UNDERSTANDING TRANSITIONS:
THE FIRST POST-SECONDARY TERM

by

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A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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0-612-35349-4
ABSTRACT

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The primary purpose of this research was to discover how students felt about the experience of transition from high school to post-secondary educational institutions in the context of other significant life changes that they experienced. I was particularly interested in discovering what kinds of practices which high schools and post-secondary institutions followed which facilitated or inhibited transitions. I also hoped to ease their transition by providing them with opportunities to meet to discuss problems as they occurred.

The participants were five students who had recently completed high school and had just enrolled in the fall term of a post secondary program. I conducted initial interviews with them before they began orientation week. Thereafter I met with three of them as a transitions team and all of them individually on a bi-weekly basis to explore transition issues. I also shadowed students on their campuses, visiting those places where they socialized and studied. Students also contacted me by phone, and e-mail. They arranged impromptu visits as they felt the need. Data collection was completed during the winter of 1996/1997.
The data indicate that two factors contributed significantly to the perception students had of their transition. Regardless of the kind of post-secondary educational institution attended, participants who stated that they were happy about the first term were those who had established career goals prior to establishing educational goals. For them the transition was merely a phase. For students whose long term goals were less well defined the transition presented more difficulty. Another critical emerging issue was the sense of community. Those who established themselves with new friends at the new institution seemed to enjoy activities associated with the first term far more than those who were less involved in the social life of the new institution. This study reveals that, for the participants, academic preparation was adequate while social, emotional, and vocational preparations were less adequate. In total, nine themes emerged in the data analysis. These were Vision, Sense of Community, Students’ Preparation and Preparedness, Institutions’ Preparation, Support from Parents, Role of the Student, Desire for Change, Community College Stigma, and Commuting Distance.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. James Ryan, chairperson of my thesis committee, for his careful reading, constant support, and encouragement of my work. Dr. Richard Townsend, a special critical friend, has been an enthusiastic teacher and thoughtful support on my thesis committee. I would also like to thank Dr. Brent Kilbourn who, as the third committee member, provided kind, thorough, and thoughtful insight at precisely the right moments. I am most grateful to Drs. Paul Begley and Rouleen Wignall for their gracious work at the proposal hearing stage in my dissertation.

I thank Dr. Donald Musella for giving me my first research project and by so doing showing me how that work could best be done.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Don Downer for his proactive support, encouragement, and supervision during the designing and reporting of the original Qualifying Research paper.

I would like to acknowledge the very important assistance and advice of a dear friend and colleague, Dr. Mary Kennedy, who understands that the real value of this kind of work is the process of doing it.

I am deeply indebted to the participants who graciously and willingly gave their energy, insights, and time. This is especially gratifying when one realizes that they could not even benefit to the extent that they could receive recognition. They willingly met with me for the duration of the study and periodically for a year after the study was complete to reread the various manuscripts.

I especially thank my daughter Kiersten who was helping gather information and giving particular support from the first days of my research.

To my partner Ana I owe a special debt for accepting me, organizing our space and time, and being patient when I had just a little more to type.
# Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................ii

Acknowledgments........................................................................................................................iii

Table of Contents..........................................................................................................................iv

Chapter One—Introduction --Facing the Gap..............................................................................1

  Problem........................................................................................................................................3
  Significance of the study................................................................................................................5
  Limitations of the study..................................................................................................................7
  Outline of the Dissertation...........................................................................................................8

Chapter Two--Review of the Literature.....................................................................................10

  Background..................................................................................................................................10
    Transitions and Passages............................................................................................................11
    Problems with Transitions in Education................................................................................17
    Students or Children?..............................................................................................................23
    Summary..................................................................................................................................26

Chapter Three--Methodology........................................................................................................28

  Design of the Study.....................................................................................................................28
    Procedures.................................................................................................................................29
    Focus Areas...............................................................................................................................30
    Participant Selection Process...................................................................................................33
    The Participants........................................................................................................................34
    The Post-Secondary Institutions...............................................................................................37
  Data Collection Techniques........................................................................................................38
    In-Depth Interviews................................................................................................................39
    Transition Research Team Meetings.......................................................................................40
    Impromptu Meetings................................................................................................................41
    Journals...................................................................................................................................42
    Shadowing...............................................................................................................................43
    Document Analysis................................................................................................................43
  Data Analysis Procedures.............................................................................................................44
  Trustworthiness of the Data..........................................................................................................45
  Data Presentation Format.............................................................................................................46
  Phases of Research......................................................................................................................46
Chapter Four -- The Preliminal Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Preparation and Preparedness</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions’ Preparation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Parents</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Student</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Change</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Stigma</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting Distance</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary | 81   |

Chapter Five-- The Liminal Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Preparation and Preparedness</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions’ Preparation</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Parents</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Student</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Change</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Stigma</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting Distance</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary | 159  |

Chapter Six-- The Post-Liminal Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Preparation and Preparedness</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions’ Preparation</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Parents</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Student</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Change</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Stigma</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuting Distance</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary | 200  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Seven--Discussion</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in value of Vision</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in importance of Sense of Community</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Students’ Preparations and Preparedness</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in views of Institutions’ Preparation</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Support from Parents</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Role of the Student</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in function of Desire for change</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in influence of Community College Stigma</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Commuting Distance</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Eight--Conclusion</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring Update</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders Addressed</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminal Group (High School)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Administrators</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Administrators</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liminal and Post-liminal Group (Post-Secondary Institutions)</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors and Advisors</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary administrators</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Implications</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Gennep’s Lens</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andragogy</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the Gap</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices..............................................................................................................................272

Appendix A: Advertisement.......................................................................................................273
Appendix B: E-mail Communication with College.................................................................274
Appendix C: Conclusions and Summary of "Pedagogy versus Andragogy: Easing the Transitions from High School to Post-Secondary Educational Institutions"..............................................................................................................................278
Appendix D: Conclusions and Summary of Pedagogy Versus Andragogy: How Are We Treating Students That Don’t Fit? ........................................................................................................................................280
Appendix E: Consent Form........................................................................................................284
Appendix F: Comparison of Assumptions and Designs of Pedagogy and Andragogy..............................................................................................................................288

List of tables

Table 3.1 Data Gathering Schedule..........................................................................................46
Table 7.1 Vision.......................................................................................................................206
Table 7.2 Sense of Community...............................................................................................210
Table 7.3 Students’ Preparation and Preparedness.................................................................214
Table 7.4 Institutions’ Preparations.........................................................................................218
Table 7.5 Support From Parents.............................................................................................222
Table 7.6 Role of the Student.................................................................................................227
Table 7.7 Desire for Change.....................................................................................................231
Table 7.8 Community College Stigma...................................................................................233
Table 7.9 Commuting Distance..............................................................................................236
Chapter One

Introduction--Facing the Gap

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. If it had a face, it was the face of this young man. Bob was stopping by the school in mid September to collect some information from the principal. He was supposed to be in class at a community college many miles away from our high school. When I asked him about community college he shrugged his shoulders, "Not too good, I quit."

I couldn’t believe it. All the preparations, student loans, excellent marks. . .and after just two weeks, he quit! He couldn’t explain why. He just didn’t like being there. But his was a more-than-casual dislike. He told me that he had to get away from there and come home. “Everything there was different.” He had no plans. His mother grieved.

On reflection, I realized that in our area this phenomenon was not unusual. I had heard of several cases where our graduates had ‘dropped out’ of college or university during the first term; but this was the first time it was so immediate and so evident to me. I began to count the cost. Psychologically, socially, financially, the waste was shocking. I was first confused, then curious. It was a paradox. How could we have students who had graduated so full of promise fail so dismally and so soon. This was especially odd in Bob’s case. He had a good mind. He was so clever it was a nuisance, at times like a philosophic gadfly. He saw inconsistencies and irrelevancies very quickly and said so immediately without regard to my plans for any particular class. He was not the kind of student who would accept anything just because I said it. He wasn't impressed by teachers, any of us. He didn’t even pretend to be impressed, which was irritating. He tolerated us because he had the sense to realize that his talents could carry him far if he completed high school. He was on all the teams. He scored high marks in all his subjects. The most challenging math projects, science experiments, or Shakespearean research papers were
no problem for him. In short, I thought he was exactly the kind of student who would carve a swath through the engineering course he'd chosen, leaving us far behind.

His dropping out and coming home made me stop. It was a boot to the stomach. I had to think about what I was doing, what I had done, and what we high school teachers were doing. I reasoned that we could not look accusingly at the community college because they had only had two weeks to help him with the transition; we had had thirteen years. Was school preparing students adequately? I began to have doubts.

Bob is not the only student who had experienced difficulty with the transition. Students experience difficulties making the transition at several points in their schooling. Difficulties with transition between various grade levels of public school have been highlighted by several authors (Ahola-Sidaway, 1991; McLaren, 1986; Finnan, 1991; Freure, 1991; Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996; Haughey, Noonan, & Fenwick, 1996; Knowles 1985; Rice, 1997). Weldy (1990) lists eight times of transitional difficulty from pre-Kindergarten to moving beyond post-secondary education while Gardiner (1997) outlines ten possible transition periods associated just with college students. Other observers have concerns specifically about the transition of high school to college (Barrett, 1993; Doyle, 1993; Menaker, 1975; Sheppard, 1993; Tinto, 1996; Tucker, 1995b; Upcraft & Gardiner, 1989).

How can we account for the difficulties that students experience with educational transitions? Beaufort (1994) maintains that students have different role requirements from one educational level to the next. Where earlier levels require that students master the processes and content of a number of disciplines, later levels require the ability to synthesize and generalize in more creative ways. Different thinking and writing skills are required at each stage of educational development. Townsend points out how sophisticated and varied
the changes in thinking and writing skills can be. He argues that "...the only universal rule is to become conscious about the conventions that structure the thinking and writing for the department/faculty/discourse community to which you’re being inducted" (1996, p. 23). Are students able to make these adjustments? Are students prepared for the transition from secondary to post-secondary institutions of learning? Are there some things which the school might do which could have a positive impact on these transitions? According to Cropley (1977) the major focus of schooling is to inspire in students a continued interest in education and provision of the means to accomplish that. The problem centers not on what administrators intend or hope to accomplish. It is more a question of what students feel that they are accomplishing. If students feel, after a short attempt at a post-secondary course, that they cannot continue, a systemic problem is indicated. This study explores transition issues in the hope of determining which practices and policies administrators and teachers can affirm and which they can question. It is also meant to be of use to practicing high school teachers in devising classroom strategies. Underpinning all of this is an attempt to discover which practices encourage growth toward successful transition and which practices, according to the participants, impede such growth. It is also meant to be of immediate use to the students who participate in the study.

Problem

This study is an attempt to describe the process of transition during the period August--December of the first year of post-secondary education. In it, I explore students' experiences with transition from high school to post-secondary educational institutions. What do they anticipate? What is their sense of the unfolding experience? Do they feel they are well prepared? For purposes of this study the efforts of other stakeholders such as parents, teachers, counselors, or administrators, are not assessed or explored except through the articulated perceptions of the student participants. It is primarily a question of
exploring student perceptions of the experience as the experience is lived (Van Mannen, 1990).

While there appears to be an obvious connection between the concept of change and the concept of transition I do not study change as such. Yet I cannot not avoid the notion that during this period several things were happening in the lives of the participants which were clearly changes which would have an impact on the way they viewed the academic and social transition of the first term. All of them had just completed high school so that the stability implicit in a known routine and place is gone. Even if high school was tiresome, it was at least stable and secure. All faced a loss of that security. These participants faced the challenge of making new adaptations in a number of ways. In the transition process they would learn more about making a passage through a system as well as making a journey of growth and development. They were variously eager and frightened, with these conditions changing from time to time. What they all had in common was that they faced the unknown. They wondered both what it would be like there for them and they wondered what they would be like there. It was a change in status, a significant change in status.

Using Van Gennep's (1909/1960) tri-phasal model, which he devised to analyze an individual's passage from one social stratum to another, I develop three sub-questions which revolve around his three phases of transition. In each of these three phases I explore the following emergent themes: Vision, Sense of Community, Students' Preparation and Preparedness, Institutions' Preparations, Support from Parents, Role of the Student, Desire for Change, Community College Stigma, and Commuting Distance. During the early phase of the study I am primarily interested in determining what students anticipated and so the first question is:
a. How do students perceive the first, preliminal stage of their transition in terms of the nine themes?

As the term proceeds and students’ views are informed by developing experience, I attempt to determine how their attitudes are changing. I am primarily interested in charting these changes as well as revisiting earlier reflections. At this stage the question is:

b. How do students perceive the second, liminal stage of their transition in terms of the nine themes?

At the end of the term I ask students to reflect upon the transition experience as it has unfolded, reviewing those issues which had been explored in earlier phases. Thus the question is:

c. How do students perceive the third, post-liminal stage of their transition in terms of the nine themes?

Significance of the Study

The overall purpose of my research was to discover how students felt about the experience of their transitions from high school to post-secondary educational institutions. I also hoped to assist them in making those transitions, by providing a regular forum for discussion of issues which both concerned them and informed my study. I followed the progress of five students who helped me understand, in rich detail, the issues that they faced as the semester proceeded. While I had individual meetings with all five, I also met three of the five in a group setting. In the meeting process each of the participants had an opportunity to assist one another both in understanding transitions and dealing with transitions issues as appropriate. I have described students' perceptions of the issues concerning their transitions at least insofar as those descriptions can
inform the work of high school educators, parents, and students. Through the inquiry I hope to enrich the literature on this transition especially for high school administrators, teachers, and district personnel. All ought to be interested in how recently graduated high school students perceive the effectiveness of the high school in facilitating that transition and in reflecting on those transitional issues which students face.

This study has much in common with studies devoted to determining why some students leave school without finishing a course of study. Kelly (1988), Panitz (1996), and Sheppard (1993) attempt to devise strategies to deal with students who are in danger of leaving while Weldy (1990) as well as Upcraft and Gardiner (1989) focus particularly on the value of solid transition plans in ensuring student success in college. Significant work has been done by Tinto (1987) to develop a theory of ‘individual departure’ which incorporates various causes for students leaving. Rather than ascribing causes to single sources he attempts to link psychological, social, and institutional factors:

Broadly understood. . . individual departure from institutions can be viewed as arising out of a longitudinal process of interactions between an individual with given attributes, skills, and dispositions (intentions and commitments) and other members of the academic and social system of the institution. (p. 113)

He argues, moreover, that students' decisions to leave are primarily the result of their having made an incomplete transition. Studies by Smith (1994), Klimovich (1995), Finnan (1991), and Horvath (1992) all support Tinto's essential theoretical contention that academic and social integration are consistently critical factors in determining which students persist in a course of study and which will depart. Ogrosky (1992) found that students' commitment to university study at the end of the first semester had a significant, direct effect on
persistence while Tinto (1987) argues that the most critical stage for college and university students is the first term. Since the primary focus of attrition/transition study has been on the first year of study the value of this study is that it will, to some degree, focus attention on that period prior to students entering college as well as incorporating the first term.

In practical terms there are a number of stakeholders who are concerned about successful transitions. Kelly (1988), Christman (1986), Haughey, Noonan, and Fenwick (1996), are concerned with the practical problems of transitions for college students, returning women graduate students, and junior high students respectively. The notion of transitions is so significant in educational terms that in Ontario a portion of public school life of students has been labeled transition years (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996). These tend to focus on the necessity for preparation for and understanding of the issues of transition; all tend to show the powerful influence of a number of actors. Administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and students all play a part in the transition process (Rice, 1997). In this regard the present study will provide data for each of these stakeholders in both the high school and the post-secondary educational institution.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to my interpretation of the participants’ perceptions of transitional events. For the most part, observers would like to know the truth or what really happened. It was not my intent to seek the truth surrounding these events because it was only the perception of participants which, I felt, was significant in determining their comfort with the transition process. Hence, the reader must understand that data has been filtered through participants’ lenses. No utterances of the participants were challenged for two reasons. Firstly, I only sought perceptions; so the views of other stakeholders would not have illuminated the issues. Secondly, I believe that any attempt on my part to verify
utterances would have jeopardized rapport simply because participants would see that I was in a judging rather than observing role. This leads to another limitation which I was constantly considering.

