon want to L all I can	<i>will dev web site - bus</i>	<i>manage time - PT work/wife w/e confl</i>	<i>expect big opportunities sch reduces \$\$ / TV time</i>

	(job)		
P2	once I'm started I won't have to do it again	s'times job conflict	job w/ benefits, retirement spec job goal
E	next to kids, big accom starting to read more	hectic, chaotic	feel there's something better I can do
J	just want to achieve this for self, further at work	not pushing myself	excited to maybe get a better job
P5	wanted GED a long time,	fam coop'g, but can jeop sch time	hope fam can buy house can help supp fam in future
O	step tow real interests	job sch better, kids' needs, want \$	tired of minimum wage
I	can concen this time, will take GED soon	time for sch stres'l routine helps me	don't want to be 50 working at Wendy's
	lower scores than exp'd don't like this level		
	GRAY ZONE		
P1	want higher grades than skim, finish part my life tempt'g "don't need it"	exp'd no problems new job - diff plans distr's hind'd joy	finan plan failed, need job after all
D	want to get exactly right,		
	read a whole book!!	sched steady - not, too many classes	want own bus, another trade
P6	after been out, feel beh may nev get it, but trying	part'n based on job/par care	
	WITHDRAWERS		
N	reading biggers words, want educ after GED	coming motiv's me, hectic to manage time	want more, not depend on anyone need GED for job in this area
H	like when not frus'd	just need time want to try on-line at home	no jobs - moving back want rich man or win lottery
A	lot of rules to know		
		sch/work trade off - can't both just now hard to sched kid's dr app'ts	want to live, more than just survive
C	actually doing it makes a big diff with me	geol location perf gr home chaotic hard when you have kids and work	don't want to be on disab for the rest of my life want decent job, more out of life
L	would like to retrain for another job		
M	get some coll maybe, pick up another trade		

APPENDIX I: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
Adult Basic Education	Lower division of basic adult instruction: reading, writing, and math 3.0 to 8.9 GE.
Barriers	Issues and events cited by studies in the literature review as precluding adults from returning to and persisting with school.
Benefits	Issues and events which students deem desirable.
Costs	Issues and events which students deem undesirable.
Expectations	Issues and events that informants anticipate regarding the effect of the program or being able to sustain participation.
English as a Second Language	Notes students, or the programmatic need to address students, who are not native English speakers and require a more specialized approach to English curricula.
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Education Development
General Education Development	1. High school diploma-equivalent test consisting of five subtests: reading, writing, math, science and social studies. 2. Upper division of basic adult instruction: reading, writing, math above 9.0 GE, as well as science and social studies.
Gray Zone Informants	A category of Non-persisters: informants who did not cease participation, but would likely be discouraged from continuing in a traditional program due to poor attendance, defined within this study as participation below 60% percent of their scheduled time.
Non-Persisters	Informants who did not sustain sufficient participation to be deemed persisters, designated as either Gray Zone informants or outright Withdrawers.
Persisters	Informants who attended better than 80% of their scheduled time.
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education, used to determine GE levels for reading, writing, and math.
Test of Adult Basic Education	Test developed by CTB/McGraw Hill, which assesses basic academic skills, normed on populations aged 15 and above, and correlated to the GED.
Withdrawers	A group within Non-persisters (the other being Gray Zone informants) who ceased participation within the first 6 weeks after enrollment.

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