ABSTRACT
            The primary intent of the study of 42 adults in West
Central Minnesota was to discover what adult learners perceived as
barriers to continuing education. Twelve of the adults interviewed
were enrolled in a baccalaureate degree and 30 expressed an interest
in postsecondary education but currently were not enrolled (20 future
degree seekers and 10 non-degree seekers). All but two had obtained a
high school diploma and all but four had completed some post-high
school study. Ages ranged from early twenties to the late fifties,
with most individuals married and assuming family responsibilities.
Five barriers identified were: (1) access to educational facilities,
(2) family responsibilities, (3) finances, (4) time, and (5)
motivation. Most barriers involved both situational and value-related
elements. Eleven of the current degree seekers were able to overcome
the situational barrier of access to educational facilities by
pursuing the University Without Walls degree at the University of
Minnesota, Morris. The study sample population, with access to
educational facilities and family responsibilities as the greatest
barriers, differed from a national sample by Cross and Valley
indicating time and finances to be the greatest barriers. Various
implications for adult educators are drawn. (EA)

Study of Barriers to Participation in Post
Secondary Education as Perceived by Adults
in West Central Minnesota

Prepared For
Morris Learning Center of the
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University of Minnesota, Morris

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PREFACE

Any research effort is likely to require the efforts of a good number of people who contribute, in various ways, to obtaining and deciphering the range of information essential to a research undertaking. This "barrier study," as it has become fondly known, is indeed the result of generous contributions of numerous people.

A most special thank you is extended to the forty-two people who so willingly agreed to participate in interviews which not only consumed their time, but which required them to openly share an intimate part of their lives. This report is designed to allow the people to speak for themselves, and it is hoped that the candor, honesty and thoughtfulness of their responses has been aptly represented in these pages.

Another special tribute is extended to a valued colleague and friend, Karla Klinger, Director of the Morris Learning Center, who is to be credited not only with the initial concept of the study, but also for her untold contributions in all phases of the project. Her counsel and support have been of tremendous worth.

As principal investigator of this study I have been advised to state my relationship to the project as a way of addressing the notion of possible biases in the study design, analysis, and/or reporting. I have several links to this project. One link is through my role as a graduate student in the Department of Social and Philosophical Foundations at the University of Minnesota through which I have obtained approval to use this study as partial fulfillment of degree requirements. A second link is through my staff position with the University Without Walls program, University of Minnesota, in which I have had the opportunity to be closely involved with the development of the Morris Learning Center dating back to its inception in January, 1974. During the current academic

year, I serve as consultant to the UWW segment of the Center. A final

link to the project is a personal one. Having been born and raised in

West Central Minnesota, I have developed a certain degree of empathy

with the educational aspirations of people in this area and have a

personal interest in the provision of educational services to these

adult learners. Admittedly, my empathy with adult learners has been

greatly enhanced through my involvement in this project. I have found

that my varying links to the project have heightened my awareness of the

situations faced by both adult learners and adult educators in obtain-

ing and providing a range of educational services in this area. Rather

than acting as suppliers of potential biases, perhaps these links have

served to broaden perspectives and to cut through prevailing stereo-

types. I would hope that any flaws in this project can be attributed

to my relatively novice status as a researcher rather than to any

ingrained biases.

The adult learners portrayed in this report have been forthright

in talking about their educational aspirations and the circum-

stances which make these aspirations difficult to achieve. It is

hoped that readers of this report will listen keenly to what these

adults have to say and that more positive attitudes and greater

empathy for the adult learner will result. One UWW student who

speaks of her late entry into education could also be speaking for

the many others sharing a similar position . . . . "We're sort of

dreamers all along the line. As we get older, we learn to face

reality. We realize something's not just going to pop up around the corner, and we find we must do something about it ourselves".

Catherine Marienau

October 1975

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SECTION ONE: STUDY CONTEXT AND DESIGN

Definitions

West Central Minnesota: for the purposes of this study to be
   geographically defined as that area within a sixty (60) mile
   radius from Morris, Minnesota (Stevens County), to include
   Roberts County in South Dakota.

Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities: any educational offerings
   provided by accredited post-secondary institutions.

Adults: any persons 18 years of age or older in the above geo-
   graphic area who are currently not served or inadequately
   served by post-secondary educational institutions.

Sample Population: the sample of adults (42) in the previously
   defined geographic area who have in some fashion made known
   their interest in continuing their education beyond the high
   school level.

Informants: members of the sample population.

Barriers: in seeking the meaning of barriers as perceived by the
   sample population, the term is loosely defined as those factors
   which tend to restrict adults from engaging in post-secondary
   educational pursuits.

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STUDY CONTEXT

A Broader Context:

That adults have numerous needs to be met in education is a little
questioned assumption. Society increasingly demands that learning
be a way of life, all through life. As Wesley Walton of the Educa-
tional Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey, simply states,
"Adults interested in learning have a hard time of it. Only
infrequently do they find what they want, where they can go to get
it, at times they are free to do so. This should not be".[1] That
"this should not be" is the issue which has spurred the advent of
the non-traditional study movement which has been gaining momentum
since the early 1970's. While non-traditional study has not yet
earned a precise definition, it is known to be "more attitude than
system", which implies that "this attitude puts the student first
and the institution second . . ."[2] Building towards a general defi-
nition of non-traditional study are two basic premises: "that
opportunity should be equal for all who wish to learn and that
learning is a lifelong process unconfined to one's youth or to
campus classrooms".[3]

The target audience for the various forms of non-traditional study
has largely been the adult, or mature, student. Cyril Houle defines
an adult as twenty-five years of age or older, since, "by this age,
the responsibilities of maturity have been assumed and the period
of full-time college or university attendance has ended for most".[4]

Others statistically categorize adults as between eighteen and sixty years of age.[5] Regardless of a concise definition of adult, what is important is that an awareness of the value of learning as a lifelong process is expanding throughout the country, and adults are making it known that learning should be made available under conditions that respond favorably to their life circumstances.

All aspects of post-secondary education, traditional and non-traditional alike, need to be critically aware of the potential demand for education by adult learners. The potential population of adult learners to be educationally served is in the multi-millions. Two prominent researchers in higher education, Patricia Cross and John Valley, estimate that some eighty (80) million Americans between the ages of eighteen and sixty are probably interested in continuing their learning.[6] Cross and Valley project that one adult in five would be interested in working towards a degree,[7] and Houle sets the figure for a four-year degree at six and one-half million.[8] In an educational market survey report by Cross and Valley and associates, the authors are quick to point out a sizeable discrepancy between stated intentions of potential adult learners and their actual behaviors -- between professing an interest in study and actually enrolling for the study.[9] They do conclude that the majority of adults interested in continuing their learning will seek formal recognition, a portion of whom will seek it though a baccalaureate degree.

degree option along with providing individualized learning oppor-
tunities for adults.

In the face of expanding programs to serve adult learners and of the
missions of educational institutions to serve the educational needs
of their communities, it is increasingly important to understand the
types of barriers which prevent people from pursuing post-secondary
opportunities. Consequently, it is important to continue to more
fully identify the population of adult learners who are most likely
to engage in educational pursuits. This study is linked to, but not
limited to, one institution. Rather, it focuses on a geographical
region which is rural by definition and which hosts a number of post-
secondary institutions. It is anticipated that the findings on the
perceived barriers of adults in this area can be compared to infor-
mation uncovered in areas bearing similar characteristics. The
potential contribution of this study to a data base on barriers to
participation in education is a long range goal. Of more immediate
significance is the potential of the study to provide information
which may be used in servicing adult learners in West Central
Minnesota.

STUDY DESIGN

The design of the study was based upon anthropological methods as
employed in educational investigations. This methodology was con-
sidered most appropriate because it allows the issue of "barriers

to continuing education" to be taken directly to the participants in education and to determine from them the scope and substance of the issue. The basic study design was developed in conjunction with a graduate course in "Methods in Anthropology, Education" and was then reviewed by a three-member panel of graduate advisors plus the Director of the Morris Learning Center.

Aims of the Study:

The general aims of the study are founded upon the substantiated assumption that adults in West Central Minnesota face barriers to participating in educational opportunities.[11]

Three key questions were explored in this study:

1) What barriers are identified by the sample population?

2) What elements constitute these barriers?

3) Under what circumstances can these barriers be overcome by the sample population?

The investigation into these key questions has also uncovered preliminary information about such related concerns as:

1) What are the expressed educational interests of the sample population?

2) To what extent are available educational opportunities being tapped by the sample population?

3) Of the sample population, who is likely to engage in

preliminary analysis of the Phase One interviews and the effectiveness of the interview schedule, a separate open-ended interview schedule was designed for the thirty participants in Group II (see Appendix for Group II Interview Schedule). The bulk of the Phase Two interviews were conducted by three University of Minnesota, Morris undergraduates and the remainder by the principle investigator and the Morris Learning Center Director. The data was hand-recorded during the one-hour interview sessions, using the key word or key phrase method when it was not possible to record the informant's responses in their entirety. After each session, the interviewer completed her write-up of the interview notes. Audio tapes were used to a limited extent, primarily as a vehicle for assessing interviewing techniques of each interviewer.

Data Interpretation:

The interpretation of the data collected covered two major phases. The first phase involved the following steps: ordering of the interview data into Group I and Group II; identifying patterns of responses of each group; establishing general categories of responses of each group; integrating patterns of responses of Group I and II; establishing specific categories and sub-categories of responses of the combined groups; and selecting examples of responses to represent the above. This phase of interpretation is represented in Section Two of this report. The second phase of

interpretation, represented in Section Three, involved addressing
the key questions posed at the outset of the study to determine
the extent to which those questions were answered through the
data obtained. Of equal importance was the identification of
other issues brought to light through the responses of the infor-
mants. Such issues include adult learners' attitudes toward
education, their educational needs and interests, their value-
orientations related to education, and their knowledge of educa-
tional opportunities. These issues are discussed at length in
Section Three.

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SECTION TWO: DESCRIPTIVE REPORT ON STUDY FINDINGS

(Identification of the Sample Popula*:ion)

The sample population consists of the forty-two (42) people inter-
viewed and has been distinguished into two groups.

Group I: Group I consists of twelve (12) people who were enrolled
in a baccalaureate degree program at the time of this study.
Eleven people are enrolled in the University Without Walls degree
option through Continuing Education and Regional Programs (CERP)
at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The other person is enrolled
at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota.

Group II: Group II is comprised of thirty (30) persons who have
expressed an interest in continuing their education in some fashion
beyond the high school level, but who are not currently pursuing
this interest. Two sub-groups emerged from this population:
a) degree seekers -- twenty (20) people expressed a desire to
obtain a baccalaureate degree at some future point; and b) non-
degree seekers -- ten (10) people expressed a desire to continue
their education but are not interested in obtaining a degree.

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DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Residential Characteristics (Groups I and II):

The 42 people in the sample population represent eleven counties
within a 60-mile radius of Morris, Minnesota (Stevens County).
Kandiyohi and Stevens counties are most heavily represented. Other
counties included, in order of representation, are Douglas, Otter
Tail, Swift, Roberts (South Dakota), Renville, Big Stone, Stearns,
Yellow Medicine, and Chippewa (see map in Appendix).

More than 3/4 of the sample population resides in the largest city
in their respective counties. Those residing outside the city
environs range in distance from one to twenty-six miles.

Of the twelve people in Group I, slightly over 1/2 have lived in
their respective communities for a maximum of eight years. One-
half of the thirty people in Group II have resided in their communi-
ties for a minimum of ten years, with many having lived in the area
for over twenty years. Slightly over 1/5 of the sample population
has plans to move from the area within the next five years to gain
access to "better employment opportunities" and to "educational
institutions".

Nearly all of the members of the sample population are Mid-Westerners
by birth, with the majority born in Minnesota. Most of the popu-
lation reports having been raised on a farm or in a small town

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setting.

Personal Characteristics (Groups I and II):

Group I is comprised of seven (7) women and five (5) men, and Group II
is comprised of twenty-three (23) women and seven (7) men. The ages
of the members of both groups are comparable, ranging from the early
twenties to the late fifties. Over half of the people in each group
represent the 25-34 age group. All respondents are Caucasian, with
the exception of two American Indian women in Group II. Most of
the members in both groups are married, and most have children
living at home whose ages range from four months to seventeen years.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Formal Education (Groups I and II):

The formal educational backgrounds of people in Group I and II are
highly similar. All members of Group I had earned their high school
diploma and had completed some formal academic study prior to enrolling
in their present degree program. All but two of the members of Group
II had obtained their high school diploma, and all but four had
completed some post-high school study.