I am a teacher, a middle-aged teacher. With twenty-five years as either principal, teacher, or department head I was manifestly different from the participants in a number of ways. This was not an issue I could hide or ignore. Consequently, I felt that I had to adopt a personna which would allow the participants to be comfortable with the gap between us. How well we overcame the differences in our status must be judged by the reader. It remains, however, a limitation which is noteworthy.

Another limiting condition was demograhical. There were two commuters, one couple, and one resident student. Post-secondary representation was skewed because there was one college versus four university students. Sexes were inequitably represented because there were four females and one male. There were also four students from the same high school. The fact that none of the students represented racial minorities in Canada meant that the particular conditions which such students would face are missing from the study. All of these create limiting conditions which ought to be considered by the reader.

Outline of the Dissertation

In Chapter one I introduce the study, its purpose, and significance. In Chapter two I present a discussion of the problems with student transition as revealed by a survey of the literature. I indicate the role that Knowles's (1985) concept of andragogy has played in my sense of the design as well as the roles of 'liberating education' (Freire, 1970) and 'rites de passage' (Van Gennep, 1908/1960) in the formulation of the theory basis for this transition study. Chapter three is devoted to methodology. In it, I describe my role as a transition
team leader, an interviewer, a researcher, and sometime advisor. It outlines the research design, methods of data collection, analysis, and triangulation for this qualitative study.

In chapter four, five, and six I present the data analysis in three phases preliminal (before the term), liminal (during the term), and post-liminal (end of term). The nine emergent themes are analyzed for each student in each of the chapters. Chapter seven draws together the data and focuses on the change in student perceptions across the term and, again, across each of the themes.

Chapter eight, the final chapter, is primarily concerned with directing stakeholders' attention to various significant issues raised by participants in the study. It takes the form of considerations directed to the various actors who occupy significant roles in affecting student transitions.
Chapter Two--Review of the Literature

Background

The study of transitions has been traditionally taken up by anthropologists who were particularly interested in the rites, rituals, and customs which various cultures adopted to mark an individual's passage from one status to the next (Jacka, 1994; Ahola-Sidaway 1991). In some cultures very sophisticated and specific rituals accompanied birth, entering puberty/coming of age, marriage, changes in adult status, and death. Some of these transitions are associated with educational changes in some cultures while others are not. In North America we have grown used to the notion that individuals can attend various educational institutions for many, many years. Within two or three generations high school graduation has moved from becoming unusual to commonplace. Consequently, individuals can experience life and educational transitions at the same time in a number of complex ways. It is scarcely possible to separate one kind of transition from another because of this overlapping. One of the most critical sets of transitions is associated with the passage from high school to post-secondary when so many other life changes may be occurring for an individual (Freure, 1992; Warren, 1978). Complicating this issue further is the notion that many students are not well prepared for the transition by their experience with school.

One of the difficulties with research in the area of student transitions from high school to post-secondary is that there has been very little specific research on that particular transition. The most notable exception is the work done by the National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience and Students in Transition under the directorship of John Gardiner. However, even here the focus is diluted because the center is concerned with several different kinds of transitions including ESL, Transfer, major changers, students returning, and senior year transitions. In fact, Gardiner lists ten different kinds of transitions in a
recent presentation (1997). Another problem with this research is the focus. The Center [above] has concentrated on evaluating programs which have been established to assist various students' transitions. They have not specifically been conducting open ended qualitative studies designed to explore the transition. This is also the case with several other studies of transition (Ogrosky, 1992; Klomovich, 1994; Horvath, 1992; Pearl, 1994). Thus much research, while it is quite valid and useful, is not particularly geared to enrich our basic understanding of the process and those factors which impact on students' perception of the experience.

It also happens that the majority of these studies are surveys which are statistically analyzed. Such research precludes the gathering of the rich base of intimate, multi-dimensional, emergent data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) which is so vital to a thorough understanding of ever swirling phenomena. This research does not show us the many combinations and permutations of the changes that student experience. Consequently, researchers have been obliged to look outside the field of education to enrich their understanding of the process of transition (Ahola-Sidaway, 1991, Tinto, 1986).

In the remainder of this chapter I indicate theoretical approaches to transitions based on anthropological concepts. Next I discuss transition from a theoretical perspective in an educational context. Then I outline transitions issues within the specific context of education showing how several authors argue that insufficient or inappropriate preparation in high school puts successful transition in jeopardy. Then I discuss Knowles's concept of andragogy and the promise it holds in easing student transitions.

Transitions and Passages

It is to Van Gennep, an anthropologist, that we owe the term 'rites of passage'(les rites de passage). In his pre-World War II text he classifies customs,
practices, and ceremonies associated with the transitions of an individual from one state or condition to another. He seeks to connect 'life transitions' to 'celestial passages' in a positivistic sense but declares that all the details for doing so are not in place (1909/1960, p. 4). Nor were the details to fall in place during his lifetime. Nonetheless in his sweeping, cross-cultural analysis he develops a conceptual framework both simple and profound for considering transitions or, more properly, the rites associated with transitions.

I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (or threshold) *rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *post-liminal rites*. (p. 21)

Van Gennep's focus is not on the individuals nor on the issues which confronted them. He is interested in the rites associated with their passage from one societal level to the next. These rites he more generally terms rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of incorporation (pp. 10-11). They are the ones most often employed by anthropologists like Raphael (1988). While Van Gennep intends to discuss rites involving significant life events from birth to death, Raphael's focus is on the transition of males from boyhood to manhood -- a process he, like Kett (1988), claims is taking much longer in this century than in previous centuries. In Raphael's ethnography, situated in Viet Nam-era America, he relies on Van Gennep's analysis to equate separation with death of the boy, adolescence with transition, and manhood with the rebirth of the male as man (p. 197).

It would be practical and tidy if life transitions and school transitions could be treated separately and discretely but I suspect that that is not the case. Changing places (Tucker, January, 1995), changing times, altering circumstances, reassessing status in new peer cultures (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996) all contribute to a widely divergent variety of transition issues.
Nevertheless, Van Gennep's tri-phasal concept can be used if we consider the high school stage as preliminal, the early period of the study phase as threshold or liminal (August through early fall), and the latter phase of the study as incorporation (fall through December). The phases can be no more precisely delineated than that since each student sensed incorporation to differing degrees at different times while one may not have sensed it at all. The dynamic of the participants in the study and the dynamics of the transitions involved determined the stages participants reached and their degree of comfort with those stages. Life and school transitions informed and interacted with one another.

Transitions come in many forms. One can see a transition, anthropologically speaking, from the work of Van Gennep, a positivist, to the work of McClaren, a critical ethnographer. In his doctoral study, McClaren describes the relationship between the rituals of the street and the rituals of the school for Portuguese students in a Roman Catholic school in Toronto. Significantly, his 1986 study, while using the language of Van Gennep, provides a detailed account of the school's efforts to make the students good workers and good Catholics. His is a study of the dynamics of conformity and resistance which does not conform to the three-phase approach for much of his rich critique. Curiously, he does adopt Van Gennep's approach in describing three phases of his doctoral study which he characterises as proposal, data collection, and analysis (1993). It is in this work which he powerfully reveals the tension between the organisation and the newcomers in the transition process. The ritual of transition is, in organisational terms, a process of acclimatising and indoctrinating very like the one described in Leemon's study of fraternities (1972). Although the model of three transitional phases is not used in Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan (1996) the concept of adolescents as a 'rite of passage' is deployed. Again one can see the tension between the 'pressure to conform' and nasty pranks and 'inverted values' particularly of boys in 'low tracks' (1995). This transition of dynamic tensions is very like McClaren's.
More recently, Ahola-Sidaway (1991) uses the Van Gennep lens to describe the socialisation process of new high school students naming the phases Pre-Entry, First Encounters, and Post-Entry. She also notes that the lens has been used by those who write in the "fields of anthropology, anthropology-and-education, and organisational behaviour" (p. 1). Her work reveals that strengthening the involvement of newcomers in the structures of the school could lead to a much enhanced sense of belonging and also school improvement.

The difficulty of separating transitions such as school to school from other kinds of simultaneously occurring transitions is noted by Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan (1996). They focus on three kinds of transitions, adolescents changing, societies' changing, and the junior high years transitioning. In terms of the progressive education of Freire (1994) and Hargreaves, Earl and Ryan (1996), schools are found wanting. Specifically, schools are found wanting in that they are still married to a stultifying "... modernistic model of specialisation and standardisation which has been rejected in other organisational workplaces..." (p. 140). Dewey (1896/1983) made a quite similar observation a century ago, "The benumbing, mechanical influence which is the serious evil of the average American school today is in full operation" (p. 411).

Another kind of transition is the focus of the published conversation between Ira Shor and Paulo Freire (1987). They are devoted to the issue of assisting students in making the transition from being passive learners dominated by an oppressive culture to being critical learners responsible for deciding how to engage the learning enterprise. For them the standard curriculum promotes passivity (p. 122) and establishes norms which control teachers as well as students (p. 136). In his *Culture Wars: School and Society in the Conservative Restoration, 1969-1984*, Ira Shor characterises 'vocational training', 'the war on illiteracy', and 'the war for excellence' as deliberate conservative agendas designed to stem the schooling-for-emancipation tide of the 1960's (1986). He
sees schools and students as victims of a conservative ideology which can paradoxically enshrine and ignore: "Saint Dewey has taken his place in the laundered halls of American honor, but you have to look long and hard to find his ideas practised in U. S. classrooms" (p. 48).

It is in the understanding of power that the transition issue and the postmodern discussion intersect. It is when we realise that power operates through agents and groups and individuals at various levels (Ryan, 1991) that we see how ubiquitous and convoluted issues of transition can become. Foucault's pivotal, postmodernist treatment of power --where human beings can inadvertently make themselves subjects-- provides a key strand in the issue of transitions where schools and society are pluralistic, diverse, and multidimensional.

There are a vast number of transitional processes which students are subjected to or part of at any particular point in their development. While educators will be primarily interested in the academic, developmental issues concerning school to post-secondary school transitions, there are many things which ought to be considered as having an impact on how well students make the adjustment from one level to the next. Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan (1996) in describing the need to reconceptualize transitional years schooling (grades 7-9) show that this reconceptualization is particularly difficult if educators are motivated to evaluate by using traditional modes of assessment. They address three kinds of transitions which adolescents face during those transition years. Firstly, the students are themselves changing physically and emotionally in dramatic fashion. Secondly, the society they are presently in is itself in a transitional process destabilizing traditional views of work, culture, family and education. Thirdly, grades 7-9 schooling is especially focused on transition in that teachers are specifically attempting to direct children away from what they perceive to be elementary school habits and attitudes towards what they perceive to be more mature high school procedures. This preparation and
change orientation is also the theme of an ongoing, empirical study by Haughey, Noonan, and Fenwick (1996) who found that teachers, regardless of teaching style or attitude about class control, were in accord in that these were the key transitional years where students had to learn to 'be mature and accept responsibility', ideas which apparently were not emphasized in previous schooling.

Each year, or at least each phase, of schooling presents significant challenges and changes for students (Freure, 1991). Moreover, the transition from any type of schooling to the next is fraught with the need for reshaping meaning and structure for the student. Something which was critical in one institution is insignificant in another. There are new friends, new enemies, new spaces which threaten, support or leave one cold. Instruction is vastly or moderately different, always readjusted, always reframed and in need of reframing. Instructors tend to denigrate the value of the curriculum and the method of the previous school (Haughey, Noonan & Fenwick, 1996). To imply that the period spanning grade seven to grade nine is the most significant time of transition is misleading. Critical changes occur at every level in the educational system. They also occur in most complex and convoluted ways as a result of factors which have nothing to do with educational designs; issues of family, relationships, health, money, addictions, possessions, changing hopes and dreams, all have their impacts on the success of a student's transition. Tinto (1987) contends that the high school and the early phase of post-secondary is just as significant a transition period for students as the 'transition years' period.

An Ontario study entitled The Specialization Years: Grade 10 to Graduation (Freure, et al., 1991) groups the schooling phases as Early schooling to Kindergarten, Formative years (grades one to six), Transition years (grades seven to nine), and Specialization years (grades 10 to graduation). In this study Freure maintains that these 'specialization years' encompass a wide variety of learners most of whom are "exploring career and lifestyle
opportunities in preparation for adult roles in colleges and work” (p. 2). Again there is the stress on preparation. This study treats the high school years as a transition phase.

In reporting on a national study sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School principals, Weldy (1990) observes that school teams in the project identified the following troublesome transition points:

- Leaving home to begin school
- Moving from part-day . . . programs to full-day primary school
- Moving from primary to upper elementary grades . . .
- Changing from self-contained classes to departmentalized classes
- Changing school buildings
- Moving to school level where . . . the instructional process is different
- Leaving secondary school and moving to independent college
- Moving from one community to another (p. 62)

These are not neat, mutually exclusive, transitions. Many of these changes occur in combination. They are not necessarily anxiety-producing as Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan point out (1996), yet there are problems which persist across transfer such as " . . . disturbing declines in student progress" (p. 39) and lack of practice at being independent learners (Tucker, 1995a). The notion that being independent learners can ameliorate problems with transition is echoed elsewhere (Freure, 1991; Knowles, 1980, 1985, and 1990; Snelgrove, 1983).

Problems with Transitions in Education

Transition problems may appear before post-secondary institutions could have much influence on the students who will be attending. The habits,
customs, and practices which students have developed, and which the high school has helped them develop, have an impact on the way they engage the post-secondary institutions. Some argue that this is a negative impact. Hare suggests that a low dropout rate is beginning "... to replace education as the goal of schooling" (1993, p. 29). Where dropout rates are alarming, as they are in Newfoundland, worrying about them can consume a great deal of time. Many students fail to complete high school transitions to the world of work or post-secondary institutions. Many are delayed for some years or are entirely unsuccessful. Weldy (1990) points out that schools do not have a good record in helping students move from one educational setting to the next stating that several "... current reform reports and the educational critics have pointed at the school's failure to provide strong school transitions, resulting in poor achievement and poor social adjustment" (p. 60). Rice (1997) argues that educators do not take the effect of transition seriously enough so that the discontinuities associated with transition are little known or appreciated (p. 403).

Sheppard, in his empirical study of the transitions of students from high school history courses to university history courses, reports that many students felt that too much was done for them in high school. Several students felt that it was unnecessary to read assigned work simply because the history teachers would "... often summarize the readings later in the week" (1993, p. 108). Moreover "A significant portion were uncomfortable with their preparation for tutorial work, note-taking, and essay writing. More say they were unprepared for the amount of reading at university" (p. 107). Moreover, Glines and Long (1992) argue that transitions cannot be improved simply by making slight alterations. Simple adjustments to teaching and administrative practices are not enough to make education responsive to the 'vast changes' in the world. They further suggest that 'reforming and restructuring' will have 'limited success'. They maintain that present teaching practices can create a number of problems for students which continue and echo across levels of schooling. Keefe maintains
that certain classroom practices enhance competition for marks, are inefficient, and detract from a sense of the value of learning (1988). Ryan argues that our rapidly altering social landscape embodies vast, ubiquitous changes which would have been"...unthinkable only a decade ago." He also suggests that changes in school populations, the 'information explosion,' and the effect of a plethora of competing educational philosophies "...undermine those who would seek orderly and neat school environments" (1995 p. 38). The need for secondary and post-secondary institutions to direct attention on transitions to and from their institutions is a refrain which has become a chorus in the literature which touches on transitions (Upcraft & Gardiner, 1989; Sheppard, 1993; Glines & Long, 1992; Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996; Panitz, 1996).