Both groups had participated in a number of academic settings.
Group I cited involvement in three or more settings, while Group II
members had largely limited their educational participation to

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one or two academic settings. The four-year.college was most heavily attended by both groups, including both day and extension offerings. The second most frequently attended institution was the junior (community) college where day classes were attended over evening classes. A vocational-technical school was also attended by 1/3 of the sample population. Other educational sources include correspondence school and professional schools such as nursing, art, and business.

In Group I, levels of academic standing range from freshman or first year status to the post-undergraduate level. On the average, Group I members had completed 2.0 years of formal education. One person has a B.A. degree in Sociology and several others have certificates for studies in art, business, elementary education, and language. Levels of academic standing for Group II range from a junior high school level to post-graduate work, with an average of 1.5 years of formal education completed. Half of the people in Group II have completed between one and two years of college studies. Eleven people have received certificates for study in areas such as teaching, nursing, dental assisting, and computer programming. Four people have earned college degrees -- one A.A. degree, two B.A. degrees, and one M.A. degree.

The educational backgrounds of the people in both Groups I and II cover a range of activities, time spans, and settings. The situation of the following person illustrates that range. Upon

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graduating from high school, one man in Group I enrolled as a full-time student at a college in Minnesota for two quarters after which time, "I had to quit to be home with my family". In 1954 he enrolled in and completed a two-year printing course at a vocational school. After a two-year stint in the armed forces, he "got a full-time job and took night school courses in English" at a four-year college. In 1960-60 he enrolled in a "one-year night school course in printing and linotype". Between 1969 and 1973 he completed his Associate of Arts degree from a junior college, and in 1973 he attended one quarter at a four-year college as a full-time day student. "After all of this, I guess I am considered to be between a junior and a senior".

Informal Education (Groups I and II):

Most of the sample population has been involved to some extent in pursuing a formal education. Everyone indicated they were also receiving an education through "informal" learning situations. Most people cited at least three sources of informal education when talking of their individual learning pursuits. The most frequently mentioned sources of informal education were "workshops and seminars", "community involvements", "doing reading and research on my own", and "job experience". Several people also mentioned learning through their own creations such as arts and crafts, music, and poetry. Several others spoke of "learning through teaching", in such areas as piano, Christian education, and recreation.

The informal educational activities of the sample population are exemplified by the following people. One woman in Group I who says, "I'm quite a self-directed person", has conducted independent research in Art History in addition to her work in Studio Arts. She is also "active in the local PTA", has formed a "county-wide Arts group", has taught painting in her home, has "entered and won awards at numerous art shows", and does "programming" for her church.

Another woman in Group II is a "VISTA volunteer on an Indian reservation" in South Dakota where she "teaches arts and crafts" and is a "4-H group leader". "I've been out of school since 1973, and I've learned more since I've been out of school than when I was in school". She is also a "playwright" and is "studying the biology of animals" and "learning how to start a business -- a non-profit used clothing store".

CONTINUING EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Goals of Group I:

At some point after February, 1974, the twelve people in Group I enrolled in a college program with the expressed goal to obtain a baccalaureate degree. Their major study areas cover a range of topics and disciplines: Business (2); Social Advocacy; Art Therapy; Studio Arts; Social Welfare; Early Childhood Development; Human

Services; Community Education; Criminal Justice; Speech Communications in Human Organizations; and Animal Science. Several people are considering graduate school in their educational plans, the development of which range from "I am now considering graduate school" to "I definitely intend to go on for my Master's as soon as I receive my B.S.".

Goals of Group II:

Two-thirds of the members of Group II indicated an interest in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. Over half of these people expressed definite degree goals. Six people desire a B.A. degree in areas of Music, Social Science (2), English and Humanities, Music Ministry, and Counseling. Another six people wish to obtain a B.S. in Business Administration, Business Education, Political Science and Business, Elementary Education, Recreation, and Nursing. Another woman is seeking a Master's degree in Psychology.

Others who expressed an interest in obtaining a degree are much less definite about their actual goals. As one woman said, "Someday I'd like to get my B.A., but more or less for personal reasons -- the personal satisfaction of having it. I don't think I'd ever use it . . .". Another says, "I want to go back to school someday and get a degree. I'm really confused at this point. I didn't finish before because I didn't know what I wanted. Before I go back to school, I'll have to make up my mind what it is that

I want . . .".

The remaining 1/3 of the members of Group II who either indicated they were not seeking a degree or who made no mention of one, expressed two distinct means of continuing their education. Six people expressed a desire to pursue a formal education through "taking classes". One woman wants to "keep on taking classes until I find something I want", and another wants to "take classes for the sake of taking them".

The other way of continuing education is through "self-education" for four people. One man says, "I simply want to continue the process of self-education -- to make sure I stay well-informed about areas of interest personally and in vocational activities". A woman says, "When I was first married, I always wanted to take courses, but lately I'm more or less self-educated. I want to continue in the humanities field -- helping humanity".

Reasons for Continuing Education (Groups I and II):

"Personal commitment", "personal satisfaction", "an opportunity to learn", "employment advancement" are all cited by the sample population as reasons for continuing one's education. Depending upon the group or subgroup of the population, however, the reasons vary in priority.

Members of Group I most frequently talked of continuing their edu-

cation for reasons of "personal commitment". "I've always wanted
to get my degree", says one woman. "Pretty soon it will be impossible
. . . I'm getting so old. It's a personal kind of commitment with
me". Fewer Group I people spoke of education as a means to enhance
their employment potential, but those who did see a direct relation-
ship between education and employment. Education for one man means
a way to break out of a dissatisfying position and advance within
the company. "Now I'm structured in a job that I dislike. They've
(employers) asked me what areas I want to go into when I get my
degree . . . I'm just as smart as anyone. Why do I have to go back
(to school)? You have to accept that going back to school is the
way. You have to earn it. You don't get anything without it".

In Group II, the main reasons for continuing one's education are
shared by both degree and non-degree seeking people. The most
frequently mentioned reason refers to "employment advancement".
Comments such as "I can get one step higher in my job here", "I
can get a better salary", "It's a requirement to be recognized for
what I'm doing", and "Your advancement depends on your educational
background" represent the feelings of 2/3 of the people in Group II.

For over 1/3 of Group II, "the opportunity to learn" is expressed
as a reason for continuing one's education. More people who are
not interested in obtaining a baccalaureate degree talked about the
"learning" aspect than did those people seeking a degree. The
"opportunity to learn", however, is similarly viewed by both sub-

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groups. "I have a curious mind, and I want to keep on learning",
and "I want to learn about a range of things", said two people not
seeking a degree. "I want to cram as much as I can into my head",
were views expressed by two degree-seekers.

A number of Group II people who are seeking a degree also noted
"personal satisfaction" as a third reason for pursuing their edu-
cation. "I think a degree will make me happy -- it could change
my life", one woman projected. Others said, "I'll have the satis-
faction of having a degree", "I would be fulfilling something I've
always wanted to do", and "there will be a good deal of personal
satisfaction in getting it".

Preferred Ways to Continue Education (Group II):

Since Group I members had already selected the way to continue
their education, they were not asked about their preferences.
Group II members, however, are in the process of selecting ways
through which to continue their education, and it is interesting
to note what they would actually prefer, if available.

People in Group II were asked, "If you could set up an ideal way
to get your education, what would it be?". Responses to this
question fall into four categories: method of learning, access
to education, time, and type of educational institution.

Almost 2/3 of the group talked about the "ideal" way to continue
their education in terms of the method of study, which includes

"classroom studies" and independent studies". Over half of these

people were in favor of classroom studies. One woman said her

ideal way to continue would be "going to the classroom like every-

body else". Several others expressed a need for "formal classes".

Slightly less than half of the people wished to pursue study inde-

pendently, in ways such as "working on my own", "home study",

and "whatever I can do outside the walls of the university".

For 1/3 of the people in Group II, having access to educational

opportunities was part of their ideal situation for continuing their

education. They spoke primarily of "wishing there was something

around in the area", or, "if not in this town, then at least close

enough to get to them".

Another 1/3 of the group wanted to continue their education at a

certain type of educational institution. Six people, all of whom

are seeking a degree, would go to a "four-year college" on a "full-

time basis". Two people would attend a "technical school" because,

as one person says , "they prepare you without giving you a lot of

other classes that aren't necessary". Two others would choose

UWW because they "can demonstrate competence". Others would like

a "type of night school" or "a smaller school".

A small number of people mentioned the factor of time in pursuing

their education in an ideal fashion. "I would like to get a degree

in a shorter period of time than four years" and "I want to work at

my own speed" are commonly expressed sentiments about time.

BARRIERS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION: HOW THEY ARE PERCEIVED BY THE SAMPLE POPULATION

What are the circumstances or situations which constitute a barrier to continuing one's education? What do adult learners perceive as barriers, and in what contexts do they exist?

The people in the sample population have a history of educational pursuits beyond the high school level; a history which in some cases covers over a quarter of a century and a variety of educational settings. The irregular time spans involved, as well as the diversity of educational settings, suggest that these people have faced a range of difficulties in pursuing an education in a manner compatible with their circumstances. As a means of identifying the actual barriers faced by the sample population, people were asked to respond to a set of open-ended questions designed to allow them to talk about their individual circumstances and the problems faced in continuing their education (see Interview Schedule: Group I, parts D and E; Group II, parts E and F).

Group I represents those people who desired to obtain a baccalaureate degree and who are currently enrolled in a program commensurate with their goals. All of these twelve people previously faced barriers to pursuing their educational goals and are now in a position to reflect upon the nature of those barriers. The next section of this

report discusses the extent to which they were able to overcome those barriers.

Group II consists of thirty people who have expressed an interest in continuing their education in some fashion. While these people represent a range of educational goals, nearly all currently face barriers in pursuing their goals.

The information which people in Groups I and II presented through the interview format resulted in the identification of key areas which people considered to act as barriers to obtaining an education. Thus the barriers have been identified and defined by the people themselves.

Identification of Barriers (Groups I and II):

The barriers identified by Group I and Group II are identical in name, nearly identical in makeup, and differ only slightly in ordering of significance. While it was possible to distinguish categories of barriers from the responses of the sample populations, it was highly evident that in most cases the barriers were inter-related and added to the complexity of the individual's situation. Over 2/3 of the sample population reported the presence of two or more barriers in their educational pursuits. Due to the inter-related nature of the barriers identified, it was not possible to order the barriers on the basis of which one(s) posed the greatest hindrance. Rather, the ordering of barriers is based upon the

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frequency of which it was discussed by the sample population.

Barriers Identified by Sample Population	Frequency of Response Group I	Group II
1) Access to Educational Facilities	all group ..	+ 1/2 group
2) Family Responsibilities	1/2 group ..	1/2 group
3) Finances	3/4 group ..	- 1/2 group
4) Time	3/4 group ..	+ 1/3 group
5) Motivation	1/3 group ..	+ 1/3 group

Potential Barriers Identified by Group I
1) People Support
2) Prior Educational Experience

What Constitutes a Barrier (Groups I and II):

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The lack of access to educational facilities had been an obstacle
for all of the people in Group I, and is currently a problem for
slightly over 1/2 of the people in Group II. The problem of
inaccessability was experienced by both groups in the same two
areas: 1) unavailability of appropriate curriculum and 2) distance
from a degree granting institution.

A majority of the people in both groups reside in areas which host
a community college and/or vocational school. While some people

have taken advantage of course offerings, most now find that "I have advanced beyond the level of what's being offered" or "the schools don't offer courses on what I need to take". Two Group II women who live near a community college have found that the classes they need "are not likely to be offered here unless more people become interested". One woman's community offers only adult education classes "which has few courses in my line". Another Group II woman laments, "there are not really that many classes available around here. Those we get have to be brought here by a college".

Distance from a degree granting institution posed a problem for 1/2 of the people in Group I, and is a hindrance for most of the degree seekers in Group II. In Group I nearly all of the people resided some sixty miles or more from a four-year college. Gaining access to a four-year college would require such measures as "moving to a location where a school might have that particular degree program (Business Management)" or "waiting until my children were grown and then moving to North Dakota to go to school for four years". One woman in Group II wants to obtain a degree in elementary education but is "40 miles away from the nearest school with an elementary education department". One Group II man is looking for a way to earn a B.S. in Nursing and faces a complex situation. "In order to enter the special R.N. program for a B.S. in Nursing, I must first complete 45 college credits, but they won't accept my nursing credits. How do I do this at my age? The opportunities to do it aren't available here. I'd have to sell my home, give up

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a good job -- that's what I see as a barrier".

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

"Family" is one of those areas which is referred to throughout many
of the other categories of barriers. It emerges as a distinct
category in that it is specifically referred to by 1/2 of the people
in both Groups I and II and in several different contexts. "Family"
is most often described in terms of children and spouse, with
spouse in most instances being the husband.

Family responsibilities that serve as a barrier to continuing educa-
tion for both groups were referred to in two main contexts: 1) "age
of children" and 2) family as "highest priority". Group II also
cited "financial support of family" as a barrier to education.

A large number of the women in Groups I and II noted their "children's
ages" as one factor preventing them from continuing their education.
One Group I woman waited to enroll in a degree program until her
young child "entered nursery school and seemed okay to be left
alone". A woman in Group II faces a similar situation. "My children
are too small, and until they go to nursery school they must have
babysitters. I can't ask my husband regularly to care for the
children". Another Group II woman has two preschool-aged children
and still feels "obligated to them so much that I'm not able to
take advantage of going back (to school) now".

The same number of women place "highest priority" on their families,

which for most eliminates the possibility of continuing on with

their education in the way they might desire. One working woman

in Group I who "for years put my family first" had finally decided

to pursue a degree because "I need to set priorities for myself.

The family can adjust to me this time". Another working woman in

Group I has a disabled husband and "needs to be home evenings rather

than taking night classes". A number of women in Group II are not

pursuing their education because of family priorities. One woman

states, "my family is very important -- they come first. I don't

feel I have the time to go to school full-time". Another woman

whose husband "has just finished three degrees" vows, "I will not

allow my family to suffer. I want to stay at home and get things

off to a good start".

A number of people in Group II also indicated that their family

responsibilities are related to the "need to support my family".

One woman who is a single parent, questions, ". . . if I did go to

school, how would I support myself and the kids and maintain a

home? It would be different if there were another parent, but at

the ages they are, they need a lot of my time". Another woman

explains, "My husband is an alcoholic, and I must work to support

the family. I have three lads at home, and they need my guidance".

FINANCES

Finances are viewed the same by Groups I and II as presenting a

barrier to continuing education in three respects: 1) "lack of
money to pay for tuition", 2) the "need to keep my job", and 3)
using finances for the "benefit of the family". Finances were cited
by 3/4 of Group I and by slightly less than 1/2 of Group II as
posing a barrier.

The necessity of paying for one's education was discussed in terms
of using job income, employment benefits, grants and the G.I. Bill
to pay for tuition costs. Four of the men in Group I received G.I.
benefits and project that they "might not be in school had I not had
the G.I. Bill". One Group II woman is concerned about the costs of
financing her education because "going back to school is financially
inhibiting. It costs $45.00 a class, and if you don't take it for
credit, it can't apply toward a degree. I would need a grant".
The financial position of one man in Group II is such that "I
cannot raise the tuition without the G.I. Bill, and I'm not sure I
qualify for that".

The need to maintain a job is a problem facing a number of people.
One man in Group I quit his job in order to return to full-time campus
attendance. "Leaving my job affects my financial status. My finan-
cial situation bothers me -- I really wonder if I'm doing the right
thing every time I return to school". "I grew up without money in
the tenements of New York", says a Group II man, "and I must keep
employed. I have a wife and four kids. I can't stop everything
and go back to school". Two other Group II women "must keep on

working to support myself and my family".

Another problem related to finances is the feeling that money should
be used for the benefit of the family. A Group I woman seriously
considered the economic factor in deciding to return to school. "I
have never spent so much money on myself before. I had to be pretty
certain it would pay for itself. I think it already has in terms of
the time I have to spend at home and my increased salary". Another
Group I member confided, "it's hard for the kids to understand they'll
have no bike for Christmas because of their father's going to school".
One man in Group II who is considering "returning to school full-
time", says, "but my wife would have to work, and our kids would be
raised by babysitters. I'm willing to quit my job and move, but
I don't like the idea of my wife having to work".

TIME

Time as a barrier to continuing education was referred to by 3/4
of Group I and by slightly more than 1/3 of Group II. Time is
viewed in a similar manner by Groups I and II in two respects:
1) time "to devote to school" and 2) time "to spend with the family".
Group II members also mentioned time as "needed to spend on the
job".

In the first two contexts of "school" and "family", time was most
often spoken about as a problem of scheduling between the two.
A woman in Group I ways, "I really had to consider the time factor --

I knew I'd still be doing all the housework and be responsible for the kids. I really didn't feel I could manage the time to attend classes". Another Group I person was so conscious of the time factor that he "took one class to see if I could hack it. When I did okay, I thought I'd take a bigger bite next quarter -- I grew into it . . . you get uptight (from studying), and it's hard to explain that to the kids. I hadn't dreamed UWW would take so much time". A woman in Group II has found that she has to "get up at 5:00 am to study before my children get up". Another Group II woman says, "It's impossible to go to school full-time. I teach piano lessons. I have children in school. And I must have time for my family". Others are concerned about the length of time it will take to get a degree. Because of a Group II man's situation, he will "have to go to school part-time. It will take me six years just to get a bachelor's degree".

For many people, the time needed to devote to their family prevails throughout their considerations in continuing their education. Like the people quoted above, a Group II woman feels that "kids need the security of having family around. You must learn to sacrifice when you have kids".

Group II people also face time problems in continuing their education because much of their time must be spent on their job. One man is involved in "two business developments which require a great deal of attention. I don't want to spread myself too thin". For

one woman, "My job and my family takes most of my time. I'm not young
anymore; I don't have an abundance of energy like I used to have".

MOTIVATION

Motivation was not directly experienced by members in Group I as
an actual deterrent from pursuing their educational goals. Motiva-
tion was, however, discussed at some length by Group I, particularly
in light of its potential to act as a barrier to continuing one's
education. Slightly over 1/3 of the members of Group II specifically
referred to motivation as standing in their way of pursuing their
education. Both groups referred to motivation in such terms as
"self-discipline", "self-directed", "able to set priorities", and
"sureness of what is wanted".

Group I had the following to say about motivation. "I really had
to consider how bad I wanted the degree", said one woman of herself.
"You have to have a single-minded purpose -- don't let yourself be
thrown off the track", advised another woman. "You need a high
degree of self motivation. You have to seriously question -- is it
just a whim? You must have the discipline to keep at it", fore-
warned another woman, "speaking from experience.   You figure
out your priorities and you stick to them".

Of the people in Group II concerned about the problem of motivation,
1/2 talked of motivation in terms of "lack of self-discipline".
One woman who has expressed a desire to obtain a degree says, "I'm

not ready to go back. I don't have the self-discipline to sit
down and finish. That would be the only thing stopping me right
now". Another degree seeker shares the same feeling, "I'm not
disciplined well enough to take care of children and go to school".

The problem of establishing priorities is common to a number of
people in Group II. As one man says, "I've put things off because
I felt other things were priority. Education was just something
for my ego. That still seems to be the reason, but I don't know.
Maybe I will be a new person". For two women the family is a
first priority in their lives. "They come first", stated both
women.

A number of other people in Group II explain they are held back
from continuing their education because they are unsure of what
they want. "I have no idea what I'd want to major in, and that's
the reason for not doing UWW or Extension classes or going back to
college". Another woman muses, ". . . yet I feel that if I really
had a very deep desire to go these other things wouldn't matter.
My husband encourages me. I've never known what I wanted and
to this day . . . I'm not sure I'm good enough". A third woman
confides, "I'm not sure if I could adapt. I'm not sure I have the
study skills to cope with that. I'm groping and I really need
direction".

Potential Barriers:

Two additional areas were identified as potential barriers to con-
tinuing education through the responses of Group I members. These
potential barriers were not experienced to any representative extent
by Group I nor were they addressed by Group II members as presenting
an actual barrier. Nevertheless, these two areas are worth noting
in view of their potential to act as barriers to continuing educa-
tion.

PEOPLE SUPPORT

Nearly all of the people in Group I noted the influence of other
people in their educational pursuits, such as spouses, children,
relatives, friends and employers. For most of Group I, the influ-
ence of other people in their educational pursuits was positive,
or, if not positive, it was not influential enough to cause diffi-
culties. A typical statement was, "My wife thinks it's fine as
long as it's what I want to do". One woman said, "I don't expect
an awful lot of support from anyone. Some people wonder why a
woman my age would be interested in school. It's something I've
always wanted to do, and I'll do it". Other women expressed sup-
port from their families, "My husband encouraged me to do it --
he's very supportive".

For a limited number of people, however, support from others was
essential in continuing their education. One woman "got family

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consent before entering the program. I wouldn't have come without family support". Two other women both said they "could not have enrolled without my husband's support".

PRIOR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

While only one person in Group I said she would not have enrolled in a degree program without "first finding out what school was all about -- whether I could compete with the kids (through an on-campus course)", several others voiced their initial concerns about being able to "hack it" in a college program. Before enrolling in a degree program, one man "took one class to see if I could hack it. I thought maybe I was stagnant . . . I grew into it". Another man viewed his three plus years of formal classroom experience as a "great disappointment, a real disillusionment. My 4.0 grade point didn't represent anything I'd done because I actually did nothing . . . it was an incredible failure".

Projected Barriers of Others:

People in both Groups I and II were asked to speculate as to why more people in their respective communities were not continuing their formal education in some way. A limited number of people attributed the "lack of educational resources" as the main factor preventing others in their community from furthering their education. "It's the lack of proximity to suitable educational opportunities . . . formal education is just not available here". Another person

speculates, "More people would get a degree if it were more convenient".

Most of the people in Groups I and II projected that personal attitudes play the biggest part in preventing others from continuing their education. A large number expressed the notion that other people in their respective communities do not see a need to further their formal education. One woman says, "Not many jobs here require a degree. Most people feel a degree is useless. The families don't encourage it". Another woman states, "The rural area doesn't place value on an education. What's an educated farmer's wife worth? No more than she was before. That's the way people think". Another woman explains, "People's lives here are based on practicality rather than self-expansion. They think to improve your vocation is okay, but to improve your mind is silly".

A number of others feel that many members of their community lack the desire to continue their education. "Many housewives reach a certain age and question, why go back now? It seems like too long a haul". Another woman claims, "If they can guzzle their beer every night, they don't care. Who needs education to tip a glass"? Others state, "People here have no incentive", or "It's just a lack of motivation".

BARRIERS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION: THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY MAY BE OVERCOME BY THE SAMPLE POPULATION

"To what extent can barriers be overcome" is a question which has

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in part been answered by the degree seeking members of Group I. They
are currently enrolled in a baccalaureate program, and it can be
assumed that the barriers they previously faced have, to some extent,
been overcome. While Group I does serve as an example of people who
have overcome barriers, it may not serve well as a strict comparison
group to Group II. Group I is largely comprised of people pursuing
their degree through the specially designed UWW degree route. Their
situations may then be somewhat unique and perhaps not suitable compari-
sons to the situations facing the majority of people in Group II. The
responses of Groups I and II are reported separately in order to
clearly expose the differences and similarities in their respective
situations.

Group I:

Eleven of the twelve people in Group I are currently enrolled in the
University Without Walls degree program. The other person "seriously
considered UWW as an option", but decided to enroll at South Dakota
State University because his education "would be more intensive
and extensive if I attended the formal university. The campus has
the specialists, academic resources, and the facilities I need".
In many respects, the structure of the degree program has eliminated,
at least in part, a number of the barriers these people spoke of
as preventing them from previously pursuing a degree program. In
areas where the program structure did not entirely alleviate the
problem, people chose to make certain changes or adjustments in

their lives to confront the situation.

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

All but two of the Group I people felt it was necessary for them to maintain their current residence and did not consider changing locations to be an option. One man was forced to move "because there are no employment possibilities in this area". Another man changed residence in order to pursue on-campus attendance.

Most people felt that UWW not only alleviated the distance problem, but allowed them the opportunity to design their own program of study, thus offsetting the problem of "unavailability of appropriate curriculum". "By being able to design my own program, a program that is not offered on (another) campus, I've been able to continue my education without moving to a location where a school might have that particular degree program (Business Management)". Another person said, "I was a failure at classroom work. UWW gave me a chance to combine my experience with academic study". One young woman felt that UWW gave her the "opportunity to know what's going on in life, not just book learning".

For some people the opportunity to "design their own program" called for certain adjustments. As one man reflected, "In UWW you're responsible for designing a program. You're almost making an instructor and a student out of you at once, and it was difficult for me to change gears. First of all, I didn't know what was expected of

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me . . .". One person has had to keep dealing with the question of "knowing if what I was doing was worthwhile and countable. No one else could really answer that until I went ahead and did it".