Many writers suggest that high school students are ill prepared to continue study in post-secondary institutions (Hare, 1993; Jackson, 1985; Glines and Long, 1992; Kelly, 1988; Knowles, 1975; 1980; 1985; and 1990; Kozol, 1975; Miller, 1983; Sheppard, 1993: Snelgrove, 1983; Tucker, 1995b; Weldy, 1990; Barrett, 1993). Cropley suggests that transmission and recall play much too large a part in the strategy of many high school courses (1977, p.123). The examination of course outlines, tests, assignments and various evaluation criteria appears to support this observation. Snelgrove (1983) states that the curriculum is too transmission oriented. Other writers insist that knowledge transmission is not the essential function of the teacher. To relinquish this sense of the teacher's role as filler of vessels, it is necessary for teachers to teach students how "...to teach themselves" (Dunn, 1990, p. 18). Hare deals with precisely this issue:

Humility in teaching involves admitting that the student can grow into an adult capable of critically and independently assessing what he or she has been taught, and education needs to keep this option open. (1993, p. 43)
Weldy states that something unfortunate happens to students between middle school and high school. They learn that learning is memorizing and education is drudgery. In the United States Weldy is the national project director for "Strengthening School Transitions for Students K-13." This project was jointly sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, and the National Association of College Admission Counselors. He states that:

All students need assistance and support in making these transitions. Without support and guidance, some students flounder, fail, and drop out. School achievement is adversely affected when school programs are not strongly connected with well-articulated curricula, two-way communication, and guidance and administrative provisions for smooth transitions. (1990, p. 60)

Students who drop out for lack of interest or failure, as well as those who graduate, sense that there is something not quite right about the school system. As Warren points out "... the most recent graduates from the schools were among those who were least satisfied with the quality of education in their local schools" (1978, p. 78). Snelgrove maintains that "... many students feel unwanted and alienated from the general life of the school" (1983, p. 21). Frequently they drop out because they cannot abide school. For some the school experience is so miserable that they are prepared to sacrifice an unknown future to relieve a present frustration. In his discussion of lifelong learning Cropley states that, "In terms of classroom practice, lifelong education will involve a shift in emphasis away from transmission of fixed knowledge to the imparting of fundamental skills, above all learning to learn" (1977, p. 129).
As educators, we have often not been mindful of the various ways that individuals react to the learning tasks which are presented to them. If the task is confined to memorizing who said what in a certain play, we cannot make the claim that the student's response to the literary genre is being made to seem important. As Zahn says, "As educators, we are interested in changing behavior through giving new experiences" (1967, p. 28). This change in behavior implies that the material is more than simply remembered, it should engage the student's interest and impact on the student's value system:

An educational activity, we may say, is one which is intended to foster, and in fact does foster, the highest development of individuals as persons. Education is intended to enable people really to live more intensively and extensively, to manifest in themselves a higher quality of life, to live more abundantly. Education is essentially concerned with our growth as persons. (Paterson, 1979, p.15)

Does education, in fact, foster our growth as persons? While, broadly speaking, it may, some argue that certain commonplace educational practices do not. In a study conducted in 1983 at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Snelgrove notes that "In far too many cases teachers still rely heavily on lecturing, using only the prescribed textbook, and emphasizing rote memorization" (p.22). He also insists that "...teachers must concentrate on encouraging students to discover things for themselves" (p. 28). This tradition of teaching things, as if knowledge were a quantity, is termed 'mimetic' by Jackson. By this he means knowledge which was discovered by another and passed on to the student. This tradition deals with "secondhand knowledge' which the student must learn but may not be given time to discover" (1986, p. 117). There is no pedagogical or philosophical problem with having students learn facts and procedures, but if the method of teaching these things
presupposes that the student must be willing to simply absorb, then the process for many leads to a profound lack of enthusiasm for learning.

Weinstein (1988) is also concerned with teaching knowledge as so much stuff. In her discussion of elaboration learning strategies, she says that "When teachers promote rote memorization as a single strategy, they foster only limited short-term retention of information" (p. 17). Knowledge has a strong place in education, but without process and without understanding, students may have difficulty developing those kinds of skills which enable them to become independent learners. Knowles, who is generally credited with the popularization of the term 'andragogy' (Cross, 1982), is quite explicit in describing the problem created by the secondary school system:

Students have almost every minute of their time designed for them. They are told what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and for how long. As a result they make few contributions of their own initiative; they learn nothing of disciplining their own behavior; they take no responsibility for their education; and they graduate still completely unprepared for the real tasks of adulthood (1985, p. 368).

Knowles insists that schools have created a dependency and that teaching independent learning ought to be an important goal of early schooling (1985). Zahn (1967) also claims that learning how to learn must be done when the student is young because "... difficulties arise when they must unlearn old habits and attitudes" (p. 30). Other writers recognize the need for dramatic rethinking of our educational attitudes and practices. Cropley (1977) suggests that while it is extreme to posit that schooling should be abolished "... drastic curricular changes ..." must take place. Specifically, he recommends that greater emphasis is needed on fostering motivation and less on cognition (p. 129). This is echoed by Tough (1971) who says that, "If our general picture of
adult and out-of-school youth learning is accurate, then major changes are needed in various institutions of education” (p. 147).

Essentially, this lack of adequate learning-how-to-learn would appear to create a difficulty for students who make, or attempt to make, the transition from secondary to post-secondary school. If they have difficulty with establishing learning tasks and plans or if they are dependent on the teacher, then entering a learning institution which assumed that its participants had developed those skills, would create difficulty for the institution and the participating student.

Students or Children?

As I began my exploration into the issue of student transition I had difficulty finding those descriptors which would lead me to the particular issue of student transition that concerned me. Wondering if high school teachers hadn’t been doing too much of the thinking and planning for students I was pleased to find the work of Malcolm Knowles. He has been arguing that students need to be treated more as independent learners for some time. Over the course of his publications he became more and more convinced that adult education principles are applicable to public school. I was struck by the essential democracy he advocates. As shall be seen in the methodology section his questions helped guide me to construct the initial questions for participants. His work has considerable influence on my thinking and preparation for this research, at least in its initial stages.

Initially I reasoned that there was a gap between institutions which could be closed, at least in part, if actors at the various levels of education agreed on the nature, purpose, and process of learning. In particular, I thought that schools would do well to have a close look at the educational requirements of post-secondary learning institutions and attempt to assist students with meeting the requirements at those institutions. When I read Knowles’s work I saw that he
had been designing a common set of understandings about learning which deal with the practice of education in a way that transitions would become much more fluid. In his seminal work in the field of adult education, Knowles adopts the concept or theory of andragogy (Selman & Dampier, 1991). This notion places pedagogy and 'andragogy' poles apart on a continuum, where pedagogy is the teaching of children and andragogy is the teaching of adults. In his oft-quoted text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paolo Freire thoroughly develops the problem of the kind of pedagogy Knowles is writing about. While Knowles presents andragogy as the solution, being an extension of and inclusive of the vessel-filling pedagogy, Freire (1970) develops the notion of 'liberating education' which frees students, as opposed to the 'banking' concept where the teacher deposits the gift of information into students. Both these teachers see great problems with teaching students as though students were receivers of knowledge not knowledge makers, the most significant problem being the lesson taught by that style of teaching. Shor and Freire argue that education is authoritarian as is society at large and it is this authoritarianism which inhibits students' ability to think independently (1987).

These notions that education is frequently too transmission oriented are founded in the literature and can be demonstrated empirically. In two recent studies of transition, data indicated that six students who had attended high school on the Port-au-Port peninsula of Newfoundland and an unknown number of students who were attending high school in central Toronto had a number of difficulties with pedagogical teaching practices as described by Malcolm Knowles (1985). Respondents' feelings in the Newfoundland study are at one with the attitudes expressed by Michael Shaughnessy, program director of Central Toronto Youth Services, on behalf of his clients. In the Newfoundland study, "...Respondents felt that too much was decided for them and that this deciding made them more dependent than was necessary or wise" (Tucker, 1995b, p.52). This is the same notion that Shaugnessy describes as 'tyranny':
A lot of the kids here have this idea of this external locus of control where they feel the teacher is in control or the authorities are in control or their parents are in control or the drugs are in control. (Tucker, 1995a)

In both settings students feel that teachers are attempting to fit them into a certain routine with learning outcomes planned and behaviors prescribed. Students, on the other hand, are not responding in predictable ways to the efforts of their teachers. There is the sense that teachers in both settings live in a world of 'ought' which is quite different from the students' world of 'is'.

Andragogy, with its implication that learners must each independently construct reality in that sense which Derrida leads us (Usher & Edwards, 1994, pp. 144-5), is much more fitting as an educational theory for secondary schools than is pedagogy which has the learner as 'vessel' or 'victim' regardless of how gilded the educational cage happens to be. Knowles attempts to differentiate between those sets of ideas that one commonly associates with the teaching of children and those sets of ideas which one associates with the teaching of adults. To accomplish this he develops the notion that adults and children learn differently:

... andragogy is premised on at least four critical assumptions about the characteristics of learners that are different from the assumptions on which traditional pedagogy is premised. These assumptions are that as individuals mature: (1) their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward being a self-directed human being; (2) they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning; (3) their readiness to learn becomes oriented
increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and (4) their perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of performance-centredness (Knowles, 1970, p. 39).

Knowles (1985, pp. 8-9) defines the learner as a submissive person in a pedagogical paradigm. The learner is dependent and inexperienced, ready to advance when old enough and motivated chiefly by external pressures. Knowles acknowledges that this view of the learner is controversial (1985) but feels he has to explain a tradition in education which one associates with education in secondary schools. The pedagogical tradition and the andragogical tradition overlap. "I feel more comfortable thinking of it [andragogy] as a system of concepts that, in fact, incorporates pedagogy rather than opposing it. . . ." (pp. 7-8).

Summary

Transitions are multitudinous. Traditionally they have been explored more rigorously by anthropologists than by educators to study those ceremonies that mark the passage of an individual from one social status to another. An anthropological tri-phasic model has been adopted by a number of educational researchers as a means of conceptualizing stages of transition. Much of the work by educators has concentrated on either the public school system or the post-secondary educational system. In the post-secondary studies the majority have sought to determine how students have adjusted to the new school environment rather than comparing the two levels. The result in many of these studies has caused many observers to feel that schools do not prepare students adequately for the move to the next level of schooling. Consequently,
many researchers have proposed that educational reform embody new notions of the nature of learning and the learner. These notions have generally provided for the learner having a greater role in the educational process both for the effectiveness of learning and the facilitating of transition.
Chapter Three--Methodology

Design of the Study

The central purpose of this study was to explore the transitions of selected students. It also incorporated assisting students with the process. The 'rites of passage' stages of pre-entry, entry, and socialization (Van Gennep 1909/1960; Ahola-Sidaway, 1991) are implicit in the design of this study. In order to get a sense of what students anticipated I conducted initial interviews prior to orientation and registration. In order to understand the unfolding process I gathered data throughout the remainder of the first term in a qualitative inquiry (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The socialization process was not simply observed but rather explored, observed, and assisted. I recorded, listened, and acted as a sometime advisor whenever that seemed to be required of me. Theory and practice were developed together, one informing the other (Van Manen, 1990). The case study revealed the stories of the students gleaned in semi-structured interviews as described by Merriam (1988). The interviewing style was phenomenological (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In this regard Christman (1986) writes:

A central characteristic of an ethnographic/ qualitative/case study approach is that it expands rather than reduces. In order to understand the case in its totality the researcher attends a myriad of descriptive and theoretical problems because, in its natural setting, the boundaries between a phenomenon and its context... are not clear. (p. 9)

In the remainder of this chapter I first elaborate on the overall procedures and the focus areas which were used to begin and orient the interview process. Next, I outline the participant selection process and data collecting techniques including the rationale for selection of each of these techniques. Finally, I
discuss data analysis processes, the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of
the data and outline of the phases of research.

Procedures

I conducted the inquiry in that transition period of the five months from
August to December. This period was chosen to encompass the fall term.
August was a useful time to begin the study since students had completed high
school and made initial arrangements to attend a post-secondary educational
institution. They had not begun the orientation process or registered so that
confusing period of settling in had not begun. Generally, they had vaguely
formed impressions of what was required --these impressions I wished to
capture. I arranged individual interviews for August 15th and 16th and recorded
initial impressions.

During the fall term, I had individual interviews with the five students
twice each month. I also conducted twice-monthly Transition Research Team
meetings with three of the five students. Interviews and meetings were taped
and transcribed in their entirety. Journals and field notes were kept in the
manner described by Halpem (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and Merriam (1988). The
data collection continued until mid-December.

One could argue that transition issues are affected by events which
occurred many years before this time or many years after but for the purposes of
this study the critical events of this particular transition are covered. The
experiences embedded in this period included orientation events, registration,
course selection, first classes, first sustained attendance at the new institution, a
complete first term, and the reactions to that term. This may not be the most
important time in the student's life but it proved to be a time full of dramatic,
transitional events.
Focus Areas

As students mature they develop psychologically, socially, emotionally, educationally, and physically to varying degrees at varying rates assisted or not as the case may be by the adults involved with them. As Ahola-Sidaway has pointed out, it is important for those who research in the area of transitions not to view "...newcomer socialization from too narrow a perspective ... solely as a problem of articulation and orientation" (1991, p. 28).

As the study proceeded not only did design detail and theory emerge, domains of transitional issues also emerged. Such issues as distance from home, living arrangements, career choice, and commuting distance proved to be as important as those listed below. The following focus areas, developed as a starting point for discussion with participants, are explorations and interpretations of mine based primarily on the work of Knowles (1975, 1980, 1985, 1990) and Freire (1970, 1994) and secondarily on the work of Cross (1982) and Tucker (1995b). I also draw on the work of others as indicated where appropriate. The headings below are taken directly from Cross (1982).

Self-Concept Younger learners look to the parent or teacher for approval while older students typically have more faith in their own sense of accomplishment (Cross, 1982). As learners mature new abilities to establish goals are anticipated while timelines and plans can be set with increasing confidence. Developing learners increase in ability to handle responsibility and gain confidence in judgment. They are more and more able to work alone and typically look forward to leaving home and the independence that is associated with that move.

Experience Younger students are presented with texts to discuss and analyze. Information is brought to them whereas more adult learners can be expected to
use experiential learning (Selman & Dampier, 1991). Mature learners prefer projects to textbooks. They can be expected to contribute to planning and evaluating courses.

Knowledge Younger students have been variously treated as 'empty vessels' to be filled with knowledge which is 'banked' (Freire, 1970) for some unspecified use later at some unspecified time. As students mature, knowledge is put to practical use in projects (Knowles, 1994; Tough, 1979). While younger students can be enticed to learn by making tasks interesting, mature learners need to see that course content has meaningful application to future learning projects, especially vocational projects.

Learning Orientation Typically, secondary students learn school subjects or disciplines separately. Each has separate requirements and separate knowledge to be discretely learned. As students mature they can draw on various disciplines to assemble projects and use organized patterns which they develop themselves (Tough, 1979; Knowles, 1990). Adults like to see connections between disciplines. Typically they form general conclusions across various subjects and observations, moving from projects of content to projects of point of view. They are closer in age and experience to educators and are less and less likely to accept information based on authority. Mature learners accept responsibility to prepare for tests.

Control Younger students are given rules, procedures, and sanctions associated with these. They are taught to behave as they are told to behave, consequently, insubordination is a serious offense at this stage. As students become independent learners they exercise more self-control becoming more 'responsible' (Haughey, Noonan, & Fenwick, 1996) and considerate of the learning needs of others. They are better able to work regardless of distractions and expect to be responsible for completing learning tasks without being told to
do so. Since they have negotiated learning outcomes they have a greater sense of responsibility for completing them.

Planning Secondary school students rarely get involved in planning except to express delight or boredom as a particular activity unfolds or is announced (Snelgrove, 1983; Kelly, 1988). Young adults learn best when specific projects can be developed in small groups with students designing learning goals as well as activities in collaboration with the instructor (Knowles, 1990). Increasingly, evaluation and content are linked, planning and purposes are shared with others.