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

The degree program structure alleviated some of the problems people faced concerning their family responsibilities by allowing them to pursue their studies primarily from their home base and according to their own schedules. Still most of the people reported having to "put my family on a tighter schedule" and have "asked for them to help with some of the things around the house". One man said that his son "takes school more seriously now. This I relate about 100% to my going back (to school)". Another man said, "My children feel that maybe they can relate a little bit closer to me now that I'm a student as well as they are a student. They talk to me about homework and different things about school".

FINANCES

For over half the people, enrolling in UWW meant they could keep their present full-time job and consequently, maintain a steady income. One man's situation is representative of many others. "I couldn't even begin to entertain the idea of leaving my job. It's the only income we have". Four of the men receive full G.I. benefits, and as one man admits, "If it had not been for that (G.I. Bill), I might have just thought that it was too big of a

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financial burden and that I really didn't need a degree anyway, so
I might not have gone on through". One man did choose to quit his
job and leave the area to return to campus on a full-time basis.
"I do have the G.I. Bill available to me . . . I pay more attention
to my education when I'm going full-time rather than half-time plus
a job". Only one person reports that "we now have less money to
spend on other things".

TIME

A number of people chose the UWW route because the structure of the
program allowed them to study at times and places convenient to
their situation. "I chose UWW because of its scheduling flexibility
-- I can study at my own pace". "I needed to study at home. I can
do that through UWW".

The structure of the program did not solve the problem of time,
however, and most of the people discussed the adjustments they had
to make in order to overcome this problem. One man has "less time
to spend on my occupation". Several people said they had to "give
up some of my community activities" in order to "find the time
necessary for studying". Half of the people were forced to "curtail
time" with their families. One woman has what she referred to as
her "UWW bedroom" and is "available for family emergencies. But
I'm still not able to be part of my family's activities". Other
people have found they need to insist on having time for themselves.

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"I had to make people realize that I need time for myself to study.

I can't be on call 24 hours a day anymore". Another woman said,

"I've set my priorities and I've put my things first. Sometimes

other things will just have to wait". For several women "other

things" means housekeeping. "I spend much less time on housekeeping

than I did before. I guess it will just have to be that way for

a while".

MOTIVATION

While a number of people initially questioned their motivational

level when enrolling in their degree program, only one person

expressed a motivation problem in carrying out his program. "I'm

much better at being off on my own (than in a classroom), although

I'm not functioning well being on my own either. I really need

more self-discipline -- I must learn to allocate time for my studies".

In the case of a number of people, the motivation to pursue a

degree program has been on the back burner for some time. "Ten-

fifteen years ago I was raving about the need for this type of

program. I had three babies then -- I graduated (from high school)

in 1950. I didn't feel then that I should want to go to school.

But I have always wanted to go to school. I guess I was born too

early . . .". Another woman said, "I always assumed I would go back.

I already made my decision to do it a long time ago".

For Group I members, the degree program structure in which they

were engaged served to ward off certain elements of each of the barriers they faced in continuing their education. The barriers of "access to educational facilities" and "finances" were most relieved through the external program structure. The other barriers of "time", "family responsibilities", and "motivation" still called for personal readjustments on the part of the adult learner.

Group II:

The continuing educational goals of people in Group II range from definite plans to obtain a baccalaureate degree to plans to continue on with the process of self-education. Group II is divided into two subgroups: A) those people seeking a degree at some point in time, and B) those people not interested in obtaining a degree.

The makeup of the five barriers identified by Group II presents a complex picture of situations intertwined with multiple barriers. Group II people were asked a series of questions relating to how the barriers they face might be overcome. Examples of such questions are: "What changes in your life are you willing to make to continue your education at this point?"; "Under what circumstances would you decide to go ahead with your educational plans as you've talked about them?"; "What would prevent you from going ahead with your plans?".

Responses to these questions and others indicate that of the five

barriers previously identified by Group II, two stand out as posing

the greatest hindrance to continuing education. Little mention

was made concerning the barriers of "Finance", "Time", and "Moti-

vation". The barriers of "Access to Educational Facilities" and

"Family Responsibilities", however, are viewed as the greatest

barriers to be overcome.

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Over 1/2 of those people seeking a degree in Group II cited "access

to educational facilities" as posing a barrier to continued educa-

tion. Of these people, less than 1/2 said they were willing to

make personal adjustments to a certain extent to overcome this

barrier. One man who is seeking a B.S. degree in Nursing says,

I'm willing to commute (for classes) two or three times a week,

and I will attend evening classes. I would do research and write

papers and use on-the-job learning experience. But I don't think

I'd be willing to sell my home and give up this job I have right

now". Another man who has a full-time job and is interested in

pursuing a degree in Music is "willing to quit my job and move,

but I'm unsure about my wife working".

Slightly over 1/2 of the same group of people, however, said they

are not in a position to make the major adjustments required to

provide them access to appropriate educational facilities. For

most, the major adjustment would require that people change resi-
dence. As one man explains, "I'm not willing to make big changes,
which would be to quit my job, pull my children out of school,
sell my house and move near a four-year college". A woman who needs
access to an institution offering a graduate program in psychology
says, "My husband's job is here, and, since I'm not willing to leave
my husband, it's not feasible for me to move".

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Both degree seekers and non-degree seekers in Group II find
"family responsibilities" to be a primary deterrent in pursuing
their education.

Only a limited number of those people seeking a degree said'they
would be willing to make adjustments in order to continue their
education, provided they received support from the family. One
woman says, "I'm willing to relocate and quit my job, but I'm
not able to do it unless my family says okay". One man generalizes,
"I'm willing to make changes if they are for the betterment of my
family and ultimately myself".

Most of those people seeking a degree and all of the non-degree
seekers say they cannot make adjustments in their responsibilities
to their families in order to continue their education at this
point. One woman who wishes to obtain a degree has two preschool-
age children and is "not able to make changes until the children

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are in school which is in three years". At that time, she "will
consider commuting to classes". Another degree-seeker is "willing
to give time to studying and attending classes if I feel the time
is available, but my family must come first. This is the sacrifice
I must make when I have kids . . . but it's not the happiest sacri-
fice". A third woman who wants a degree says, "I'm willing to give
up volunteer work -- 20 years of that goes a long way. I'm willing
to discipline myself. But I am not willing to give up time with
my family". Those women who wish to continue their education outside
of a degree structure are also hampered by the age of their children.
"There are not too many changes I can make at this point", says
one woman, "the children are too small". Another woman intends
"to wait until my children are in school".

Likely Ways to Continue Education (Group II):

Given the barriers facing people in Group II and the problems in-
volved in overcoming these barriers, in what ways are people likely
to continue their education and when will they be in a position
to do so?

Two-thirds of the members of Group II have identified themselves
as wanting to pursue a baccalaureate degree at some point in time.
It appears that a small number of these people will formally pur-
sue this goal in the near future.

Three degree seeking people have identified University Without
Walls as a prospective degree program and intend to make their deci-
sion about enrolling by Winter, 1976. One man has "formed this
thing in my mind to enroll Winter Quarter in UWW". Another man
claims, "Next fall or winter I am going to decide one way or the
other about entering UWW".

Four people seeking a degree plan to obtain their Associate of Arts
(A.A.) degree at their local community college "as soon as possible"
and then plan to continue on for the baccalaureate degree. One
woman will "complete two years of R.N. training at the Community
College. I think I can take 2-3 classes a semester. When the
children are in school, I'll go to a four-year college to finish".
Another woman wants to "get as much liberal arts as I can in the
next two years. After two years I hope to be in a different geo-
graphic area". One man plans to "complete the A.A. degree and
then take courses toward a a degree as available -- probably over
a ten-year period".

Eight people who said they wish to obtain a baccalaureate degree
indicate that they will continue their education by "taking classes
as available". Most people did not set any timelines for when they
might undertake these activities. Several people are interested
in taking evening classes as shown by the following comments:
"The only way would be evening classes if they offer them here.";

"I'll take evening classes as available"; "I'll take evening classes and see if the family adjusts. I can work my way up to day school". Other people might choose alternative routes such as "take summer courses as available" or "take courses at the vo-tech school related to my job" or "take a science course next year to experiment with college". For one man, "It all depends on how many credits I am able to get for my present transcript".

One-third of the people in Group II expressed no interest in pursuing a degree of any kind. Slightly over 1/2 are interested in taking classes but give no indication of when they might actually participate. One person will "take summer classes as available", and several others are interested in "taking evening classes if offered here". Others plan to "take adult education classes as available". Slightly less than 1/2 of these people do not know what mechanisms, if any, they will use to continue their education.

Commitment to Continuing Education (Groups I and II):

The people in Group I have already demonstrated a commitment to continuing their education by enrolling in a baccalaureate degree program. At this point, all of them intend to complete their degree program. Several have plans to continue on with their formal education by pursuing graduate work.

The commitment to continuing their education for most of Group I goes beyond the education obtained through formal academic channels.

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The commitment is one to a process of life-long learning as indicated
by the following comments. "I don't really need a degree. There
have been very few years that I have not done something in education.
Education is a necessity to carry one throughout life, and I won't
ever stop". "I keep telling myself and the people I know -- it's
never too late to learn". "The degree won't end my education pro-
cess". "Education plays a selfish part in my life. It's given me
an outlet. I'm more aware of what's going on. I'm not going to quit
now".

Over 2/3 of those people in Group II who expressed an interest in
pursuing a baccalaureate degree say they are committed to obtaining
that degree at some point in time. One woman vows, "I'll do what-
ever I can, any which way, as long as I can get it (the degree).
If I have to clean 16 hours a day after work and school, I'll do
it". Another woman reminisces, "I've always wanted to complete my
education. Ever since I was a little girl, I've wanted to be a
teacher. I will finish when I get the chance". One woman claims
she is "very much committed. I won't be happy until I do it". "I
would like to say I'm committed 100%", says another person, "but
I feel it must be a 50-50 basis. I must weigh things carefully".

The rest of the people in Group II interested in obtaining a degree
have not yet made a commitment to do so. One person states, "I
haven't made a commitment yet. I'd just like to do it". Another
feels she has made a commitment only as much as "my records are on

file to be evaluated. My foot is in the door just a crack and I know I have to make the next move". One man explains, "I haven't really committed myself. There's a large emotional and financial investment. If it's too large I can't shift gears and do it. Willingness is different than making it".

Nearly all of the people not seeking a degree in Group II said they have made no commitment to continuing their education. One person's commitment is "not very strong yet, I think because of lack of direction. I don't know what's available to me that will fit my needs and time frame or what mechanism there is for helping me determine my goals". One woman knows she "can get good paying jobs. I couldn't hope to compete with people with degrees for those big jobs, but I can be content with what I have". Another woman muses, "About the only commitment I have is a dream and the thought that some day after the kids are in school or grown . . .".

EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION

Certain perspectives on education have already emerged through the preceding responses of the sample population. They have made known their educational goals and the circumstances which act to prolong the actualization of these goals. The majority are adults who place value on a baccalaureate degree. While the educational futures of some hold promises of a degree, the futures of others are likely to be a repeat of the past until their situations change drastically

enough to warrant a more focused effort in education.

A good deal more stands to be learned about adults' perspectives on education. How do adults define "education"? How do they define "learning"? What learning styles do they consider most appropriate for obtaining their education? What characteristics do they associate with an "educated person" and to what extent do they identify with those characteristics? Whom do they most admire in their community and for what reasons? What do they associate with "success"? These issues were addressed to a limited extent by the sample population. Their responses shed further light on adult learners' attitudes toward education.

Definitions of Education and Learning (Groups I and II):

The definitions given by the sample population on "education" and "learning" indicate that a clear distinction exists, although less of a distinction was made by members of Group II than by members of Group I.

Both Groups I and II associated "education" with "formal study" within the context of a structured, academic setting. Examples of the academic setting include "classes, schools, tests, degrees and studying". The following quotes represent the definitions given on education. Several people in Group I felt that "education has more direction. It's a formal, academic process". Others in Group

II agreed by saying education is "formal schooling -- knowledge acquired through an institutional setting". One Group II woman defined education as "the result of a successful long period of study such as you would get by earning your degree".

For both Groups I and II, "learning" was most often associated with "dealing with everyday experiences". A number of people felt that learning "comes out of everything -- from people, places, things. No day goes by without learning". One young woman spoke of learning as the "process of learning certain behaviors and knowledge to be able to adapt to your environment". To one man learning is the "entire process of man obtaining new knowledge, right or wrong. Life is a constant learning process".

It was noted that members of Group II on the whole made less of a distinction between education and learning than did Group I. Slightly over 1/3 of Group II associated education with the "process of learning" to varying degrees. Others considered education and .earning to share the same meaning. "Education doesn't merely mean going to school and learning from books, but trying to develop your own potential. Education and learning mean the same to me".