Activities Lectures, movies, videos, silent reading and other techniques designed to transmit knowledge; all these abound in secondary school. Moreover, the selection of these activities is generally the teacher’s responsibility (Freire, 1970). Mature learners do not have all information presented in class. In post-secondary education learners are expected to find information outside class time and outside class texts. Mature students are expected to develop knowledge and meaning connections which they can articulate (Knowles, 1990). Note taking becomes intrinsically driven.

Evaluation In secondary school the teacher, or groups of teachers, are responsible for evaluation of students. While that is quite often the case in post-secondary educational institutions there are more opportunities for students to negotiate areas or weights of various aspects of evaluation (Knowles, 1990). Collaborative evaluation techniques are more and more appropriate while adults are more able to tolerate a variety of evaluation techniques and procedures. Adults like to have more choice in the substance as well as the procedure of evaluation.

While these considerations served as a starting point for our discussions, we really did not depend much on them. Participants’ issues directed the nature
of the discussion within sessions and from session to session. I realize now that
the concepts above need not have been presented to students during the
process since I had only to ask them how things were to get a flood of
responses which were vastly interesting and informative. I reacted, listened, and
responded to their concerns while often encouraging them to reflect back on
their high school experiences as well as the experiences of the first term.

Participant Selection Process

During July I arranged, through a colleague, to advertise in a local
community college asking for volunteers to participate in the study. The registrar
of the college randomly selected the names of forty first year students and
mailed the advertisement (Appendix A) on my behalf. At the same time I
arranged through another colleague, who was a high school administrator, to
invite the participation of high school students who were about to attend
university. On my behalf, the high school administrator invited students to
participate and arranged the time and place for initial interviews. All prospective
participants received a copy of my advertisement in which the project was
described, participation was encouraged, and conditions were listed (Appendix
A).

Through these means one participant who had enrolled in community
college volunteered while four university students were found. The community
college student did not wish to be part of the transition research team since she
would have felt uncomfortable as the only community college participant. She
agreed to continue in the study in all other regards. The remaining four
participants became the transition research team until early in the study one of
them became beset by commuting concerns and decided to come more often
than the others but not to the night time meetings.
I had felt that the optimum number of student participants would be five. This would allow me to spend a portion of a day every second week with a different student, shadowing, interviewing, as well as reading and reacting to journals. I had been concerned about the possibility of the advertisement process generating more offers of participation than I could accommodate. With that possibility in mind I was prepared to select participants along a first-come-first-served basis, and post-secondary institutional criteria, but since there were only five volunteers to participate in the study all could be included.

The Participants

Four of the participants knew each other before the study began because of the recruitment process. All graduated from the same high school in a small town which was centred in farming country. All attended the same university. Michelle and Shane had been going steady for a year and began living together at the start of the university year. Donna and Elaine were acquainted but not close friends. The other student, Trudy, who was recruited through the advertisement, knew nothing of the others and is yet to meet any of them.

*Donna* I was immediately impressed with Donna’s enthusiasm. She is the kind of person who sparkles with energy and confidence. Even though she speaks rapidly covering many topics in a short time span, she displays the ability to focus on doing those things which are appropriate for the moment, ignoring anything which does not serve her purpose. She loves to read, particularly about the Celts, archeology, history and the East. While she is healthy and robust she detests exercise classes and sports having the confidence not to be drawn into the fad of fitness. If she feels like eating half a cheesecake, she does so without a tinge of guilt. Her relationship with her parents appears to be solid and comfortable. She appreciates their support and relies on them in a moderate, mutually respectful fashion. She is tireless, doing everything with great gusto whether it be socializing or studying.
It seems odd to me that of all participants she detested high school most vehemently and consistently. She won several awards and scholarships in her final year of study but would not have gone to commencement ceremony if it were not for the chore of collecting them. She has no desire to visit the old high school even though she was dramatically successful with academic work. Nevertheless she claims to maintain contact with many of her high school peers while having developed a solid network of friends in university. Donna is easy to like and easy to admire.

**Trudy**

Trudy is a practical person who seemed shy when I first met her. She was not eager to attend community college. Because it was a second choice, she was not enthusiastic about it in the beginning. Even though she soon grew to like college, she nevertheless views it in a business-like way. Living in the metropolitan centre she never even considered moving away to go to school even though her older sister had done so. She was much too conscious of wasting money. She is managing to attend school, work, and save money at the same time. Even though her parents’ attitudes sometimes irritate her it makes no sense to her to even contemplate living on her own or in residence.

Her efficiency and dependability has made her quite valued by her employer. In the course of the study I discovered she believes that students should be responsible about study, doing the work that is prescribed. She does not believe that the purpose of schooling has much to do with exploration. For her it is a question of picking a course that will lead to a career. Her academic record was mixed in high school and it remains so in community college. Her high school marks were mediocre. She had difficulty with math in high school but finds the business math course a joy. While Donna swims in a sea of friends, Trudy is much more likely to spend a great deal of time with just one.
Shane Shane's dream is to play volleyball for Canada's Olympic team. School never loomed large in his thinking. In fact, it was not even in second place. Second place was held by his need to make connections. He was constantly studying relationships in school. Was he with the right friends? Was he behaving the way people thought he should? Was he going to embarrass himself in front of his classmates? His high school years are marked by his developing a strong concern about impressions, so strong that he developed an aversion toward speaking in front of seminar-sized groups. This studying of groups is still powerfully present in university. He and Michelle, his roommate, constantly discuss the way they relate. His first connections with the volleyball team were characterized by his fitting himself in and studying the way he ought to behave.

He appears self-assured but he is anything but. A tall, comely young man who wears scholarly spectacles and speaks softly and thoughtfully, he is constantly wondering how he is doing and how he is viewed. He is extremely sensitive and is easily hurt by even a casual questioning of his motives. His career intentions were unclear and unfocused.

Michelle Michelle, who is Shane's partner, is a quiet and thoughtful person. She is also athletic and energetic with an eagerness to learn new ideas. Her career plans are unsettled but she is inclined towards helping people in some fashion or another. She admits to having been rebellious in her earlier teen years. Even now she takes nothing at face value, questioning everything for meaning and hidden meaning. She is sensitive and caring. She has a special regard for her autistic brother but her feelings are mixed because she, more than any other participant, has a strong desire to leave home, town and school, especially school. She claims to have slept through several classes and skipped several classes. She was, however, energized and motivated by a women's studies course she had taken, and she continues to pursue this study interest at university.
She expects to develop an identity. She’s had enough of the small town and the sameness of the culture. She wants to jettison much of the closeness but, paradoxically, she wants to keep the security of her relationship with Shane. While she wants the security of the relationship she also struggles for voice, substance, and fair play with him. She makes it clear that she is not the type to accept any slight to her personhood or her womanhood.

*Elaine*    Elaine’s feelings run deep. She is able to render the group speechless by the depth of feeling she displays. Normally these feelings are frustration, confusion, or despair. She is not specifically interested in attending university. She does not care for the kind of academic challenge her teachers appear to have encouraged. She feels betrayed by their enthusiasm for her talent. She does not anticipate enjoying her first term.

Elaine is very concerned about the impression she makes on others. She is also very concerned about doing her duty. She feels obliged to go to work even when she feels ill. She has accepted the challenge of university, so she will go, not with enthusiasm, but from a sense of duty. She is also very specific in her attitudes about behavior. She is shocked by peers’ attitudes with regard to drinking, drugs, and sex. She is unsure about orientation week, transportation, funding, courses, and careers. Overall, she is overwhelmed by the sense that she has bad luck.

The Post-Secondary Institutions

Four participants were enrolled in a large university in a large Canadian city. This institution has many residence colleges and many faculties, each with its own character and culture. It is quite possible for a student on this campus to find a quiet place to study. It is also quite possible for a student to have difficulty in becoming acclimatized because even by North American standards the
enrollment is large. There are several libraries; some are modern, some are not. There are a multitude of cafeterias, clubs, and causes. One student was enrolled in a community college in the same North American city. It is a much smaller institution in a setting away from bustle. There are a small number of program offerings to a campus population where it is possible for students to know a large percentage of their peers. One can walk around the campus in a short period of time and learn all the buildings and their function, first hand, in less than half a day. It is a campus renowned for being friendly. It has one cafeteria and one library.

Data Collection Techniques

During the course of the study I focused attention on the transitional issues developed in the conceptual framework though many issues emerged from participants' perceptions of their experiences. In the transition team meetings, agenda items were developed collaboratively while for individual interviews the semi-structured interview process (Merriam, 1988) allowed participants to discuss freely emerging themes of interest or concern. The questions which emerged from this research focus were broad. I sought student perceptions of the process without making any attempt to verify their assertions. For purposes of this study it was only necessary to determine their perceptions of issues affecting transitions, nothing more (Christman, 1986). I repeatedly asked participants to reflect on events leading up to this period which seemed to affect their preparedness for post-secondary education (Knowles, 1990). While the discussions ranged far and wide, responding to participant agendas, I was most interested in those reflections which seemed to relate to high school practice.
In-Depth Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were a fundamental data gathering method in this study as they commonly are in qualitative studies (Merriam, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Giesne & Peshkin, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Even though other data gathering methods were employed, these were critical to the study. At an individual interview I was able to focus exclusively on the issues raised by one participant, exploring transition on that individual basis. At these interviews participants could converse with me without having to be concerned about allowing time for other participants or what other participants thought of their comments.

In the initial interviews I established rapport by explaining the study and my interest in the study. I gave each participant a copy of the focus areas so that they would have a sense of the kinds of things I wanted to discuss with them. After they read the document I ascertained that they were still interested in the study. In all cases they affirmed that they were. I then asked them to read and sign a copy of the consent form (Appendix E). Thereafter I began the semi-structured interview based on the focus areas (Merriam, 1988). I asked general questions glancing at the sheet as the conversation lapsed. The conversation was more unstructured than structured since I would pursue conversational leads presented by the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). At the end of each interview I noted specific points or areas to discuss at the next meeting. I also included comments on the setting, the mood, and circumstances of the meeting. These fieldnotes were recorded in the casebook, a journal I kept throughout all phases of the study after the fashion described by Merriam (1991). She presents a checklist of elements for participant observation which served as a useful guide. The list is made up of setting, participants, activities, and interactions, frequency and duration (of a situation or activity), and subtle factors (p. 90). These subtle factors proved interesting and valuable. It included such things as looks of exasperation between Michelle and Shane, eyes filling
with tears, and sighs. All of these being an integral part of natural communication. All were noted as they were observed or immediately after the session.

In subsequent interviews I reviewed issues presented at the previous interview, and asked what concerns students had. Quite frequently, the conversations developed in such a way that the focus area sheet was not used very much. Since I did not want participants to merely answer questions which I posed, I followed issues which they had presented. The most striking example of an emerging issue was probably Community College Stigma. Had we adhered to the questions implicit on the focus areas sheet that issue would not have emerged. As it was, it became a very powerful important issue for some.

Transition Research Team Meetings

Since I planned to meet with students frequently through the term to gauge how they were becoming settled or incorporated (Van Gennep 1909/1960) and since I wanted the study to provide them with an opportunity to discuss their progress, I felt that group meetings would benefit both the study and the students. Meetings would allow them to see how others were handling transitions issues and allow them to offer and receive advice on those issues. I also felt that the meetings would provide me with another way in which I could observe participants since they would present issues in a slightly different way when in a group situation. When they reacted to one another I could have the benefit of observing these reactions, thus enriching the triangulation process.

These became a series of discussions which touched on many areas. Issues such as accommodation, money problems, loneliness, distance to commute, and the tensions of old and new relationships, while not directly related to education, had a powerful impact on transition and were discussed as they occurred to the participants. When issues become too personal, involving
other family members, or when a participant became sad or upset about something which was being discussed, the topic was set aside to be discussed in an individual interview.

Typically, the meetings would be scheduled for one hour. Each student participant was given time to review the events since the previous meeting, noting problems or issues of concern. Other participants would then make comments, suggestions, or offers of help as the occasions warranted. On a number of occasions participants would help one another by offering emotional support. Sometimes that support would simply be a matter of assuring one another that doubt and anxiety were faced by many students. At other times the help would be as simple as directions, advice about places to study, or advice about how to study.

Impromptu Meetings

All members of the team visited me to discuss a particular problem, concern or insight. These impromptu meetings were not taped but field notes were kept except in one case where a participant wished to have a private discussion off the record. Other impromptu contacts were by telephone or e-mail. Student participants initiated these contacts turning to me as mentor in their transition process.

This research embodies interesting tensions in method and ethics. The offering of listening services had the potential of putting me a position of hearing more than a participant had intended. In the course of the liminal phase this unintended hearing was the case with Elaine. During a two hour impromptu meeting with her on 22 October it was obvious that she was in turmoil. It was also obvious that I could have taped our conversation or at least made copious notes since she was upset and might not have thought to protect herself. However, it was also obvious that to tape the conversation would have strained
ethics. She came to see me to talk about personal and family matters. As we began to talk I said I would not write about the substance of our discussion unless she made the same comments elsewhere. This seemed to lessen her anxiety enough so that we could talk for two hours, first in my office and then in the noisy anonymity of a crowded cafeteria where she knew no one else. I rendered what support I could, gratified that the research design had incorporated the opportunity for such assistance to be legitimized.

In a broader sense this visit of Elaine's reveals her wisdom in seeking assistance. This acknowledgment of a problem and the suffering through it characterizes her whole term, indeed her whole year, as I discovered during a member check session in April 1997.

Journals

Each student participant was asked to keep a journal which incorporated reflections upon transition issues, reactions to meetings and interviews, and any other insights each might have on the first term experience. Two of them did so while the others demurred. I did not insist because I reasoned that they were giving me a great deal of time; I mentioned the journal on three occasions and then decided not to force the issue. For the two students who did make journal entries those entries became an opportunity for reflective voice in the Vygotskian fashion assisting students to conceptualize the transition and assisting them to develop the means to navigate it (Townsend, 1995). For one respondent in particular it provided a rich field of data for observing the change in the way she responded to challenges in the transition process. It assisted in the 'triangulation' process since the journal provided an opportunity for unhurried, reflective communication (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This type of communication is supported by Van Manen who argues that a person is unable to reflect and act at the same time, "phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective" (1990, p. 10).
Shadowing

This was the least utilized of the data gathering processes simply because so much data were gleaned through other means. In each case I spent time on campus with each of the participants. I went to their places of study but attended no classes. I visited the buildings and rooms where classes were held. We had coffee where they typically went to have coffee. We strolled the campuses together visiting any places that they used often. Through this means I achieved some insights into the kinds of places that they liked or hated. The conversations which took place during these strolls were not taped so after each shadowing session I noted my impressions in the casebook.