One woman's definition of education and learning seem to reflect the thinking of others. Of education she said, "At the very least it is a grade. At the very most it is learning". And of learning, "At the very least it is education. At the very most it is living".

An Integration of Approaches (Groups I and II):

Given the definitions the sample population assigns to education and
learning, to what extent are these definitions carried over into the
style or manner in which these adults learn? While the sample popu-
lation tends to define education and learning as separate phenomenon,
they also project a tendency to integrate the two into their preferred
"learning" styles. In response to the question, "There are a variety
of ways to go about learning something. What ways of learning do
you feel are related to getting an education?", people distinguished
between a "formal" approach (classroom based, institution sponsored)
and an "experiential" approach (doing on your own, actual experience).

Everyone in Groups I and II considered "experiential" learning to be
an important ingredient in the educational process. The majority of
people in both groups, however, are in favor of a combination of
"formal" and "experiential" settings. One woman likes a combination
of "reading and classroom work plus the actual experience of doing
it. Doing is 75% of it, but you need the other 25% to go along with
the experience". One man feels that "for some things you should go
to classes for discussion. You should have instruction in basic
concepts. But you learn more or as much from the actual doing --
from trial and error".

Slightly over 1/3 of the people in Group II indicated that they
preferred to learn primarily through "actual experience" and offer
such reasons as, "I consider experience most important. It stays

in your mind because it actually happened to you" and "I respond badly to classroom situations. I prefer working on my own".

Views on Educated People (Groups I and II):

Members of the sample population have definite views on education, and it is interesting to note how these views relate to their impressions of someone they consider to be educated.

Groups I and II both identified the same four general characteristics of an educated person.

An educated person is "knowledgeable", meaning he is "intelligent", "knows his own particular area of interest", and "knows about a variety of things".

An educated person is able to "communicate", which includes such skills as being "willing to listen", "able to speak well" and "able to relate well to others".

An educated person is "socially conscious". He should "be able to function in various settings", "be community minded", and "have good leadership qualities".

The fourth characteristic concerning "attitudes" of an educated person shows some differences of opinion between Groups I and II. The most highly valued attitudes shared by both groups are "understanding", "open-minded" and "accepting". Several members in Group II, however,

also described an educated person by terms such as "pompous" and
"has a know-it-all attitude".

A number of others in Group II have mixed responses about an edu-
cated person. "I've known some well educated people, and I know
some who haven't had any, and they're the ones with better charac-
teristics. I've known some with their Masters and stuff and they
think they know everything. So it just depends on the person". "I
call an educated person someone who has a college degree, but when
I look at the word 'education', I don't want to exclude myself too.
I think I know something. I don't want to flaunt a degree or think
I can't function without a degree. Some people do that".

Views on Successful People (Groups I and II):

Who are the successful people in a given community, according to the
sample population? And, what common traits do these particular
people possess? While nearly 1/3 of both Groups I and II were not
able to think of someone they considered to be successful, the majority
of the groups' members responded specifically to the issue and
identified the following traits of successful people.

The successful woman was either identified by her relationship to
the respondent, such as "friend" or "wife" or by her professional
role, such as "director", "teacher", and "doctor".

The successful woman is often noted for her professional accomplish-

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ments. One woman was noted as being "the first woman on the school board in this traditional town". Another successful woman "came directly from the farm, but she didn't let it stop her. Now she's a social worker".

A woman's success is also based on her contributions to the community. One woman is acknowledged for "giving of herself in the community. She does a good job and you can count on her". Another woman is credited for having "helped her people for years without wages. She speaks for the poor and doesn't gain anything for herself".

The sample population finds that the successful woman is one who is "satisfied with what she is doing" and "doing it well".

Maintaining a "good family relationship" is another important trait indentified by the sample population. According to one woman, a woman is successful "if she's a good housewife and mother first, and if she can accomplish something without upsetting the family environment".

Finally, a successful woman is educated. One woman is described as a "Civil Servant" who "obtained her degree. It took her ten years. She must feel great self-satisfaction".

The successful man is most often described according to his professional role such as doctor, mayor, restaurateur, dentist, banker, poet. Other descriptions of the successful man are husband, boss, friend, and "myself".

The successful man has six identifying characteristics. First he
is deemed successful because of his professional accomplishments.
One informant's "friend is "close to getting his PhD degree and
is head of the music department at the college". Another is the
"mayor" who "has gotten to where he is through hard work, involve-
ment, honesty, and caring about other people".

The successful man is a contributor to community affairs. One woman
said of her husband, "He does the most he can for the community and
gets the most he can for his own needs". Another man is considered
successful because "he is an active leader in the church and the
community".

"Good family relationships" are also characteristic of the success-
ful man. One man, a recovering alcoholic, is "learning to live. He
has a good relationship with other people and particularly with his
family". One woman says her "boss has worked way to the top in a
short period and meantime he's had a good family relationship".

A number of people concur that a successful man "has the respect of
others".

He is also "happy with what he's doing", and he is "financially
secure". One woman's boss "doesn't have a high school or college
diploma, and he's a millionaire".

These two latter views of the sample population on "educated" and

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"successful" people are presented to show yet another dimension of the sample population's perspectives on education. These views and the range of other views offered in this section are subjects of analysis and interpretation as presented in the following section.

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SECTION THREE: INTERPRETATIONS OF STUDY FINDINGS

(General Introduction)

This section serves several functions. In part, it is an extended
interpretation of what members in the population studied have ex-
pressed in the previous section. In other respects, it acts as
an integrating mechanism for discussing significant findings of
this study. It also contains elements of the author's own inter-
pretations of the information obtained and perspectives on the
directions adult educators might follow in developing better avenues
within continuing education for adult learners.

The section is divided into three distinct parts: Part One focuses
on the analysis of significant findings in this study -- given that
the study's purpose was to uncover patterns among the population
studied, the findings are presented as generalizations formed from
the patterns which emerged; Part Two serves as the recommendations
portion of this document which are presented in the form of a series
of considerations to be addressed by adult educators; Part Three
addresses the study from three perspectives -- its limitations, its
support of future research efforts; and its contribution to continuing
education for adults.

PART ONE: ANALYSIS AND GENERALIZATIONS

Analysis of Barriers Faced by Adult Learners:

The primary intent of this study was to discover what adult learners
perceived to be the factors preventing them from continuing on with
their education. It was also the intent of the study to examine
those factors as to their makeup and their influences upon the adult
learner. The population studied identified five barriers: 1) access
to educational facilities, 2) family responsibilities, 3) finances,
4) time, and 5) motivation. The analysis of these barriers is di-
vided into three parts and culminates in a fuller working definition
of barriers. The three parts are posed as generalizations, and the
barriers related to each part are discussed according to the common
elements shared by several barriers rather than a dissection of each
barrier. The following generalizations, then, are based upon the
interpretation of barriers to continuing education as perceived by
the population studied.

-- Barriers to Continuing Education are Intricately Related --

The relationship of the five barriers is of a cyclical nature. One
barrier feeds into another, which in turn is related to yet another
barrier. Each barrier has the potential to influence the other and
to affect the adult learner in several different ways. While mem-
bers of the population studied perceived separate barriers with

distinguishable characteristics, the distinctness of these charac-
teristics is often clouded by their close relationship with those of
other barriers.

The five barriers identified by the population studied, while dis-
tinguishable, are intricately related.   The most frequently
mentioned barrier of "access to educational facilities" appears to
serve as the barrier which magnifies the significance of several
other barriers. It was particularly linked to "family responsibili-
ties", wherein it involved problems such as having to "wait until
my children are grown" and "requiring my wife to work". The "access"
barrier also creates "time" and "finance" difficulties as it affects
taking time away from one's job and/or family and might require some-
one to "give up a good job" in order to avail oneself of educational
offerings at a distant location.

"Family responsibilities" is a barrier intertwined with all of the
others. The family acts as a major force in preventing residential
moves nearer to an educational institution or in allowing a number
of women to utilize otherwise accessible educational resources.
The family plays a significant role in determining the manner in
which members of the population studied spends his/her time since
in most cases, it is considered necessary "to spend time with my
family". The financial barrier is related to "family responsibilities"
in regard to the consideration that is given to the fact that money
for educational purposes may affect the family, e.g., "no bike for

'Christmas" and "my wife having to work". For some people, "family responsibilities" affect their motivation to continue their education as in the case of the woman who is "not disciplined enough to take care of children and go to school".

In other instances, the "time" barrier treads on the "finances" barrier in that time must be spent "on the job" in order to financially "support myself and my family". Here the cycle begins to repeat itself and makes even clearer the high interrelationship of the elements of the barriers identified.

-- Barriers Are Created From the Situations and From the Value-Orientations of the Adult Learner --

The barriers identified by the population studied are derived from the situations faced by the population of adult learners and from their particular value orientations. Most of the barriers involve both situational and value-related elements. For the purposes of this study, values are viewed as those elements of one's life which have high priority, i.e., the important things in life as perceived by the population studied.

The barrier of "access to educational facilities" is a predominantly situational barrier as it is related to the population's place of residence and availability of educational offerings within their given locations. The educational institutions within the population's immediate environs do not, for the most part, offer the

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type of curriculum which is needed. Most people face the problem of having "advanced beyond the level of what's being offered" or "the school doesn't offer the courses" that many people need to take.

"Family responsibilities" as a barrier to continuing education stems from an interplay of personal values and actual situations. Those of the population studied who are members of a family unit are most often in a parental role. As an adult member of the household, he/she has certain responsibilities to the physical and emotional care of his/her charges. Certain situations exist, such as the women who have "preschool-aged children" or the woman whose "husband is disabled", which contribute to "family responsibilities" acting as a barrier to continuing education. Intertwined with the familial situation, however, are certain value orientations toward the family. Many members of the population studied, most of whom are women, place their families as their "highest priority". Their allegiance to their families is such that other things, e.g., an education, are viewed as something less than first priority. The mother of two preschool-aged children feels "obligated to them so much" that she is not able to go to school. Another woman who has stood by her husband's long-term pursuits of education feels she cannot subject her family to further educational efforts -- "I will not allow my family to suffer. I want to stay home and get things off to a good start".

The barrier of "finances" is obviously related to financial situ-

ations faced by the population studied. Educational institutions require tuition, and tuition costs must either be met through personal income or, in some cases, through employment benefits, Veteran's Administration benefits or other sources of grants and loans. Most people are not in the position to give up their full-time jobs to return to school since their livelihood is dependent upon employment income. A number of men could not be in school had they "not had the G.I. Bill". To a limited extent, values enter into the financial picture in determining the ways in which their money should be spent. Here again, the family receives due consideration in respect to how the expenditure for education might effect the family. One man considers the consequences of deflated Christmas presents for his kids. A woman who has "never spent so much money on myself before" must be certain that her educational effort will "pay for itself".

The barrier of "time" also involves situational and value related elements. Most people who are employed full-time must comply with the schedules dictated by their positions. A certain amount of their time is controlled by external circumstances. The issues of time "to devote to school" and "to family", however, are also influenced by values. People are highly conscious of the ways in which they spend their time such as those people who consider it important to "spend time with their families", or those who need to gauge how much school work they can accomplish in a given period,

or those who are concerned about the length of time involved in getting a degree. Since people's time is required for several different aspects of their lives, they are careful to think through how best to spend it.

"Motivation" as a barrier to continuing education is largely derived from the value orientations of the population studied. "Self-discipline" and "self-motivation" are admired traits and speak to the population's belief that one needs to be ready and able to undertake a given task. People in the study appear to be saying that continuing one's education is no easy task nor should it be taken lightly. They view self-directedness, priority-setting and sureness of goals as important ingredients in successfully continuing one's education.

None of the barriers can be isolated as being solely situational or solely value-related. All contain some elements of both and, except for the barrier of "time", one can quite readily determine which element influences a given barrier most highly. The "access" and "finance" barriers stand out as highly situational barriers. The barriers of "family responsibilities" and "motivation" contain strong value orientations. "Time" as a barrier contains both elements to the extent that is difficult to assign one a higher influence over the other.

-- Situational Barriers Have the Potential to be Overcome by External
Sources, Whereas Value-Related Barriers Require Personal Readjustments
by the Adult Learner --

Group I serves as an illustration of people who have faced and to

a great extent, overcome both situational and value-oriented

barriers. The predominantly situational barrier of "access to

educational facilities" was overcome through the structure of the

University Without Walls program which allows people to design

individualized programs of study and make use of a variety of edu-

cational resources, e.g., independent reading/research, on-the-job

related activities, coursework on an independent study basis. Once

people were freed from the constraints of required on-campus par-

ticipation and provided with options to develop a degree program

related to their educational interests and available learning

resources, the barrier of gaining access to traditional educational

facilities ceased to present a problem. The man who is able to

pursue a program in Business Management "without moving to a loca-

tion where a school might have that particular degree program"

serves as a prime example.