Document Analysis

While the vast bulk of data were transcriptions, there were some documents which were used to augment the picture presented in the interview and meetings processes. The journals themselves, completed by only two of the participants, were used to gain insight into the day-to-day issues, especially in Elaine’s case. Her entries profiled certain impressions which were revealed only in that context. There were also e-mail transmissions which assisted in gaining a full impression. E-mail communication has interesting characteristics in that it combines the intimacy and immediacy of conversation with the distance of written communication. The result can often be that the resultant communication is different from any other form. In Elaine’s case, e-mail was poetically shaped and heartfelt. I also read the student newspapers to gain a sense of the communication environment of participants but since I did not question participants as to their reading habits I could not assume that any of them had read any of the newspapers. In the shadowing sessions I read the signs and posters which abounded in those areas which participants frequented. Again this assisted my impression of the places. It did not
necessarily imply that participants were actively engaged in the communication. In the interview data, however, it was revealed that Donna read a great deal of broadcast print material while Elaine never referred to it. During two of the shadowing sessions with Shane I was also able to obtain print material which described the gymnasium where he spent several hours a day. This was very useful in that it gave me a sense of the controlled and optimistic environment that helped him find stability. These sources of data were minor but valuable complements to others, filling in gaps, rounding out impressions, and assisting with triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Data Analysis Procedures

After each interview or meeting the encounter was transcribed. When transcriptions of the preliminal phases were complete the data were analyzed using the unitize/categorize method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data were read in their entirety. Field notes, transcripts, e-mail conversations and journals were then ‘carded’. Each utterance which seemed to have any significance was recorded on its own three by five card without regard to how well it suited the focus questions. One such card was a journal entry, “finally slept full night.” Another was:

I kinda got screwed out of Fine Arts. They're accepting about 100 and about 250 applied. So if I wanna do fine arts, I have to go somewhere else. I talked to the athletic department, the Fine Arts department, and I talked to the registrar. They can't do anything. It's all computerized. But I'm not too worried right now. . . . I don't really know what I want to do. I may get into occupational therapy. (9 Sep)

It did not matter if the unit of thought contained many words or few words; it was more a question of whether or not the utterance constituted a complete
thought. The unitizing process generated approximately 200 cards for the preliminal phase of the study (several times that number for the balance of the study). On completion of the unitizing process I sorted the cards into categories. A card would be placed near others which seemed similar. Cards were shuffled and reshuffled until there were nine stacks which appeared to be united by the themes; Vision, Sense of Community, Students’ Preparations and Preparedness, Institutions’ Preparation, Support from Parents, Role of the Student, Desire for Change, Community College Stigma, and Commuting Distance. It was through this process that the themes emerged and the grounded theory was developed. After the data were analyzed a report of the findings was presented to each of the participants separately. Each participant was asked to read the report suggesting any changes. I assured participants that they were free to alter or remove any thing which was embarrassing, or any thing which did not authentically represent the views they had held during the time of the encounter. Participants made very few changes. Some asked to remove the repetitious use of the word 'like' while others spotted misplaced words or misspellings. Participants expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the authenticity of the representation. None wished to make any substantive changes. This 'member check' procedure was used at the end of each phase and at the stage where data were summarized.

Trustworthiness of the Data

The data trustworthiness was established by the triangulation procedures outlined above. Collecting data across several encounters over time, collecting data by several means, and having participants review the transcripts and findings all build data trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This does not mean that the participants are in any sense a representative sample. The power of this kind of study is in its ability to generate data which can be used by others to draw inferences about other cases (Stake, 1988).
Conclusions are interpretations of the data which have been subjected to the triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erickson, 1986) of Transition Research Team meetings, individual interviews, observations in shadowing sessions, document analysis, and observations in impromptu sessions. Throughout the data collection participants were asked to engage in member check procedures as part of the audit trail outlined by Halpern (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were invited to review transcripts of their interviews altering them as they wished. These data collection procedures generated the 'thick description' (Merriam, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) necessary to provide illuminating insights into the students' vicissitudes during the transitional period under study.

**Data Presentation Format**

I realized that because I was meeting these young adults repeatedly and hearing their stories in depth, I would tend to identify strongly with their vicissitudes. I felt that if I were to present each participant's narrative, I would have some difficulty in drawing the themes simply because I would be focused on each individual for a concentrated period. Perhaps more critically, I would also have difficulty in maintaining my researcher role. I wanted to concentrate on emergent themes as much as possible so I chose to present data by themes in the hope of making the themes predominant rather than the personalities. This was a dynamic tension for me throughout the study. Their stories were so poignant and engaging that I confess I was unable to distance myself to the extent that I could claim to be objective. Even in the understated presentation I chose, I feel that their stories are compelling enough to engage most readers.

**Phases of Research**

The choosing of an appropriate preliminal phase was clear. Prior to students beginning and the first orientation visits fit naturally into the preliminal
phase. When to distinguish between liminal and post-liminal was not quite so obvious. It was not certain that incorporation would have taken place by December and indeed, the degree of comfort participants had in December varied dramatically. One could argue that for one participant there was no incorporation. Yet by December participants seemed to have a sense of where they belonged. In December term assignments were due, term examinations were given. The tests of academic achievement and social acceptance were largely rendered by that time. Hence the division of data analysis phases.

**Table 3.1**

Data Gathering Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary</td>
<td>August-September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>11 Individual interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Transition Team Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Impromptu meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Shadowing sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liminal</td>
<td>September-November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Transition Team Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postliminal</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Transition Team Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Member checks</td>
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Chapter Four -- The Preliminal Phase

The line between one phase of student transition and another is rarely clear. It is difficult to insist that a student is entirely ensconced in one phase or the other simply because things are learned slowly and by degrees; students make adjustments about different issues at different times as the need arises. Moreover, even if one student were to leave the preliminal state and abruptly enter the liminal state at a particular time other students would do so at different times. Consequently, one particular moment in time would not clearly define the different states for one student or a group of students. Data reveal that each student's perception of the transition experience was different; each was informed by a unique history and unique circumstances. Each experienced different transition events, similar events at different times, and similar events from different perspectives.

The first interviews, which took place in mid August, were clearly part of student preliminal experience. What became obvious as the study proceeded was that the orientation experiences and initial class procedures kept students, generally, in that preliminal state until mid September. That preliminal state was characterized by mixed emotions. Students alternated between bafflement and assurance as well as happiness and despair with no settled sense of how well they had made their choices about accommodation, university/college, career, or relationships. This was a time of excitement, a time of turmoil, a time of 'vulnerability' (Aloha-Sidaway, 1991).

These data revealed nine distinct themes which appeared to be significant to students as follows:

1. Vision
2. Sense of Community
3. Students' Preparations and Preparedness
4. Institutions' Preparation
5. Support from Parents
6. Role of the Student
7. Desire for change
8. Community College Stigma
9. Commuting Distance

Vision

In the analysis which follows there are instances where one participant has a great deal more to say than another. There is a great deal of variation simply because some were more concerned about some things than other things. In the case of the initial meetings most participants had nothing to say about Community College Stigma since, at first, it only appeared to have affected one of them. On the other hand, Donna and Trudy had little to say about Commuting Distance because they didn’t commute. There are also many instances where participants brought concerns which formed much of the topic of the interview or meeting. Moreover, I attempted to follow conversational leads which had been established during the previous conversation. These points all militated against following an interview schedule where data would be uniformly thick for each individual in each theme.

Although the nine themes are not generally arranged in priority or by order of importance, this one is. Vision is critically important in this preliminal stage of transition. Vision is more than career goals and learning goals. Vision is the image which the student holds of the future. The differences in students’ visions were obvious and striking. Some students had a vague impression of what the future might hold while others' impressions of the future were so clear and complete that actual body positions and working conditions were visualized. Some had a sense of what they thought the work would feel like. Naturally, it was not difficult for these to select courses or programs.

Donna demonstrates and articulates a quite detailed vision which excites her and inspires her to proceed with university. She had developed a keen interest in Celtic Studies, fueled by her ancestry and two trips to Ireland where
her interest deepened and ripened. For her, university is a condition to be met, part of the process in reaching her goals. She was encouraged by a supportive history teacher who seemed to know just how interested she was. For him, she demonstrated a passion to study and dig, archaeological and academically, into Celtic history. She feels that other students have less specific direction and purpose than she does.

A lot of people are going to university because they think they need the degree and the social life. I just want to get in there because I have a chance to do what I love. (14 Aug)

Even after a few daunting experiences, a small poky room, and a confused, unsatisfying orientation week, Donna's vision does not become clouded. "I'm not thrilled about being here. . . . The only reason I'm here is because I know what I want to do" (9 Sep).

She wants to get her doctorate in archaeology specializing in Celtic Studies. She had, for some time, daydreamed about being a professor in the British Isles and digging at ancient Celtic archaeological sites. She is thrilled by being close to such sites. She has a sense of how Celts valued women. For her, it is a vision of history imbued with joy and passion. She is engaged by this vision.

Trudy is neither as enthusiastic nor as passionate in her vision. Moreover, her way was marred by disappointment; yet her vision was detailed, clear, and definite. She sees herself working in a downtown theatre doing administration surrounded by performers and the excitement which is associated with that glittering world. She had attended a high school which specialized in music and drama but realized that her talent lay not in performance. She did not even practise her trumpet at home because she didn't want her parents to hear her. Instead, she wants to work in support of
performance. Consequently, she applied to a university to study arts administration. She was unsuccessful in this application so she decided to pursue her vision by taking business administration at a community college as a way of enhancing her qualifications. She intends to reapply to university the following year.

She did not look forward to going to community college. It was not her first choice, but her dream was intact. She is oriented to achieving her vision in whatever way she needs to. By mid September the friendly atmosphere and small class sizes of the community college convince her that her post-secondary institution is a better choice than she had expected it to be. She begins to warm to the community college.

Shane had a spate of possibilities open to him with a variety of opportunities and potentials. All are, however, unclear. Within the space of a single first interview he reveals that he is interested in pursuing careers in psychology, journalism, advertising, photography, and business. None of these excite him as much as the possibility of being an Olympic volleyball player. He is very likely going to be on the varsity team, having been actively recruited by the coach. None of the other aspects of university life, including courses, were quite as important, or at least as immediately important to him. University is a next step, necessary and logical, but academic choices were not a major part of the vision. His other aim was to travel. When the "university thing" is done he would like to "...put everything on hold and get some experience. ...visit foreign countries."

He wants an honors B.A. in the four years since not doing so would be a waste of time, but he has no long term vision of the work he will pursue since there are a number of competing dreams. There are possibilities, hopes, and flickering images but "...it's wishy washy."
Michelle, on the other hand, doesn't even pretend to have a definite vision.

I have a wide variety of interests so I'm simply taking my first year courses as a building block to decide what I want to do. . . . I want a situation that allows me to explore. (14 Aug)

Michelle and Shane are planning to find an apartment and intend to live together. This immediate circumstance of moving in together appears for both of them to be a dramatic enough change. Distant career visions do not seem to be as significant as they are for Donna and Trudy.

Elaine has gone through a series of visions, none of them strongly held. At times, she wonders why she is even going to university:

When I first applied I didn't know what I wanted to do. I thought, 'Well, anthropology or archaeology.' And I thought, 'Politics or philosophy.' Then I thought, 'What I really want to do is language.' But I didn't know what language to pick. So I contemplated and contemplated. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I'm taking this with the full recommendation in my mind that as soon as I don't like it, I either change it, if I can, or wait 'til next year and do what I want. (14 Aug)

Her immediate observations of those other new students around her cause her disquiet. While her vision is not well defined she senses that her idea of how the university experience is meant to proceed is not the same as the ideas expressed by other students. "I feel old --perhaps working full-time has
tainted my opinions of fun and relaxation. . . . It doesn't feel as serious as I expected yet” (3 Sep).

By the time of our first transition team meeting (9 Sep) she was filled with pain, confusion, and anxiety. She is well motivated to work hard. She is willing to work like the 'A' student she has always been but she recognizes that some impetus is missing:

I'm not as driven as other people. Like, I called my boyfriend tonight and I told him, 'I don't want to be here. Like, I really don't want to be here.' And the only reason I'm still here is 'cause he told me to stay. (9 Sep)

Sense of Community

Sense of community includes any transitional phenomena which make students feel a sense of belonging. Peer group relationships, living arrangements, and feelings generated by physical surroundings all help contribute to this powerful transitional factor.

During our first interview Donna explains that she is looking forward to staying at the particular residence she had chosen because it is old-fashioned and traditional. It fits her need for the time-honored and is in accord with her preference for archaeological and Celtic Studies. She knows which physical surroundings felt 'right' to her not only because of their being hoary with age but also because there are a number of residence-fostered student support structures in place which, she feels, would provide succor and guidance.

By the time of our first transition team meeting she is not quite as enthusiastic. She discovers that several students are from rich families. Many of
them she feels are 'snobby.' That factor and the condition of her residence room make her wonder.

I was sitting there with my boyfriend the other day when he brought me in and I said, 'Well, I can't believe I'm here. And I really don't know if I want to stay in residence more than this one year.' I'm just not impressed. (9 Sep)

Trudy had not thought much about the issue of friends and relationships since she lives close to the community college and had already decided to continue to live with her parents and keep her half-time job. Since there are no siblings at home she finds it convenient and appropriate to change only her place of schooling.

By mid-September she is discovering that she no longer wants to be connected to her high school even though she had intended maintaining close ties with her high school friends.

I went back to my high school last week just to visit people and I was so glad that I was out of there. Even though the people that I went to see were my friends, and I still wanted to see them. I just don’t want to see them at the high school. (11 Sep)

She likes her new campus. Even though she didn’t know anyone, there is a intimacy about the campus which she finds inviting. “It’s small. I think that’s why I like it. You start to see the same people every day, which is more like my high school was” (11 Sep).

Shane and Michelle are together in the apartment and together in three of their five courses. Although Michelle laughs and says, “We sit on opposite
sides of the lecture hall." At this early stage the two of them admit to being careful about allowing one another psychological space. On the volleyball team Shane was a newcomer but he does feel welcomed. During the recruiting process he is impressed with the friendliness of the coach. He is particularly pleased that the coach offers to pay for the two parking tickets Shane had gotten while he was visiting the campus.

Shane has the team as part of his new community, Michelle has Shane. They are concentrating on one another as the new community, rather than friends at campus. Shane feels that, "We kinda complement each other."

During our first interview Elaine explains that she has ". . .a lot of trouble trying to relate to people." She anticipates problems, ". . .especially given the fact that I'm not staying there on campus." Part of her discomfort stems from feeling resentful of others who act, in some way, dishonorable. By way of example, she explains that in her part-time job she rarely took time off for sickness while several co-workers seemed to go home 'quite often.' She feels strongly that one should do a day's work for a day's pay.

She thinks of herself as reserved. She does not relax easily. Distance from peers socially has been aggravated by distance physically. She feels that not living in town keeps her apart from peers too much for her to lose her reservedness. "We live out in the country, so we're outsiders even though my parents have been here ever since the bowling alley was a grocery store [a long time, by her reckoning]" (14 Aug).

She is anxious about all the uncertainties. By the time of our first transition team meeting, the only feelings Elaine has about the students around her are negative. She is disgusted by how they don't seem to be serious about study. They drink, laugh and skip classes. They complain about having to walk across campus while she has to commute for three hours every day. She's
angry and resentful about her not having been accepted at residence through a combination of misunderstandings while at the same time she feels she couldn't have afforded residence. She was disappointed in the orientation activities for the first two days. She didn't make new friends and she didn't feel she belonged, so she skipped most of orientation week by returning home early.

Elaine is not drawn to the campus by any sense of community or belonging. Quite the contrary, she feels she does not belong. By the end of the team meeting the other participants are offering her temporary accommodation, encouraging words, and sympathetic smiles. Michelle and Donna both say that she could stay with either of them when she needs to remain in town overnight. She thanks them for the offers but explains that she feels she had to go home in the evening because she hates being here.

When the others had left she says she is afraid that she would hurt the transition study because her feelings about transition were so negative. I explain that she need not worry for two reasons. Firstly, the study is designed to assist students with transition, so having difficulty did not disqualify a participant; quite the contrary, it makes the study more meaningful. Secondly, she is providing rich and valuable information about the kinds of things students face. Thus I encourage her to stay and she does. Finally, she says that the transition meetings are very valuable for her because they allow her to "...relieve her frustration." At this preliminary stage it is obvious that Elaine has begun to cling to her home community, resisting or rejecting entrance to the new community.

Students' Preparations and Preparedness

In this theme I attempt to assess those ways that students have prepared for the transition. What kinds of habits have they formed about study? What kinds of things have they done in school and out of school which help to get them ready for being students in a post-secondary setting? Attitudes, team
experiences, travel, work habits, all these contribute to a student's preparation or sense of preparedness.

Donna is focused. She has been preparing for three years. She had become interested in Celtic studies in her history class in grade 11 and had been able to stoke that interest by taking trips to Ireland during the two summers preceding her entry to university. Not only did the trips foster and develop her specific short term and long term interests they also gave her the experience of traveling alone, being alone, meeting new people, and making new friends. She feels that this aspect of the trips prepared her for the independence required for the university experience.