Another highly situational barrier, "finances", was also overcome

to a large degree by the structure of the UWW program. People were

able to maintain their regular employment and income levels and

were not required to make significant financial sacrifices in

order to pursue a college degree. Some people used their job

income to support their educational pursuits, while others received "full G.I. benefits".

The barrier of "time" contains both situational and value-related elements. Due to the "scheduling flexibility" of the UWW program, people found they were able to "study at my own pace" or "study at home". In spite of working within a flexible time context, people still found it necessary to make value-judgments concerning how their time should best be spent. For some it was a decision to "spend less time on my job". For others it meant "giving up some of my community activities". Many others made the choice to "spend less time with my family". These decisions required personal re-adjustments on the part of each adult learner involved.

A highly value-oriented barrier, "family responsibilities", was overcome to a small extent by the degree program structure. Many people were able to pursue their studies at home and on an indivi-dualized sche.ule. Still, most adjustments were made on the part of the adult student and his/her family. People reported having to "put my family on a tighter schedule", having "less time for my family" and asking them "to help around the house". For most people, these changes called for real readjustments in their own and their families' lives.

How are Group II people likely to be affected by these situational and value laden barriers? Certainly UWW is not an appropriate

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option for a number of people in this group, and, consequently, their experiences may differ significantly from those in Group I. In the previous section, Group II revealed an interesting response to the ways in which the barriers they face might actually be overcome. Their lack of response concerning the barriers of "time", "finances" and "motivation and their heavy emphasis on the barriers of "access to educational facilities" and "family responsibilities" would indicate that if the latter two were overcome, the others would lose their potency as actual barriers to continuing one's education. Group II then seemingly faces one largely situational barrier (access to educational facilities) and a second highly value-related barrier (family responsibilities). Most people view the "access" barrier as one which must be overcome largely through external sources. Since they are unable to make such major adjustments as "moving closer to a college campus", they are limited to what "is offered here in the community" or to what the "colleges can bring in". It is in this area people must rely most heavily on sources outside of themselves, an area which leaves adult learners in a relatively powerless position and looking toward outside influences to provide avenues through which they might achieve their goals.

With respect to the barrier of "family responsibilities", the adult learner is the major instrument in determining the extent to which this barrier can be overcome. Most people claim they cannot make

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personal readjustments in their lives and those of their families to pursue an education to the desired extent. The responsibility to one's family is intimately felt and only a few suggested the notion of external sources serving to alleviate some of the responsibilities. Even in those instances, external sources were limited to being able "to find suitable babysitters". The female adult is most likely to be faced with this barrier and the way in which she views her roles within the family and within the overall social structure will determine the extent to which she may actually see alternatives to overcoming this barrier.

Members of both Groups I and II of the population studied face barriers which are comprised of situational and value related elements. Both groups appear to support the notion that the barriers which are largely situational hold the greatest promise of being overcome by external sources. Those barriers which are largely influenced by the values of the adult learner are most likely to require personal readjustment.

-- A Working Definition of Barriers --

For the purposes of this study, barriers were initially defined as "those factors which tend to restrict adults from engaging in post-secondary educational pursuits". The adults in the population studied have identified five barriers which they perceive as posing

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the greatest hindrance to their desired educational pursuits:
1) access to educational facilities; 2) family responsibilities;
3) finances; 4) time; and 5) motivation. The identification of
these barriers and the description of their components offers a
fuller definition of barriers.

We now know that the barriers can potentially be created from both
external and internal sources and are likely to contain elements
from both sources. External sources would be those factors which
predominantly play upon the situation of the adult learner, as
represented in the barriers of "access to educational facilities"
and "finances". Internal sources are those factors which are pri-
marily derived from the value systems of the adult learner, as
displayed in the barriers of "family responsibilities", "motiva-
tion" and to some extent, "time".

A fuller definition of barriers, then, becomes, "those situational
and/or value-oriented factors which restrict the adult learner from
engaging in post-secondary educational pursuits".

Educational Needs and Interests of the Adult Learner:

Members of the population studied not only provided valuable in-
sights to the nature of barriers to continuing education for adults,
but also gave clear expressions of their own educational needs
and interests. The population studied relayed their educational

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needs and interests in three distinct aspects: 1) professionally-related educational interests; 2) location and scheduling of educational resources; 3) application of education to daily living. The following generalizations are based upon these three areas of educational needs and interests of the population studied.

-- Degree-Seeking Adult Learners are Interested in Subject Areas Related to Professional Fields --

An examination of the educational interests of the degree-seeking members of the population studied shows that their selected major areas of study are predominantly professional-related fields. Eight people are interested in pursuing fields of study which are related to professions in the social services, e.g., Social Welfare, Art Therapy, Social Advocacy, Human Services, Criminal Justice, Counseling, Recreation, and Nursing. Four others are interested in the field of business, ranging from Business Administration to General Business. Another four people wish to be involved in the educational field and are interested in such areas as Community Education, Elementary Education, Business Education, and Early Childhood Development. Interest areas within the fields of Art and Communication also indicate an orientation toward professional endeavors with major areas in Music Ministry, Studio Arts, and Speech Communications in Human Organizations. Only three people have selected fields of study which by their labels (Social Science and English) would not indicate a relationship to a particular profession.

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-- Adult Learners Need Convenient Location and Scheduling of Educational Resources --

One of the foremost barriers preventing adults in the population studied from continuing their education is their limited access to educational facilities. Because of such commitments as families, jobs, and home ownership, most people are not in a position to utilize educational resources beyond their immediate environs. Many members of the population studied spoke of their need for resources within their respective communities and particularly of their need for "classes to be offered right here in the community". People did not appear to be concerned about the sponsoring agent of the courses as long as "they are on what I need to take" and above the "level of what's (currently) being offered".

In addition to needing classes provided within the community, people are also concerned about the scheduling of the classes. Most people are unable to attend regular day-time offerings and need classes "to be offered during the evenings", or "during the summer months", or "for a shorter duration" than the typical ten-week period.

-- Adult Learners are Interested in the Application of Education to their Daily Lives --

This notion is supported in a number of different respects by the population studied. Nearly all of the members of this population have had some prior experience in a formal post-secondary academic

setting and everyone reported educational experiences through
informal means. Many members of this population want some formal
recognition for these past educational pursuits. Several people
face the problem of transferring credits gained in one academic
setting to another institution, as exemplified in the case of the
man whose nursing credits are not acceptable or in the case of
the woman who is concerned about transferring credits earned from
several different institutions. A number of other people who have
pursued fields outside of a formal academic route want some recog-
nition for those educational experiences. The man who has been a
professional musician for twelve years, or the woman who has studied
art history independently, or the man who has owned and operated
a successful business for a number of years represent the range of
educationally-related activities adults pursue within the course
of their daily living.

As suggested by the above examples, adults typically have educa-
tional experiences gained through both formal and informal channels.
It is then likely that when they consider continuing their formal
education, they will be interested in combining formal and informal
learning resources in these pursuits. Everyone in the population
studied considered "experiential" learning to be an important part
of the educational process, and a majority preferred utilizing a
combination of "formal" and "experiential" educational settings.
While they consider it necessary to "have instruction in basic

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concepts", their past experiences have shown them that "you learn
more or as much from the actual doing -- from trial and error".
The lives of these adults provide rich and varied experiences which
they feel should be recognized as part of their education.

Another aspect of the applicability of education concerns the area
of employment. A large number of the members of the population
studied see education as relating directly to employment and cite
this relationship as a primary reason for continuing their educa-
tion. The applicability of education to employment is viewed in
such terms as providing an opportunity for advancement, for increases
in salary, and as an entry into the job market. Since most adults
derive their livelihood from some form of employment, this issue
is of high priority in their educational considerations.

Another consideration that adults in the population studied have
for their education is the need for education to have some special
meaning in their personal lives. A number of people have a "personal
commitment" to continuing their education and wish to see that com-
mitment through. Others see education as an "opportunity to learn"
and want to take advantage of the opportunity. Others believe
that education will be a source of "personal satisfaction" for
them, that it "could change my life", or that it "will make me happy".
This type of application of education points out that adult learners
wish their educational experiences to be an intimate part of their
lives. While such a connection is measurable only by the

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learner involved, it speaks strongly, along with the other named considerations, for the need of the adult learner to be involved in directly meaningful educational pursuits.

Participation of Adult Learners in Continuing Education in West Central Minnesota:

In order to develop a clearer sense of who is likely to participate in continuing their education, we can look to two primary sources: 1) the national sample of adult learners (described in Section I); and 2) the adults comprising the sample population of this study (described in Section II). The following generalizations are based upon these two populations of adult learners.

-- The Adult Learner in West Central Minnesota Differs in Certain Respects from the National Sample of Adult Learners[12] --

In comparing the two samples of adult learners, we find the populations share some of the same characteristics. The adult learner is Caucasian, married with children, and between the ages of 25 and 34. Their shared reasons for continuing education are the attainment of knowledge, personal fulfillment, and increased employability. They are interested in subjects of a professional nature which center around experiential and job-related areas. They wish to utilize the classroom structure, but prefer it be available outside of the college campus.

The differences between the two populations lie in the areas of
sex, prior formal education, and predominant barriers. While the
national sample supports a relatively equal number of female (51%)
and male (49%) participants, the sample population in this study is
comprised of 71% female and 29% male. The high representation of
women in the population studied may be accounted for in part by
a number of factors. An examination of the network sampling tech-
nique used for the study shows that, while only a few more woman
than men participated in the primary contact group, the referrals
of both sexes were predominantly female. It appears that females
are a highly visible group needing continued educational opportunities.
In the State of Minnesota, 11% more females than males, 25 years of
age or older, have engaged in some college level work.[13] Assuming
that it is those whom have experienced education who are likely to
pursue it further, women are a good market for continuing education.
The visibility of women may also be attributed to other factors.
Ages 25-34 are typically child-bearing years for the female, and we
are aware of the significance she places on family life. The female
adult must approach her ventures into education through careful
planning toward keeping her family's status intact. The female
learner stands out as facing a multitude of barriers to continuing
education, and her needs are not likely to be met through tradi-
tional means. Also, women are entering the job market in increasing
numbers for a variety of reasons, such as: economic gain, development
and utilization of skills and talents, opportunities to be active

contributors to society, for personal gratification and so forth.
Most jobs which would meet the expectations of the above are likely
to require advanced training and/or education. The female adult
visibly requires more facile access to such opportunities. These
are only several of presumably numerous factors contributing to
the visibility of the female adult as requiring channels into con-
tinuing education.

42% of the national sample had some prior college in contrast to
90% of this study's sample population. Given that this study focused
on adults who had already expressed an interest in continuing their
education, the high percentage of those having prior college experi-
ence appears to substantiate the notion that it is those who have a
history of educational pursuits who are likely to be interested in
continuing on with their education.[14]

Another area in which the two populations differ is with respect to
the barriers which act as the greatest deterrent to pursuing an
education. "Time" and "finances" are reported as the barriers pre-
senting the greatest difficulty to the national sample. While these
two barriers were indeed cited by the sample population in this study,
the two barriers which they perceived as the greatest hindrance are
"access to educational facilities" and "family responsibilities".
It is difficult to assess the implications of this distinction since
the method of identifying the barriers for the national sample is
unknown. While the "access" barrier stands well alone as a barrier,

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"family responsibilities" is related to both "time" and "finances", and it may well be that the latter three barriers have much in common with respect to both populations.

Based upon the general descriptors found in comparing the national sample of adult learners and the adults in this study's sample population, it is possible to identify the general characteristics the adult learner in West Central Minnesota is likely to possess.

-- Characteristics of Adult Participants in Education in West Central Minnesota --

The adult who wishes to participate in educational activities is likely to possess the following characteristics:

1) is female, Caucasian, between the ages of 25 and 34, married and has children living at home,

2) has resided in their respective area for approximately ten years and is a town dweller,

3) has had nearly two years of prior formal post-secondary education,

4) has clearly articulated educational goals,

5) is seeking education for personal and professional betterment,

6) is seeking a baccalaureate degree at some point in time,

7) is faced with the barriers of "access to educational facilities" and "family responsibilities" at the minimum,

8) wants educational resources to be related to professional interests,

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9) wants courses offered within own or neighboring com-
munities, and

10) has a deep felt commitment to continuing education.

These characteristics are based upon the patterns which emerged
from the population studied. While it is certainly expected that
there are people desiring to continue their education who possess
only a few or none of the above characteristics, these characteris-
tics do serve as general indicators of who is most likely to engage
in post-seondary educational pursuits in West Central Minnesota.

Educationally Related Value Orientations of the Adult Learner:

The adults in the population studied have not only spoken clearly
about their educational aspirations and the barriers they face in
pursuing their goals, but they also have made evident what values
they hold concerning their roles in continuing education.

-- Adult Learners Assign Distinct Values to Learning and
Education --

Members of the population studied made a distinction between the
meaning of education and learning. Learning was defined as that
which comes from "dealing with everyday experiences". Education
took on a more formal definition as being "knowledge acquired through
an institutional setting". Most of the sample population felt
that a mixture of both elements was desirable in "getting an edu-
cation".

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The distinction between learning and education remains, however. Members of the population studied felt that learning should be valued for learning's sake, as indicated by the comments, "learning is a necessity of life" and "I will never stop learning". The belief that learning is a never ending process, a necessary ingredient in the continuation of life, is strongly held by the population studied. While learning was viewed largely as an internal occurrence, education was linked more to external sources. It was something that could be recognized by others and valued as a means for improving one's self and one's lot in life. Many people felt that they would find "personal fulfillment or satisfaction" from an education. Others believed it would bring them "recognition for what I already know" or "increased employment benefits". It is valued as a vehicle for bettering one's place in society. Most people would like to get an education which allows for the types of learning just described. Perhaps because adults are able to see a distinction between the two, they are closer to achieving a true integration of learning and education.

-- Adult Learners View Education and Success in a Humanistic Light --

It is interesting to note that the majority of the members of the population studied assigned similar characteristics to an "educated person" and to a "successful person". Both were identified by what may be called "humanistic" characteristics, including such

attributes as intelligence, social awareness, communicativeness, and open-mindedness. While members of Group I were highly consistent in their assignment of shared characteristics for both educated and successful people, some Group II members were less complimentary in their descriptions of an educated person. That an educated person is "pompous" or "has a know-it-all attitude" may be attributed to Group II members' delayed entry into education and to the stereo-types which are formed when certain groups have little or no inter-action. Group I appeared to more fully identify with the educated person than did Group II, which is likely since Group I members are already active participants in education. Even this slight difference in viewpoint, however, would indicate that most members of the population studied feel that education is related to humanistic values as is success.

Pursuit of Existing Educational Opportunities by the Adult Learner:

This issue is an important one to address, and it is discussed here in order to provide preliminary information concerning the knowledge adult learners are likely to have about existing educational oppor-tunities and the ways in which these learners are likely to investi-gate such opportunities.

-- Adult Learners have Limited Knowledge of Existing Area Educa-tional Institutions --

West Central Minnesota hosts some 17 post-secondary educational

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institutions. Seven institutions grant the baccalaureate degree:
University of Minnesota, Morris; Moorhead State University; St.
Cloud State University; Southwest State University; Concordia
College in Moorhead; St. John's Univ rsity in Collegeville; and
College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph. Two community colleges
granting the Associate of Arts (AA) degree are located in Fergus
Falls and Willmar. There are eight vocational-technical schools
located in Moorhead, St. Cloud, Fergus Falls, Alexandria, Willmar,
Morris, Granite Falls and Canby.

Of the seemingly substantial number of educational institutions in
this area of the state, the majority of the members of the popula-
tion studied mentioned the existence of only one of the baccalaureate
degree institutions, one of the community colleges, and four of
the vocational-technical schools (University of Minnesota, Morris;
Willmar Community College, and vo-tech schools in Willmar, Morris,
Granite Falls and Alexandria). The location of the institutions
noted coincides with the most heavily represented residential areas
of the population studied. While it is not surprising that people
would be aware of institutions within their own locales, it is
interesting to note that people's knowledge of the existence of
institutions is largely limited to their own vicinity and does not
extend into other portions of West Central Minnesota.

-- Adult Learners Make Use of a Limited Range of Information
Sources Concerning Educational Opportunities --

Slightly over 1/2 of the population studied were able to identify sources they would use to obtain information about available educational opportunities. In most instances, the information sources were associated with a given institution, e.g., counseling office, college administration office, teachers at the institution, students at the institution, and bulletins on course offerings. The only outside information source cited was the local library. It is significant that members of the population studied would consider the institution itself as a primary information source. It is also significant, however, that nearly 1/2 of the population did not know where they would go for information about educational opportunities.

-- Adult Learners Conduct Limited Investigations into Educational Opportunities --

Among the members of the population studied, nearly 1/3 said they had done "nothing at all right now" in the way of investigating opportunities for themselves. Those who did report having investigated educational opportunities had done so on a limited "checked into" basis. Most of the investigations involved "writing for information from the college". Only a small number of people had directly "talked with school representatives". The nature of these discussions for most people involved determining ways to earn credits from prior schooling or for knowledge gained outside of the classroom.

Admittedly the data obtained from the population studied regarding

these above three issues is limited in scope and lacking in detail.

Informants were asked only general-questions in these areas and,

for the most part, were not asked to elaborate on their responses.

The information gathered does, however, point out a number of ques-

tions concerning the population's pursuit of existing educational

opportunities. Why is it that adults are largely unaware of the

existence of institutions outside of their immediate locale? What

accounts for a large number of adults being unsure of where to find

information about opportunities available to them? Why have adults

not been more thorough in their investigations of opportunities?

Perhaps an immediate response would be that these adult learners are

relatively uninformed and passive in their investigations because

they apparently lack the inclination to really do anything about

continuing their education. Perhaps they are mainly paying lip

service to the notion of continuing their education. For most of

the members of the population studied, it is highly doubtful that

these impressions are well-founded. Most of the members of this

population have clearly expressed educational goals and certainly

all of them face barriers to continuing their education. Their

commitment to education is high enough to warrant belief in their

willingness to carry out their goals given the opportunity to do so.

Unless one were to discount most of what these adults had to say

in the previous section, there is evidence that we must look beyond

the individual learner and question what other factors may be contributing to this situation.

It may be that adults are unaware of existing area institutions because they have had little cause to be involved with these institutions. We know that most adults are limited to their respective communities because of job and family commitments, therefore it is unlikely that they would be interested in the existence of "distant" institutions. Perhaps adults find it difficult to associate institutions which predominantly serve the 18-22 year old student as being appropriate sources for their own academic endeavors. These factors are likely to be related to the adult's knowledge of information sources. People who have been out of the mainstream of education for some time are likely to lose contact with educational information and do not know which sources would be most useful to them. Investigation of sources, too, takes time and an awareness of how to interpret institutional policies and procedures. If adults do not easily identify with institutions and find it difficult to relate their own educational experiences and goals to those of the institutions, it is not surprising that adults assume a passive investigative stance. Educational opportunities may be available, but the extent to which they are available and accessible for the adult learner is a question which deserves considerable attention.

PART TWO: SUGGESTED CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATORS

All of the information presented thus far has been derived from the
interviews with adult learners and prospective adult learners in
West Central Minnesota. It is their own perceptions of their situa-
tions which have been offered concerning the barriers they face in
continuing their education. They have offered more than that, for
they have also indicated what the prospect of continuing education ·
means to them in the course of their lives. These adults are part
of a growing body of people needing to be served by post-secondary
education. Many of them have been pursuing their education for a
period of many years, on an on-again, off-again basis. Some may
wish to continue a piecemeal approach to continuing their education.
Many others may want to pursue a more comprehensive route. Regard-
less of their desired approach, these adult learners face obstacles
which are preventing or slowing down their efforts to obtain further
education. Educators need to acknowledge that adults are a different
type of student, not any less capable or any less committed than
their younger counterparts, but different in the sense that they are
unable to assume the sole role of student. They have other equally
demanding roles of spouse, parent, employee, community member, etc.,
and the role of student is an additional role which requires a
flexibility in order to be assumed along with the others.

The following is a list, certainly not inclusive, of the kinds of
considerations educators might give in developing and/or offering

educational opportunities for adult learners. It is only a beginning
list.

Readers of this report and others who are involved in the education
of adults will no doubt be able to add to or expand upon these con-
siderations. Bearing in mind the characteristics of the adult learner
and the types of barriers they face in continuing their education,
the following considerations are offered:

1) Educators should consider the extent to which existing
   educational opportunities are publicized or promoted --

   -- what special efforts are made to inform the adult
      learner population?

   -- are the materials and language used aimed specific-
      ally to the adult?

   -- how can adults identify the opportunities which
      relate directly to their own educational needs?

   -- what other avenues exist for promotion outside of the
      institution itself?

   -- what special groups within the adult population are
      identified, e.g., women with children, business owners,
      etc.?

2) Educators should consider the establishment of communica-
   tion links among sources of information on educational
   opportunities --

   -- does the institution have a known referral source on
      its own and other institution's offerings?

   -- who in the community might serve as information
      sources, e.g., school counselors, social service
      workers, community groups, media resource people?

   -- what mechanism is needed to ensure that current and
      accurate information is given out?

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3) Educators should consider developing and offering courses
related to the professional interests of the adult popu-
lation --

-- has there been a survey of the professional interests
of the adult population?

-- do courses contain elements of both experiential and
theoretical approaches?

-- is the content of the course related to the issues
involved in the practice of a given profession?

4) Educators should consider the accessibility of degree
routes to the adult learner population --

-- what options exist for adults who wish to pursue a
degree without full-time, on-campus attendance?

-- what options exist for individualized study?

-- what major study areas exist which relate to the pro-
fessional interests of adults?

5) Educators should consider the range of experiences adults
bring to the formal academic setting --

-- what mechanisms exist for recognizing knowledge gained
outside the formal classroom?

-- what mechanisms exist for transferring credits earned
from other institutions?

-- what channels exist for the adult to share his/her
experiences with other students?

6) Educators should consider providing services which assist
the adult in establishing educational goals and priorities --

-- what types of career counseling service are available?

-- where can adults go to discuss general educational
plans?

-- what types of referral services are available?

7) Educators should consider ways of providing education so
that it is more readily consumed within the course of
daily living --

-- are courses offered during the evenings, weekends, or summer months?

-- are intensified, short-term courses provided for credit?

-- are courses available on an independent study basis?

-- are facilities available during the evening or weekend hours?

8) Educators should consider bringing educational resources to the community rather than requiring adult learners to primarily come on campus --

-- are courses offered in the community?

-- are there shared efforts among institutions to bring in courses to the community?

-- are there community people with expertise in given subjects who could serve as adjunct faculty of an institution?

-- are there tutorial services available to supplement information provided in formal classes?

-- are short-term workshops or seminars held in the community?

These considerations and subsequent questions are posed to provide a general direction for thinking about and responding to the needs of the adult learner population. The task for educators is indeed a demanding one which requires support in the way of dollars, additional resources and manpower. One institution alone is not likely to adequately meet all of the needs of the adult population. Such an undertaking will require the cooperative efforts of the institutions involved in providing educational services to adults. West Central Minnesota hosts a substantial number of post-secondary educational institutions. In this respect, it is rich in educational

resources, which if banned together, could provide effective edu-
cational services to the adult learner.

PART THREE: SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Several matters need to be addressed to finalize this report.   One
matter is that of noting the limitations of the study.   Another
matter involves identifying issues to be addressed in future research
undertakings.   While these two matters deserve attention, a third
matter appears to have greater significance and that is to address
the question of "What purpose will this study serve and whom will
it benefit?".

Study Limitations and Future Research Issues:

One limitation of the study is that it was narrowly focused to the
issue of adult learners' barriers to continuing education.   The
issue of barriers, however, is not an isolated one, and it was most
difficult to discern what information was most pertinent to the task
at hand and what was better left for future studies.   The tendency
in this study has been to leave little information obtained go un-
noticed.

Another possible limitation of the study concerns the composition
of the population studied.   The population reflects the educational
interests and needs of persons who have already given some thought

to continuing their education. Hence we have not uncovered information from adults who are not currently interested in continuing their education nor do we know to what extent the members of the population studied are representative of the adult population in West Central Minnesota. While adults who have not expressed an interest in continuing their education would serve as an interesting third comparison group to the two groups represented in this study, resource limitations did not permit us to investigate this dimension.

Another aspect of the study which some may find limiting is the lack of quantitative data from which to draw numerical conclusions. Undoubtedly, there are numerous questions to be raised about the adult learner in West Central Minnesota which are related to actual numbers of the potential market and a more accurate account of educational resources required. These two, however, are issues for further research or survey undertakings.