Other preparations were not problematic. The decisions about residence, program of study, and finances were rendered in an orderly fashion. She knows what she wants to do so she is willing to go through the steps and stages, including the visiting and evaluating of the various residences to ensure she would enjoy the atmosphere.

Trudy had thought she was going to go to university like all her friends, so she stayed in high school for academic credits in grade 13. She did not realize that her academic standing would deny her access. While she had a clear vision, she had not investigated thoroughly the impact her medium to low marks would have on her aspirations.

I wasted my last year in high school. If I had applied to college last year, then I would be a year ahead now. 'Cause I thought I was going to university, so this past year I took, like, three OAC courses which was, like, nothing. Like, I had five spares. It was just a waste of time. I didn't need them because I'm not going to university. (15 Aug)
Shane's preparations are skewed away from academic issues by his talent to play volleyball. He was able to choose universities by virtue of his value as an athlete. He is not worried about academic preparations or particular program choices. "It probably is pretty hectic... but there's no point in getting your socks in a knot. Just play it through" (14 Aug).

He was calm and confident during our initial interview. He had visited the coach but he had not visited the campus. He had not spent much time in considering various programs of study. After that period he got a nasty surprise. By the time of our next meeting his plans were in disarray.

I kinda got screwed out of Fine Arts. They're accepting about 100 and about 250 applied... So if I wanna do fine arts, I have to go somewhere else. I talked to the athletic department, the Fine Arts department, and I talked to the registrar. They can't do anything. It's all computerized. But I'm not too worried right now... I don't really know what I want to do. I may get into occupational therapy. (9 Sep)

Both Shane and Michelle feel that high school students are themselves responsible for preparing to go to university so she takes full responsibility for having dropped mathematics at the end of grade eleven. Michelle recognizes that she was "...awfully math stupid," so by grade 12 she had focused her attention on those subjects where reading and writing were more critical. There she did well.

She had not realized the cost of university texts. That dismayed her only a little. She is also willing to make mistakes.
I think that everyone is a beginner. Like, it happened when we went to look for an apartment. We didn't know where to go. We didn't know where to start. We didn't know where all the information was and where to park and everything. (9 Sep)

Academically, her plans are not specific. Like her partner, Shane, she is exploring and choosing courses in the arts rather than courses which would lead to specific academic or career paths.

Elaine is nervous about orientation week so even in mid August she has no firm plans about being part of it. Her not having followed the appropriate procedures at the appropriate times causes her to miss a chance to stay in residence so she is not sure where she would sleep if she were to attend all the orientation week activities. She does finally make contact with Donna and arranges to share residence accommodation but the experience is ghastly for her. It is noisy, cold, cramped, and miserable.

Her unfamiliarity with campus created a sense of unease. "I never knew east and west and all that stuff." She 'got the courses' she had chosen simply because "they had a lot of people in them." She has a frustrating time returning books she had purchased in error. She finds general instructions confusing and by the second week of September had already missed one lecture, along with several hundred other students. She appears to be carried along by circumstances beyond her control or influence. Courses, bookstore frustrations, commuting, and estrangement all contribute to her anxiety and deepening dread.
Institutions' Preparations

In this theme I focus on the kinds of things which the educational institutions seemed to do to facilitate transition. What kinds of ways did teaching staff help? Were there any things which seemed to be organized for your benefit specifically designed to assist transition? These kinds of questions were posed so that participants could render a sense of the role that schools, colleges, and universities had played in the whole process. Some preparations were inadvertent, such as comments and classroom practices. Other preparations were more deliberate, such as orientation programs and instruction in organizing research essays.

In this preliminal phase some students are most interested in the receiving institution's efforts at enhancing transition while others have most to say about high school. While she hates the high school generally and relentlessly, Donna heaps praise on a small number of specific teachers who had inspired her to excel and who interested her in certain issues, especially Celtic Studies, Women's Studies and Feminism. Because her interests are powerful and specific, she was able to ignore or at least tolerate the frustrations and boredom of high school. She found everything so "slow and so general."

Her particular residence college has sent a great deal of information in various mailings prior to the beginning of the fall semester which encourages and informs her. Student services information, orientation meetings, and counseling sessions all help her feel welcomed and ready, soothing her anxieties, slight though they were.

Orientation Week is a shock. The parties, the noise, the confusion are a whirlwind which she could only begin to sample. Monday night she imbibes so much that she has to spend the following day in bed, too ill to arise Tuesday. On
Wednesday she feels she has to leave the city and straggle home to her parents' house to recover. This she does, missing whatever other festivities there are.

The residence room is a stark surprise:

It's just dreadful. When I first walked in there and my parents came in behind me and they're like, 'We paid how much for this?!' And they were really perturbed. And I said 'Ohmigosh! Do I have to stay here? Let's go back. (9 Sep)

Just prior to orientation week she has another bad experience in the form of a dispute with one of the office staff. The telling of this is long for a quotation but I could not possibly relate the events as dramatically and charmingly as she does herself during our first transition team meeting:

I think the only hassle I really had in the summer, was trying to get my OSAP deferred. Whenever I talked to anybody on the phone, they would go, "[Just come in]," But then when you showed up at that place, "Oh, no, you have to do this first."

I showed up at three o'clock one afternoon so I could defer my OSAP payments. It was my only afternoon off, where I have to work two jobs, And, "Oh, you have to go to Financial Aid and get this paper first."

And, I go, "Why didn't you tell me that on the phone, 'cause I explained situation to you." "Well, like, you weren't talking to any of us."

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1. Ontario Student Assistance Program, i.e. a government assisted loan.
[I said], "My butt, I wasn't talking to any of you, buddy. C'mon, how many of you are there in the office? And someone in here talked to me." So I had to run down to the student centre, wait in this line up. . . . Finally at 20 to 4, the office closes at 4 pm, I asked someone at the front of the line if they would let me in. I didn't even leave the student centre to get back to residence until 10 to 4. They'd locked the door after I'd walked into the bursar's office to get this. I would have had to take an afternoon off work and then come back because no one would explain what I had to do on the phone. That was my only problem. This summer. . . until I got here. . . . And a lot of them that are in the offices are really snotty, too.

Like my registrar story is: I went to get my OSAP forms so my dad could negotiate a loan for me 'cause I'll never make it back in time to deal with my bank. . . . So I was going to get it for my dad and my registrar turned around and said to me, "Well, excuse me but you've known . . . three times when our office was open."

And I said, "Well, actually, no I haven't."

He said, "Well, we told you three times in March. "Three times in March!" and like, "What!? I don't memorize your office hours, and it's supposed to be regular office hours, as of the 2nd, and you're not doing that."

And he said, "Well, I saw the look you gave this lady."

[I said], "Don't jump to conclusions, if you don't know what I'm thinking."

And he said, "Blah, blah, blah, blah. . . ." and starts going like yelling at me in the hall.

And I said, "Don't give me all that crap," and I turned around and said, "Kiss my ass!" . . . and he walked off. I was so
disgusted with him. . . . He just slammed the office door. ugh!! buddy!! [rolling her eyes] and all because he heard me say, "Oh, I really need my OSAP form." . . . I wasn't even talking to him,. . .[big sigh] jerk! So that was my bad experience. (9 Sep)

For Trudy preparations are not dramatic or complex. The only process which she notices as being substantial is the writing of a placement test. Her college communications courses are streamed. Students are typically placed in communications courses based on the evaluation of a placement test. Aside from the placement test and two speeches there is no fanfare or celebration of the entry to community college. She had no stories of excitement or welcome or rite of passage (Van Gennep, 1909/1960). The entry process planned by the community college is business-like. She does not anticipate anything but a sparse orientation program. She is somewhat disappointed by the lack of orientation spirit but this disappointment is eclipsed by the rejection of her application to university. She is as business-like and as goal oriented as the community college so if there is no joy there is at least a sense of comfortable resignation on her part (Appendix B).

Before I got here I was not as happy as I could have been if I were going to arts administration at university. I was not, like, looking forward to it. I didn't really want to come. But now it's good. (11 Sep)

Shane is annoyed about high school teachers' propensity to inspire, or try to inspire, fear. In our first meeting he describes his grade thirteen years as tough but he thinks that this is fair because it seems to him necessary for teachers to force students to adopt work patterns appropriate to post-secondary. It is really the warnings and dire predictions he resents. He had observed this
teacher behavior before when he was in grade eight preparing to go to high school. He also has an older brother who contradicts the warnings so he has become quite cynical about these threats.

It's not that they didn't prepare you. They sort of over prepared you. I remember in grade eight they were saying it was hard in grade nine. I talk to people like my brother who've been there. That's where you get the real sense. . . . It's kinda foolish to scare people. . . Teachers, I think, are feeding you a line of crap. (14 Aug)

When he begins Shane finds university big, unfriendly, uncaring, and inefficient. He has difficulty with the telephone registration system, as do the other students. He likes the concept, "it just didn't work well."

His first dealings with the coach have given him a good impression of the athletic department but this impression is strained during the first week. He experiences unanticipated difficulty in getting into the Fine Arts department and is disappointed that the athletic department is unable to provide effective assistance. They had given him a letter of support but it does not help. He is somewhat disgusted by his first encounters with the university experience:

They've gone after good teachers and they've made the place look nice and stuff but it seems like nobody's willing to help. . . . They're sort of not really concerned because there's too many people. If they're concerned for you then they have to be concerned for somebody else. And it's just too much on their minds. (9 Sep)

Michelle's attention is centered on high school's lack of thoughtful preparation. She had had a difficult time with mathematics and is disgruntled
about guidance counselor efforts to compel her to take that subject. She was not interested in a career in science or math but sensed a consolidated, relentless effort by high school counselors to steer her into those subjects. She refused. She also insists that there was little guidance. She feels that the main problem is that there was not enough time spent on the issues associated with her transition from high school to university.

I don't think my guidance counselors did a very good job. Each student, each year should have a specific time set aside for them with a guidance counselor who would actually sit down and find out everything there is to know about this kid . . .because nobody sat me down. Ever! (14 Aug)

Elaine didn't have the orientation information organized. She had had anxieties about the orientation process and these are intensified by her sense that those responsible for organizing the orientation process at the university had not presented her with the necessary data. “I don't know when it starts or when it ends or what we're doing each day or whatever” (14 Aug).

By September 3rd she writes that the "organization seemed weak." She is uncertain and nothing in the arrangement of orientation and initial classes is providing any comfort. She had paid $106 for orientation activity fees but when she goes to her college they are unable to find a record of her having paid. When she reviews the orientation events, "there's a coupla things that I can see 106 bucks being for but . . ." (9 Sep). She has difficulty with the city using east and west as a method of orientation. This is new to her, a function of big city navigation, easy to the inducted, painfully simple for the city-raised, but a new notion to someone who, raised in a small town, is accustomed to orientation by landmarks. It is something which requires a profound and yet subtle shift in her thinking. Orienting oneself, a ubiquitous issue, for her becomes a source of
constant anxiety during this preliminal phase. Elaine is not certain who to blame for her disorientation, herself? the institutions? her luck?

Do you want to know about my luck? Why am I the only student who didn't get residence? I really expected university to be very focused. All I come across is people who say they're helping you but they aren't. I had 1000 different problems. (9 Sep)

Support from Parents

Throughout the process of raising children parents variously strive to instill a sense of independence and increased responsibility. Parents accompany children to early schooling for that first wrenching transition. Thereafter, there are many transitions (Freire, 1991; Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996) which are all critical and important and significant, but the transition from high school to post-secondary has the potential of being one of the most stressful, simply because it involves so many changes at once. It involves changes in living arrangements, school patterns, and locations, as well as changes in relationships of several sorts.

Parents figure substantially in these changes. Their guidance, leadership, and history as well as level of financial support seem to have impacts in a host of ways on the transitions of their children. Donna credits her parents with providing the background for her vision as well as providing the financial support:

My dad was interested in Irish Mythology as well. When I was younger, whenever I wanted to read, they threw me a book. And I wasn't allowed to read my mom's romances, I had to read historical fiction. I got interested in reading
about things which I didn't realize were Celtic until I got into Celtic Studies. And then it all fell into place. (14 Aug)

Trudy did not need to leave her parents' home. She has an older sister who had moved away years previously. With no other siblings she has enough space to have her own bedroom as well as exclusive use of what was once a family room. There she has her own combination office, music room, and TV room.

I'm very lucky, very, very lucky. I know I am. My parents pay for my car. Like, I paid my tuition and I paid for my books but they pay for everything else. (11 Sep)

Not only do they cover her living expenses, but because her mother is receiving a disability pension she is receiving an allowance. Donna also has a half time job. She is able to meet all her expenses, pay a personal trainer, and invest in RRSPs. She feels that she will have enough money so that even if she decides to continue her study through community college and university, she will not need to borrow.

Shane has had a happy relationship with his parents. Leaving his parents' home, while exciting in some respects, is tinged with some anxiety and a hint of regret. "I guess I'm so comfortable with my house I'm not ready to feel uncomfortable" (14 Aug).

Michelle is more eager to leave. She spoke, very briefly, of a younger autistic brother. With a sigh she explains that she and her parents had been through a lot. While she is getting some financial support she thinks of herself as strongly independent. "I like to do it myself. I'm too proud to ask for help" (14 Aug).
Elaine's dad wants her to be independent. She is a little resentful that he's insisted that she pay her own expenses beyond high school. She explains that as she 'hit high school' he began telling her that she would need to save money for university. "My parents aren't helping me at all at school. . . . I watched everybody else who's not working as hard as me. I know I'll work harder if I pay for it myself, but. . . it's really hard" (14 Aug).

Later, in the same interview session, she says that she is having money problems due to her having to pay for maintenance on the company truck which her father had set aside for her use. Her food and lodging costs are to be borne by her parents but it did not occur to her to mention this. She also notes that her parents seemed more lenient to her two younger brothers than they were to her. "So there's a little resentment." Nevertheless she admires her father. "My dad quit school when he was 16. . . . He's probably one of the toughest, in my mind, people you could ever meet. I've learned a lot from him" (14 Aug).

Role of the Student

In this section I explore participants' perceptions of the way learning took place in high school and the way they understand it was about to take place in post-secondary. In this section I used Knowles's term andragogy to describe those practices where students felt they had an important role to play and the term pedagogy for those areas where they felt their role was weak. "The term andragogy has been championed by Malcolm Knowles to juxtapose it with the term pedagogy, meaning the art and science of teaching children" (Selman & Dampier, 1991, p.85). Knowles attempts to differentiate between those sets of ideas that one commonly associates with the teaching of children and those sets of ideas which one associates with the teaching of adults.
Even though she professes to like all her teachers, especially the history teacher who sparked and encouraged her interest in Celtic Studies, Donna loathes the high school experience.

I hated high school. It was all I could do to get up in the mornings. . . . If it was up to me I'd never go. Like, I would have dropped out in kindergarten. I've always hated school. . . . It's too broad. It's too general. (14 Aug)

She is intensely interested in her Celtic studies and contrasts the cramped and circumscribed educational culture of the high school with the freer, more interest focused university. She detested the pace of high school lessons. The boredom, the tedious lectures, the endless repetitions for her were unceasing suffering. Notwithstanding her having received the top awards in most of her subjects (as we later learned) she feels she has only performed in a perfunctory fashion in high school. She had eagerly anticipated the change from pedagogy to andragogy.

When I came home at night I just did homework. I didn't pay any attention to what it was saying to me. I didn't absorb any of it. I did it because it had to be done. Whereas I'm hoping that during university I do things because I want to learn. (14 Aug)

Trudy's favorite high school course was geography. She likes the way the class was taught. She likes the teacher because he was organized and made sure the students knew the material. She does not object to a transmission form of learning. It worked for her.

It was my best class. It was just because the teacher reviewed what we did last time, went over it and then went
ahead. He applied what we learned so it would stick in your head. Whereas, I dunno, other classes, it was like this chapter, then this chapter, then this chapter. They don't connect. (15 Aug)

She does not claim to be a particularly clever or successful student. She is sure about this. Her work habits were not an established routine. Marks were never A's, sometimes B's, often less. She anticipates having to become more organized and more dedicated to work. "Like I don't sit down and study which I have to do. My work habits are gonna have to change. . . . I'm not smart. . . . Like I'm really bad at tests, but then it depends on how the class is taught" (15 Aug).

She is not certain about 'how it will be there,' but she and her friends knew enough to be anxious about the transition. In her mind they have all become 'little kids again,' with the new challenge of having to select things to study without being certain about what is necessary. She does not think it will be like high school 'homework-wise.' She anticipates receiving less guidance from instructors than she had from teachers.

Even in the second week in September she has not begun many classes but is feeling quite positive about her initial exposure to various courses. She is especially delighted about business math. In high school she had struggled with the more theoretical constructs of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. When she realizes the nature of the math she required she is pleasantly surprised.

There's business math which is really good. I like it because I can do it. In grade twelve math I only got like, 54. So math is not high thing. . . Business math is good. It's, like, way more accessible. (11 Sep)
She finds that she does not have to decide as much as she thought she would. Communication placement tests are administered. Her level is decided but she does not mind. It is, for her, high school continued with a little more freedom.

In communication they, like, never told me what level I was at or anything. So I guess they work that out when they give you your timetable. But everyone takes the same thing if you're in business administration. You take all the same courses. Like, I didn't have to choose a timetable. (11 Sep)

This experience of Trudy's seems to be much less of a struggle of choices than the university students had to face. Program decisions, grouping decisions, timetabling issues were all handled by the educators. Trudy is not empowered by these events, perhaps, but she is comforted by the adults managing all these things for her. She is also pleasantly surprised at the calmness and friendliness she is encountering.

I always thought it was like, like really, not formal but like university. So like there's the professor and there's the students. And nobody knows anybody. But it's not like that here. (11 Sep)

In her community college it is the custom for instructors to announce that students are welcome to call them by their first names. This seems friendly and wonderful to her. She does not mind transmission oriented curricula. She does not mind the pedagogy implicit in administrative and educational structures and discourse. She feels welcome, accepted, and safe.
Shane did not work hard throughout high school because he didn't take it very seriously until the final year. In his view he was treated as a child would be treated. His work was defined in a thoroughly transmission sense. Because teachers accepted total responsibility for designing, planning, and implementing curricula, he did not feel responsible. He accepted the teacher designed learning patterns implicit in the high school but he is cynical about the value of the work he was doing and he chafed under the regime. He has a unique metaphor to describe the nature of the high school work which resonates of primary school. “In high school you do tons of little mapping assignments. You know, where you colour in the map, find the country, colour it in (14 Aug).

He anticipates working in a more andragogical fashion when he arrives at university. At least he hopes for that. While high school teachers set 'mapping assignments' he expects that professors will treat him in a more adult fashion, requiring him to accept more responsibility for his work. “From the impression I get from what people say, it's independent studies. . . essays and stuff, and just listening to what the guy has to say and reading a lot “(14 Aug).

His first forays into university give him, perhaps, a too soft impression of what would be required of him. He has only had one or two introductory classes during the preliminal period which make him believe that he wouldn't have to be anxious about the work.

I like it. I like the profs. It's not so bad. It's pretty relaxed. . . . Our first prof, it was fifteen minutes and the class was over. We got our booklist, the outline. Then we left after that. And sociology is really laid back. He's funny. (9 Sep)

Michelle seems to feel that high school teachers were engaged in a conspiracy to, at the very least, establish their separateness from students. At
the most, this separateness is almost a caste system. She sees the teachers as keeping themselves apart and all the adults as keeping distance, ensuring that various roles were distinct. She has resented this for quite some time. She views it as hurtful to her and dysfunctional to schooling.

There's a big line drawn between teachers, the principal, the janitorial staff, and then the, whatever, the helpers, the teacher's helpers. It just seems so weird that teachers all have their own bathroom and all have their own staffroom where the teachers go and be adults together and complain about the students. (14 Aug)

She is not satisfied with the distance. She felt slighted. While she is not pleased with many teachers she was especially annoyed at guidance counselors.

My guidance counselor said, 'You have to take math.' I looked at all the books [calendars] and said, 'No. I don't. You just want me to take math for some stupid reason. I just felt that they weren't on my side. Sometimes teachers were, but I don't know about counselors. (14 Aug)

She has had only two brief classes by the time of our first transition team meeting. She makes no comment about the type of learning that is taking place but she is amazed at the size of the classes. She is not accustomed to lectures where there are a thousand or more students in the audience.

Like Michelle, Elaine is struck by certain injustices in high school. She tells of one case where she and a classmate submitted the same paper. She received 60% while her friend received 80%. She didn't complain because she felt it would be pointless. In another case she earned a very high mark, 99%, in
Spanish but she didn't get the language prize because her combined Spanish/French mark wasn't as high as another student's single mark in French. She thinks she should have gotten the prize for having gotten the highest single mark. She accepts the competitive side to high school but even though she was an 'A' student, she was handicapped. "I was turned off. It continued. The same people on awards night. Up until valedictorian the same people were nominated for the awards" (14 Aug).

Desire for Change

This theme does not necessarily have much to do with educational issues. As the study began I realized that for these participants the notion of a change in status was itself a factor in their perception of the transition. Patterns were being broken, challenged, or tested. Herein I attempt to assess their attitudes to the changes that they faced. I also attempt to gauge the extent to which these attitudes affected the nature of their transitions. How much did they want change to take place? Were they eager? Were they fearful? These were the basic questions in this theme.

Donna is neither in a rush to complete university like she was to complete, or escape, high school; nor is she eager to get away from her parents.

If I'm rushing, I won't enjoy university. I want to enjoy it, take my time and learn as much as I can rather than what I did in high school which was rush everything. . . . I really feel I have to go. A lot of people go through without realizing that special place. To me, I already found it. Whereas I'm not looking forward to moving out because I'm close to my parents; but it doesn't bother me, not to the extent it would have if I had never traveled or been on my own. (14 Aug)
Shane is anxious and excited. Moving away from home, moving out of his parents' house, moving in with his girlfriend, moving out of high school, moving away from almost all his high school friends, joining the university volleyball team, and entering the university, constitute an overwhelming number of transitions for him.

It'll be different. I'm excited on the one side and a little worried on the other side. I'll be living with my girlfriend and all that experience. It's exciting and maybe I'll find it a little challenging at times. (14 Aug)

Michelle is eager to change. Together with Shane she faces almost all of the same changes but she doesn't acknowledge any sense of anxiety at this preliminary stage. During the first interviews her eyes sparkle when she speaks of the new experiences she anticipates. Mercifully, she isn't aware of the doubt and turmoil she was about to face in the next phase. She had invested a great deal of emotion in her home and needed to move. For the moment she is excited, optimistic, and open to the new adventure.

I like change. . . . I don't know how much I'll come back and visit my family. I think my parents and I have gone through a lot and this is really important because it's going to make both of us appreciate each other a lot. . . . I just want culture shock. . . . I've been living in a small town all my life and I just want to see it. Get it to me. I'm ready. (14 Aug)

Elaine is not ready. She is not sure about courses, travel arrangements, or living arrangements. She is not even certain that she had made the right choice of institution. When she says, "I've never moved in my life," her voice betrays no eagerness to do so.
Community College Stigma

Stigma is a powerful, value-loaded noun. Nevertheless the data seem to warrant it. This was not anticipated. Perhaps the stigma notion ought to have been, but it was not. It was not until the interviews began that the idea of there being a stigma associated with attendance at community college arose. Trudy brought this issue to my attention so at this stage in the analysis, the bulk of the data is derived from my interviews with her. Later in the study it became clear that other participants had choices curtailed by the stigma but this was not manifested in the preliminal stage.

Stigma for Trudy was powerful and hurtful. She knew that university is where one ought to go so she just assumed she was going to go there. When she did not get accepted she was disappointed but she decided to make the best of it and proceed to community college.

She was not prepared for the reactions she got from her peers. They ridiculed her choice and her. Suddenly she began to reevaluate relationships. She felt betrayed and belittled by these peers. When I met her in September she is still smarting from the sneering looks and rolling eyes of her former mates. “A lot of them I don’t even talk to anymore. . . . I don’t want to bother with them now and they don’t want to bother with me” (11 Sep).

She had not had a particular desire to attend university. Her vision had not necessitated university but she had felt moved to apply simply because ‘that’s where everyone went.’ She regrets not having applied to community college the year before. “I would have applied to college. [I thought] ‘yeah, I’ll go but I didn’t want to. But I knew I had to. . . just because it was always university you would hear about, not college” (15 Aug).
Trudy is particularly annoyed because she did not like being rejected while students who did not seem serious or whose intelligence she did not respect, were accepted. "They're like, ditzes and they got into university? And that's, like, crazy" (15 Aug).

Until she began classes Trudy was embarrassed about her being a community college student. When she was asked her plans she would mutter in a downcast fashion that she was going to community college. She had internalized a sense of stigma.

Things change. After beginning she sees how well college suits her and her plans. She begins caring less about the stigma. Trudy is soon able to proclaim to parents that she “really liked it.” She likes the notion of calling instructors by their first names. She loves the idea that she could manage the courses, especially the business math. Everything is working for her so much so that she begins to rethink her intent to reapply to university when the first community college year is finished.

I could still take arts and administration but from what I'm hearing, I don't think I'd fit in. . . . I think it's big, very big. And I can't see myself, like, sitting in a lecture with, like, 450 people, and listening when there's people beside me sleeping. And that's the whole impression I get out of it. And you have to take tutorials and stuff like that but there's still, like, 50 people. (11 Sep)

Trudy has been affected by the stigma but she very soon realizes the advantages of her decision and is enthusiastic about the results of what had appeared to be so disappointing.
I've got the same goal but I'm just taking a different route. And it's good. I mean, I love it, really. . . I love it! My parents ask me how it's going. . . . Well, I love it. (11 Sep)

In this preliminal stage the other students do not have much to say about this issue. It was not part of my focus questions so it was not an issue which arose 14 August. During the first transition team meeting there were several pressing and interesting issues. Trudy was not involved with the team, and since I didn't have the wit to raise the stigma issue, it did not emerge for any of the others until later in the study. But it did emerge. For at least one other participant it may have had a more devastating impact than it did on Trudy.

Commuting Distance

I had underestimated the impact of this prosaic sounding issue prior to data collection but I quickly began to realize that it was an issue worth some attention before the first interviews were over. Intimately linked with and in part situated in Sense of Community, it nevertheless informs the transition motif in particular ways.

Donna lives in university residence. She can get to class easily and quickly. She does not appreciate this at first because her attention is taken up with disappointment in residence food and the squalor (soon to be elegance) of her basement room.

There's chunks of stucco out of my wall. I have, like, all the water pipes, passing through my bedroom. There's an old heater that I don't think they've changed since the building was built. . . . I'm in the basement. it's dirty. There's no sunlight. Curtains are falling to pieces. I paid for my first
semester residence. But I'll, like, live this year out. But next year there's no way I'm going back to residence. I'm just not impressed. (9 Sep)

She does not realize the value of living and working immersed in the residence culture yet. What is she doing while others are commuting? Making new friends, learning the intimate details of her environment, establishing herself as a member of a new community. Even at this preliminal stage, not withstanding her negative experiences, she begins to reveal unwittingly that she is going to like the Sense of Community aspect of residence.

Some people I really like. . . . And it's not that I'm not having a good time in residence because I really like some people. But it's just overall bad experiences. (9 Sep)

Donna's sense of community is being rapidly built by virtue of her being continuously in the community where she studies. Had she commuted, this phase of transition might have been prolonged.

For Trudy the commuting distance is small. She has a car. She lives at home. She appears not to have been affected much by this commuting aspect, particularly since the building of the Sense of Community process was different from university. There is no strong residence culture, indeed there is no residence on her campus. Classes are small. Students are together in several courses. Sense of Community is being built during the school day. She is not concerned about commuting.

Shane and Michelle, having decided to live in an apartment together, find a place which is inexpensive but far from the campus. At this preliminal stage it does not appear to be a problem for them. It is only a walk of thirty minutes. Shane is an athlete, Michelle is athletic. She likes rollerblading. Both
of them love to use their sturdy state-of-the-art bicycles. They do not realize that the distance from campus would become part of a process of estrangement. It would force them to plan their days with a deliberateness foreign to many first year students who had more time than they to explore and be among friends. It forces them apart in the scheduled and dreary ways of some couples in their middle years. But this is not obvious yet.

Commuting distance is a terrible problem for Elaine. She has to use her truck, a commuter train, and the subway for a round trip time of three hours each day. It contributes to her frustrations well before the term begins. “Any problems you hit meant another trip down here, and another phone call. Like, they don’t know how much you spend. They do not appreciate it at all” (14 Aug).

She had spent almost $100 on registration and residence related telephone calls during the spring and summer. She is also worried because for a portion of her three hours of commuting each day she would be using the company truck which she thinks is not adequately insured for her to be principal driver. She has the constant fear of accidents to add to her pandora’s box of anxieties.

This becomes a pivotal factor in determining how Elaine would spend orientation week. It becomes a week to endure as required, not fun, not orienting, not useful.

I don’t think I would care much about it if I was staying there. If I didn’t want to be there [at a particular activity] I could just go back to my room. If my friend can take me in residence then I can stay with her or I’ll just tell her ‘Let me know when something’s going on that’s good.’ [I’m not sure how this could possibly have worked] Because if I come down early
in the morning and nothing's going on, I'd go back home. It's a waste of gas and effort and money. (14 Aug)

It's difficult to see how this factor and her view of it could have allowed for that spirit of serendipity which can make orientation week an exciting adventure of freedom and delicious licence. The distance, and her feeling distanced, engenders a need for excessive planning.

The commuting problem does not become any easier for her to untangle. It is such a frustration that it not only cripples her opportunities to develop a sense of community, it also makes her resent those who are not exposed to the journey. They have much more time to study or relax or become familiar with the terrain.

But like everything I've done I've hit a roadblock. I'm frustrated because to them it just seems like a joke. And I had to get up at five this morning and spend 14 bucks just to come to class. They have to get out of bed and walk to class. And they're not paying for school, I am. (9 Sep)

Summary

Across the nine themes and five participants there is a wide variety of experience and perception being reported at this early phase in the study. Data revealed great discrepancies in firmness of vision and sense of community. While some seem more prepared than others, at this stage preparedness differences are not striking. In considering institutions, all university students are surprised at the size of the new institution and are dismayed by that while the community college student enjoys a sense of belonging to an institution which is not very large or alien. Students report support from parents. All are grateful but all look forward to the freedom they anticipate in the new term.
Even at this early stage it is possible to discern degrees of difference in the level and kinds of involvement parents have had with participants regard to their career and school concerns. With regard to Role of the Student, all students are eager to leave the high school having been bored through repetition or pace of work. Some also felt that the high school treated them as the pedagogical victims who have no power. All are looking forward to the more andragogical approach that they expect with the post secondary institution. Trudy's early experience in the community college is more andragogical than she had anticipated. Most desire change and see this as part of a necessary process. Community College Stigma is an issue presented by Trudy. It is not obvious that it matters to others yet. Commuting for some is a problem from the very beginning of the transition period. Long commuting distances complicate the transition.
Chapter Five

The Liminal Phase

By the beginning of this phase students had selected courses and programs, having already completed arrangements for accommodation and transportation. Routines were becoming established, books had all been purchased, and, for the most part, participants knew the various requirements of each program. They had also developed some sense of comfort in being able to describe new conditions, new surroundings, and new courses. It is not that they were all happy during this phase. Far from it. But now they felt more definite in describing how they felt.

The themes, established in Chapter Four, are explored in this liminal phase (Van Gennep, 1909/1960) for the period from mid September until December. The period is longer so the data are more voluminous, but the pattern of data presentation is precisely the same as in the previous chapter.