Numerous issues have been raised in this study which, if made the focus of further study, would add considerably to the needed base of information on adult learners in continuing education. In addition to the issues raised in the discussion of study limitations, the generalizations and considerations posed previously in this section can serve as a base for developing topics for further exploration. Three areas which are of particular interest to this author involve 1) a clearer distinction between the educational needs and interests of degree seekers and non-degree seekers, \

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2) a comparison of the educational needs and interests of rural
adults and urban-dwelling adults, and 3) an investigation of the
roles and expectations of adult women in continuing education.
The issues surrounding adult participation in continuing education
are numerous and varied. They demand attention and they require
inordinate amounts of time and resources to address each one ade-
quately. They do, however, pose an exciting and stimulating challenge
to adult educators, one which can be faced with optimism as develop-
ments continue in the field of continuing education for adults.

Contributions of the Study:

It can be stated that the primary aims of the study have been ac-
complished. Barriers that adults perceive to be preventing them
from continuing their education have been identified as well as
the elements which constitute the barriers. Insights have been
offered into what factors might enable the barriers to be overcome.
Other secondary aims of the study have also been explored. A por-
trait has been provided of who is likely to engage in educational
pursuits along with a picture of the educational interests of the
population studied. Preliminary information has been offered con-
cerning the extent to which existing educational opportunities are
being tapped by the population studied.

This information and subsequent insights are important, particularly
to educators who are involved in the planning or development of

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programs and resources serving the adult learner. This information, along with other information already gathered, lends further support to the immediate needs of adult learners which are to be met through the avenues of continuing education. Hopefully, this information will be channeled into tangible outcomes such as those found in the increasing quality and expansion of services for adults.

It is also anticipated that the information will produce certain intangible outcomes, as stereotypes held of adult learners are dispelled and replaced by clearer understandings of and empathy toward the adult who engages in educational endeavors. Certainly both educators and adult learners stand to benefit from continued effects to secure information directly from the adult learner population. We are reminded of the man who realistically views his continuing educational efforts as "a large emotional and financial investment. If it's too large I can't shift gears and do it. Willingness is different from making it". He, and many others like him, are willing to put forth a great deal toward a continuing education. It is the task of adult educators to provide the avenues through which success, at least in part, is insured.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Walton, Wesley J., "New Paths for Adult Learning", in Cross, Valley and Associates, <u>Planning Non-Traditional Programs</u>, San Francisco, 1974, p. 95.

2. Commission on Non-Traditional Study, <u>Diversity by Design</u>, San Francisco, 1973, p. xv.

3. <u>Ibid</u>.

4. Houle, Cyril O., <u>The External Degree</u>, San Francisco, 1973, p. 47.

5. Carp, Abraham, Peterson, Richard, and Roelfs, Pamela, "Adult Learning Interests and Experiences", in Cross, Valley and Associates, <u>Planning Non-Traditional Programs</u>, San Francisco, 1974, p. 15.

6. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 49.

7. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 50.

8. <u>Ibid</u>., 4. 61.

9. <u>Ibid</u>., 5. 50.

10. <u>Ibid</u>., 15-51.

11. "Preliminary Report", (unpublished), University Without Walls/ Morris Pilot Project, University of Minnesota, Morris, 1974.

12. <u>Ibid</u>., 5. 15-51.

13. "Minnesota Socio-Economic Characteristics", from the 4th Count Summary Tape of the 1970 Census, Vol. III, St. Paul, April, 1972.

14. Johnstone, J.W., and Rivera, R.J., <u>Volunteers for Learning</u>, Chicago, 1965.

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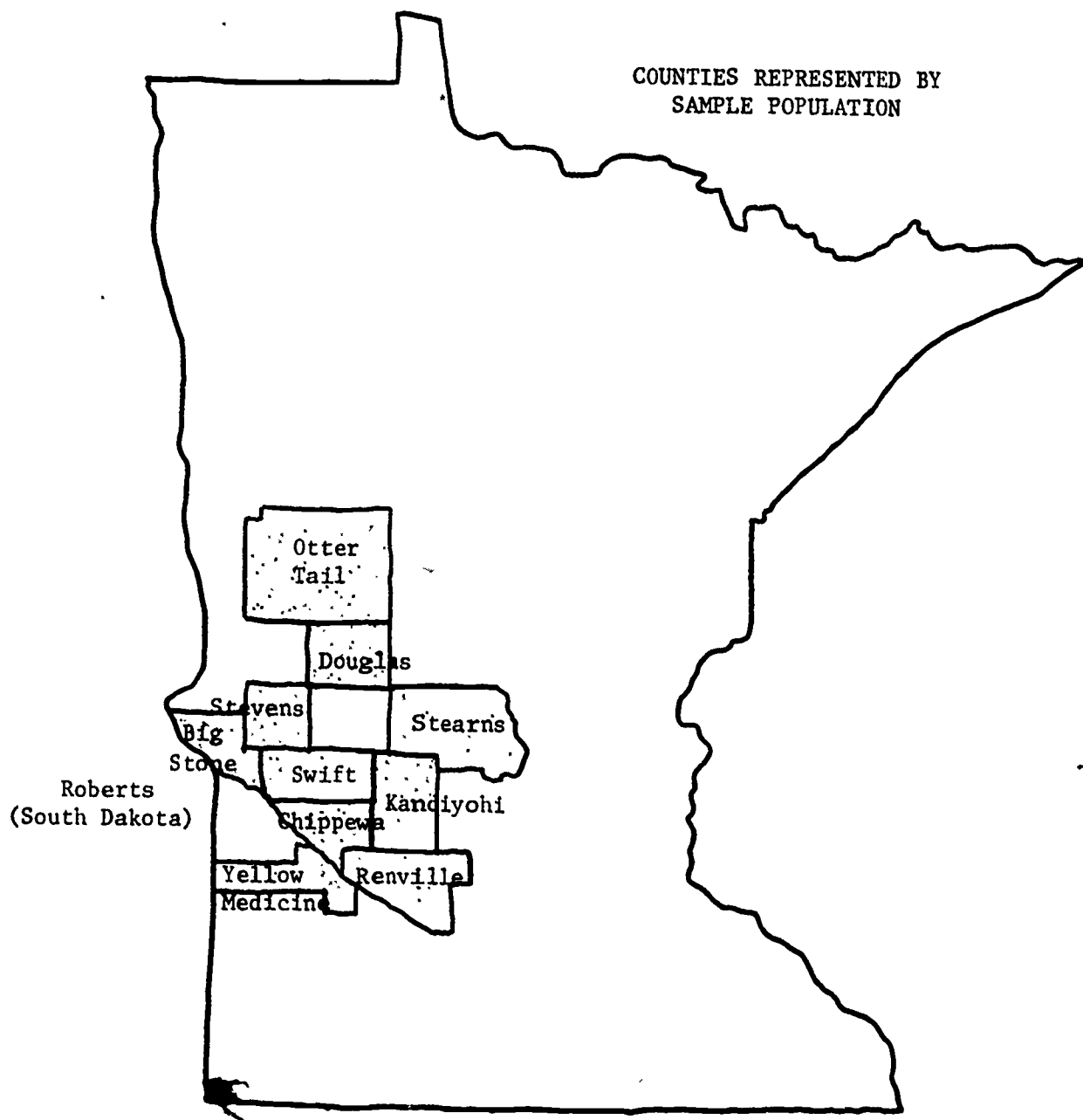
C. **TELL ME ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES UP UNTIL THE TIME YOU ENROLLED IN UWW.**

Probe Questions:

1. What kinds of educational activities did you participate in (e.g., classes, seminars, workshops, training)?

2. What did you receive for your participation in these activities (e.g., credits, certificates, diploma, promotion, other forms of recognition)?

3. Did your involvement in any of these activities enable you to do something beyond what you were doing at that time?

4. When were you last involved in an educational activity?

5. What level of schooling have you obtained?

6. What other things have you been learning about, perhaps on your own, that we have not talked about yet?

D. **TELL ME ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN UWW.**

Probe Questions:

1. Why did you decide to enroll in UWW?

2. What prompted you to seek a college degree?

3. What programs did you consider before deciding upon UWW?

4. What is your main study area and how did you choose it?

5. How committed are you to completing a degree in UWW?

6. What is the college degree going to mean to you?

E. **WHAT SPECIFIC THINGS DID YOU TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN DECIDING TO ENROLL IN A COLLEGE PROGRAM?**

Probe Questions:

1. What were some of your concerns when you first began to seriously consider UWW?

2. What problems did you actually encounter?

3. What specific changes or adjustments did you make in your life to enable you to do what you are currently doing with your education?

4. What are your concerns or problems at this stage of your education?

5. If someone came to you to talk about enrolling in UWW, what key questions would you ask them to assist them in their decision?

6. What do you think are important things to consider for anyone who is thinking of continuing their education?

7. What things might have prevented you from pursuing your UWW program?

8. Who was most influential in your decision to go to college?

9. How did your friends react to your enrolling in a college program?

10. How has your family responded to your efforts to continue your education?

F. <u>WHO DO YOU KNOW (FRIENDS, RELATIVES) WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CONTINUING THEIR EDUCA-TION IN SOME WAY AND HOW ARE THEY DOING IT?</u>

Probe Questions:

1. Are your educational goals similar to those of your friends or family?

2. Are the educational goals you mentioned typical of people here in general?

3. What do the general goals of people in this community appear to be?

4. Why do you think more people in this area are not continuing their educ? ion?

5. Who do you think is the most successful <u>man</u> in your community and why?

6. Who do you think is the most successful <u>woman</u> in your community and why?

G. <u>EDUCATION AND LEARNING ARE TWO COMMON WORDS THAT MAY MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS TO PEOPLE. WHAT DO THESE TWO WORDS MEAN TO YOU?</u>

Probe Questions:

1. What do you associate with education?

2. What do you associate with learning?

3. There are a variety of ways to go about learning something. What ways of learning do you feel are related to getting an education?

4. What kinds of continued learning do you think are important and for whom?

5. What characteristics do you associate with an educated person?

6. What part does education and/or learning play in your life?

7. What are your educational plans beyond UWW?

H. I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE A NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN THIS PART OF THE STATE. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THESE FACILITIES?

Probe Questions:

1. Which ones do you know of?

2. What are your opinions about them?

3. What educational opportunities are there for adults in this community?

4. Where do people go to find out about what's available?

I WHAT SHOULD I HAVE ASKED YOU THAT I DID NOT -- OR -- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?

C. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN THE TIME YOU COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL AND NOW:

Probe Questions:

1. What educational activities have you participated in (e.g., classes, seminars, workshops, training)?

2. Where were they offered and who offered them?

3. What did you receive for your participation (e.g., credits, certificates, diploma, promotion, other forms of recognition)?

4. When were you last involved in an educational activity?

5. What things have you been involved in learning about outside a formal setting?

D. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN THE WAY OF CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION?

Probe Questions:

1. What are your educational goals?

2. When did you form these goals?

3. What level of education are you interested in obtaining?

4. What subjects are you interested in learning about?

5. If you could set up an ideal way to get your education, what would it be?

E. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOU INVESTIGATING WAYS IN WHICH TO CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION?

Probe Questions:

1. What options are actually available to you to pursue your education?

2. What have you actually done in the way of investigating educational opportunities for yourself?

3. What have you found out?

4. Are you in a position to take advantage of these opportunities?

5. What are your opinions of the educational facilities you know about?

6. Who has been of help to you in your investigations?

F. WHERE ARE YOU IN THE PROCESS OF DECIDING ABOUT CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION?

Probe Questions:

1. What has previously prevented you from continuing your education?

2. What things must you take into consideration in order to make a decision about your education?

3. At this point, what are your problems/concerns about pursuing your education?

4. What changes or adjustments in your life do you think you would need to make in order to continue your education at this point?

5. What changes in your life are you willing to make?

6. Under what circumstances would you decide to go ahead with your educational plans as you have talked about them?

7. What would prevent you from going ahead with your plans?

8. What difference would it make in your life to actually do what you have said you would like to do?

G. WHO DO YOU KNOW (FRIENDS, RELATIVES) WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION IN SOME WAY AND HOW ARE THEY DOING IT?

Probe Questions:

1. Are your educational goals similar to those of your friends or family? (What are their educational goals?)

2. Are the educational goals you mentioned typical of people here in general?

3. What do the general goals of people in this community appear to be?

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Probe Questions:

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2. What do you associate with learning?

3. There are a variety of ways to go about learning something. What ways of learning do you feel are related to getting an education?

4. What kinds of continued learning do you think are important and for whom?

5. What characteristics do you associate with an educated person?

6. What part does education or learning (or both) play in your life?

7. At this point, what is your commitment to continuing your education?

I. <u>WHAT SHOULD I HAVE ASKED YOU THAT I DID NOT -- OR -- IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE</u>
<u>YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?</u>

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