Vision

Donna is confident and relaxed. Her vision is sharper, more precisely defined, and more comprehensive as the term ripens. She is much more than simply career oriented. She sees precisely how she wants to work after a number of degrees are completed.

I want to go on and do post-graduate work. And I want to do it overseas. And when I’m done that I want to get right into it because, hopefully, the job will be something that I've always wanted to do. So I want to get out there and work. It's not working in a company. It's not getting dressed up in a suit everyday and going to work. It's, you know, trying on a
pair of shorts and an old t-shirt and sitting in the dirt for like six hours at a time. That lifestyle suits me. (7 Oct)

She is aware that her intense attitude sets her apart from others in high school. There were no other students who had expressed any interest in Celtic Studies. There were also none, as far as she could tell, who were as keenly interested in any field of study as much as she was.

I don't think I ever met anyone who was so specifically interested in something as I am. The only person I ever had a conversation with about Celtic Studies was my history teacher. (10 Oct)

She is surprised to learn that at university the intensity of her interest is still sharper than those around her.

But even now I find that the students in the Celtic Culture program are not as keenly interested as I am. I mean they go out and they learn but they don't want to talk about it afterwards. (10 Oct)

Is she being too specific in her vision? If that dream failed would she be in a quandary because she had eschewed the taking of more general courses which would have given her more options of study and career? She does not see a problem. She is not irrevocably tuned to one vision. It gives her her bearings but it does not control her.

There's lots of other things I'd love to do as well. I just happened to choose this one and just focus on it. I think it makes it easier for me to have one main goal because it gives me a focus. . . . I need some place to steer myself
towards or else I'll just get lost. But if I couldn't do it, that would be okay because I could still read about it. (7 Oct)

It is interesting that she can not only face the possibility of her being unable to pursue Celtic Studies with equanimity, she also contemplates a career with changes and periodic altering of focus.

I would like to do this for the first part of my life but that doesn't mean I still wanna do it when I'm forty. I mean there's other things I'd like to do with my life, and they don't necessarily involve that line of work. But this is where I'd like to start out from, and move from there. The possibility of choices just makes life richer. (7 Oct)

Not being accepted at university is becoming less and less of a concern to Trudy. In fact, she feels sorry for some students who are engaged in it because they are not certain of their vision, they just move from year to year following a pattern they observe in those around them. "Most people do general arts in their first year. They don't know what they'll be doing later (13 Nov).

Her vision is still sound and clear. When she was first refused entry to the university she thought that a year of community college would enhance her chances of gaining entry to university the following year. During the liminal phase she loses the urge to be accepted at university. She is enjoying the program and decides that she would complete her business administration diploma. "I still wanna do arts administration and everything but they also have arts administration part-time here, but it's post diploma. That's why I figure I can do it while I have a job" (13 Nov).

Trudy has a clear idea of how students ought to orient themselves to post-secondary education. Vision seems, to her, to be critical.
Decide what you like. Most people don't know what they want to do for the rest of their lives. If you find something that you like doing now, then that'll probably develop into something else. (13 Nov)

Vision for Donna and Trudy is critical but it is more of a beacon than a road. It guides progress, providing an aiming point. Like the lighthouse to a mariner it serves until the ship is quite close to it. No sailor in his right mind would actually steer exactly into the rocks which support the lighthouse. One steers, using the beacon until just that right moment comes when it is necessary to alter course and avoid shoals by altering the direction, refining the vision in the light of new information or new circumstance. So it is with these students' vision. It is apparently serving to hold these two students on course until a new plan of action is indicated by whatever conditions are in place at that future time.

Shane has not been able to settle his vision on a particular career or academic program but, to some extent, he has been able to narrow his field of vision. It still sounds vague but there are fewer choices which he is considering.

My career goals are becoming more concrete. I'm interested in selling stuff to people... influencing. Whether I try to get into advertising or something like that... (4 Nov). I think I'm pretty much flexible as far as jobs go. (7 Oct)

Yet he appreciates the value of having clear, specific plans. Moreover, he seems to have a clear impression of the value of vision's assisting people in routine ways, as well as in grander psychological fashion.

I like a focus because it gives a sort of a purpose. That's what I like, to set goals... trying to achieve stuff (4 Nov).
tried to achieve the Ontario Volleyball team and stuff like
that. That's made me a better person at a higher level. If I
failed, and I have failed, it makes me a better person. I
believe in following my destiny. (7 Oct)

Volleyball keeps him interested in university but it does not help define
plans. It may keep him so occupied that he has suspended any concentrated
effort at planning.

I think I'll remain at university just because I want to play
volleyball. And I can probably get a degree in English or
something like that if there's no journalism course. Or
there's maybe a school that I can commute to that's a sister
school to here, or another school. (7 Oct)

Shane is not eager to launch a career. He feels young, innocent of
experience. For him this first degree is not really a developmental step on the
path, it is more of an obstacle or a kind of way station. He never speaks of there
being any joy in attending courses. Nothing connected with the academic work
he's engaged in seems to bring him much satisfaction. It is more a question of
surviving.

I don't think I'll jump right into the work force. I'd like to get
my degree and say, 'Okay. That's done.' I don't want to work
that year. I want to move to Europe and work as a janitor
and just live that life. And then move to Jamaica, you know,
and just see all the different cultures and stuff. That's been
sort of a dream, but I don't know whether I'll be able to do
that. (7 Oct)
"The dream is not a vision." (Cohen, 1969). The glamour of travel and broadening experience beckon without providing a beacon. He wants to travel but that desire is connected to neither volleyball nor high school, nor career, nor university. Each of these appear to occupy separate cognitive compartments not drawn together by any overarching theme which forces him to consider direction. He has no faith of purpose in his world view. He is primarily concerned with garnering a variety of experiences.

Why am I here? I've been asking myself that a lot. And the only answer I can come up with is, if I am not here, where the hell would I be? I'm not ready, at all, to move on. I still need some time to think it through. So I think this is the place for me because I'm on my own and I'm not babied anymore. And I'm trying to find myself. (7 Oct)

Like her partner, Michelle is exploring options and, ever so slightly, refining directions. She also has the desire to complete the degree and to travel. Otherwise, she is not specific.

I've never been able to decide what I'm gonna do with my life (10 Oct). . . . After college I want to travel, then look for a job. . . . I'm also thinking about my own business. . . . (7 Nov)

Working out marital-like rules of engagement with Shane, and navigating her courses has not given her clear purpose. She feels stress and doesn't have a vision to justify or alleviate it. She is responding to the stimuli around her but her response is not based on a plan. Without the beacon of vision she is stumbling. "I'm in school now. I still don't have a direction. I guess I'm still eager but it's not what I expected. . . . I expected to exist more" (10 Oct). Striving for direction has become striving for the numbness of indifference. Instead of being
able to bask in the joys or her accomplishments and new freedom, she is vacillating between anxiety and boredom.

I don't have any courses right now that I'm really, really interested in so I just sort of mindlessly do it all. . . . It's all just the same thing. It's all just reading. That's all I do. Just read. And after, like, 6 hours of reading, nothing is interesting anymore. It's just. . . blah. (5 Nov)

Elaine is suffering. She is so uncomfortable on campus that by the end of September she comes to see me to say that she would no longer stay late for transition team meetings. However, she does want to stay in the study so she agrees to see me alone, earlier in the day. The following week she thinks she is 'doing better' but she is worried about specific goals.

I do bounce back and forth thinking, 'Well, I should have taken science,' or 'I should have taken arts. . . .' I haven't got a goal. That's another problem. I keep thinking about that a lot. Do I want to be a journalist? Do I want to be a lawyer? All I can see is I should be getting a job. My goal is to work. But learning about 13th century history isn't going to do much for me if I don't want to be a teacher, and that's just one thing I never wanted to be. (7 Oct)

During a shadowing session early in November Elaine explains that university is like an investment which requires time as well as money. She thinks that it is crucial for prospective university students to visit the campus a number of times before deciding to attend. She also suggests that it would be worthwhile for high school students to spend some time shadowing university students to see how they feel about the new environment.
By mid November Elaine's vision begins to clear. During another shadowing session she says that she had seen her boyfriend's community college calendar and senses an end to her dilemma. She has hope. She has become intrigued by the possibility, presented in that document, of obtaining a public relations diploma offered jointly by that community college and a university. Suddenly she realizes that what she was doing was not part of what she wanted to do. In my casebook I write, "The fog lifts. Connections are made. New possibilities dawn" (12 Nov). Underneath the miasma of conflicting desires she had had a vision all along including her time of marrying, choice of mate, place of living (close to home), study plans, and work goals.

Late in November she writes in her journal about a session where she had acted as a resource person to a counseling session at her old high school. At that session her essential message was that students have to decide for themselves with regard to external forces or the advice of others. “Students have to investigate to find out what is best for them individually, to second guess what they were told” (28 Nov).

She had had a vision all the time, but it was buried. She had been following a plan which did not support that vision. Now she had struggled enough. Battered but unbeaten, she is able to articulate her preferences with more certainty. “I don't want to be in school any longer than I have to. . . . My goals are more having a family. My career is less of a priority” (28 Nov).

Sense of Community

Donna soon forgets her concerns about 'snobby' students because she develops a strong sense of community with a group of new friends who are connected by residence proximity and common interest.
Once you've settled into a group of friends then you don't notice other people so much. Once I got back [after the orientation week fiasco] and got into my classes and got into finding the groups of people that I liked the most, it really helped. I think that by the second or third week in September it was clear that this was the place I wanted to be. I was really glad to be there. (10 Oct)

This community of friends is small but powerful. She becomes immersed in the group and is thoroughly and continuously connected with them. There is a swirl of community fellowship and camaraderie which leaves her barely time to worry about anything. The community quickly develops patterns, customs, and its own culture.

We hang around together, about ten of us. We're always together every day and we go out together every night (23 Sep). Every Tuesday night we go to jazz and Wednesday night is the traditional pub night. Every Thursday our college has a party and Monday, it's sit around and talk. And tonight it's girl's night out. And sometimes it's Hockey Night in Canada and just stuff like that. I guess that's part of why I'm so happy with the university right now. (7 Oct)

When she had left her hometown she had a boyfriend with whom she had been 'going steady' for three years. Their relationship was stable while she attended high school and lived at home but when she embraces the new community things change. The old relationship is doomed.

While he's a lot of security and comfort, his path in life isn't the path I want to take. He can't travel because he has a
steady job, and he resents the fact that I've traveled twice. . . . Actually, I've gone out on a few dates and I've met a really, really nice guy and he kind of fits into things a little better. He shares some of the same goals that I have. (10 Oct)

Donna also has a sense of community which extends beyond her immediate group of friends to include the whole university. Throughout her high school years she was disgusted that no one was interested in discussing ideas. She felt a lack of connection with her high school peers because they were so concerned about impressing one another and making the right liaisons.

I appreciate university a lot more because there's a lot more people who know who they are,. . .whereas in high school nobody cares about finding out who they are. It was just, "Party on the weekend." In university it's not that you have to belong to this or that cool crowd because there isn't one. (7 Oct)

By high school commencement time in late October, her sense of separation from the community of that school is virtually complete. She does not want to be there for the ceremony. She is not interested in the speeches, the rituals, the greetings or even the accolades. She had won honors for the highest marks in several subjects but that does not motivate her to wish to be there or be bothered with high school any longer. She has a new community. This old one is a dead issue.

I really didn't feel anything. . . . There's a few teachers I wanted to talk to but if I didn't think I was getting any awards, then I wouldn't have gone at all. (5 Nov)
During a shadowing session in November it is quite obvious to me that she has become thoroughly comfortable in her new residence and her new boyfriend's residence. As we walk along she greets most students who look up and smiled brightly at her approach. When we arrive at her new boyfriend's residence she pauses to consult several individuals about study and dinner arrangements. Her new community of friends is like an extended family, comfortable, exciting, but above all, thoroughly engrossing.

That residence room, which had so shocked her and her parents, is altered so that it has become a positive asset to her sense of community. She shows me the space during a shadowing session toward the end of the liminal phase. I note in my casebook that:

Her room is charming and personalized. Holes and cracks are disguised or covered. A handsomely decorated quilt adorns the bed. There is an elegant clutter of artifacts and memorabilia, among them, a tiny cluster of benign teddy bears and a score of family photos which, by the sepia tones of some, span generations. (Casebook, 15 Nov)

She has tamed the room, blending with its design her own notions of space. It is a peaceful enclave, a celebration of her past, her interests, and her confidence.

Trudy is feeling a sense of community spirit at her community college but it is not thoroughly engrossing. She is not spending night and day with her classmates. Even so, it is obvious that she is comfortable there. When I went to the cafeteria to rendezvous for our third interview, I saw her with someone who appeared to be a good friend. I later discover that this is so. She likes her surroundings. She likes the culture of the one place that students gather. “And
people come to the cafe and whatever. Here there is more interaction with people than there was in high school" (25 Sep).

During this period Trudy becomes comfortable in her new community and develops a set of relationships which spring from classmates' associations. She has also become less worried about whether or not other people accept her. There is psychological and social safety in numbers.

If you're with your friends you're cackling and you don't really care what other people are doing. . . . We're all in the same classes, most of us. It's like we're in with the same people. . . . just 'cause we have, like, the common thread of what we're doing in school. . . . We all just kinda hang out. (25 Nov)

Shyness has dogged Shane all through high school. He is a person who studies the way he behaves and the effects that that behavior has on those around him, always concerned about creating the right impression.

A lot of the time my problems with social relationships before was just unwillingness to be dumb or to be something that I didn't want to be. . . . (4 Nov). I guess I'm kinda timid too, I won't jump right into class. It takes me a while to warm up. (7 Oct)

In high school he had moved from one group of friends to another, trying to find who he was comfortable with, 'experimenting' with various relationships. It was a question of which attachments were best for him. In a sense, he likes the possibility of anonymity at university. It is an opportunity to shed some of his reserve. He feels that until now he has had to work to maintain his image.
A lot of the time I feel like I'm going to say something really stupid. I want to be able to lose that aspect and I want to feel like I'm comfortable. I could probably name everybody in high school... I knew a lot of the people there. Now I don't know anybody. (7 Oct)

Of course he spends a great deal of time with members of the varsity volleyball team. They are becoming his community, at least in a 'big city' sense. Shane feels that people relate to one another differently in big cities and small towns. In small towns a person could be known in a number of ways whereas relationships in the big city are more narrow.

We play well together because we all try really hard and our coach motivates us well. But we are not really together like I would be with another team, say, from my hometown. You're not known for anything because there's so many people... People do not have the same attachment. (7 Oct)

Even though he is not as connected to the university team as he was to his high school team, there are clear benefits to the association and a sense of community. During mid November Shane takes me on a tour of the home team gymnasium including the locker room. I am mildly surprised to learn that his team has its own exclusive locker room set aside. Each team member has an exclusive locker while the whole team has an exclusive room. He and his roommates not only change there, they also gather there and use the space to store bicycles and other sundry belongings. If the team is the community then the locker room is the community hall.
At the beginning of the year Shane was tense around all the other teammates, trying to establish himself as a valuable asset and trying not to say things to embarrass himself. But he becomes more comfortable as the liminal phase progresses. During an early November game I see that he was in the starting lineup. He plays steadily and productively; his team wins easily. He has established himself athletically. This is important. He has also established himself socially. This is important because it allows him to relax.

I went to a party on the weekend and had a really good time with my teammates. . . I like my attitude lately because I don't care what anybody else says. I guess before I did, but now I don't care and I'm not out to prove anything with anyone. I just enjoy playing. (4 Nov)

His relationship with Michelle is not developing so uniformly. During their last high school year Shane and Michelle had already begun the process of learning how to relate to one another, adjusting tone and temper, learning correct distance, and accommodating one another's needs and differences. They became intensely involved with one another to the exclusion of others, then less involved, not quite finding a balance.

When I found Michelle we just sort of detached ourselves from everything. And from then on I started analyzing stuff. I started to realize I was losing touch with everything. Then I started to make friends again, and I did. And then it was time to move on to university. I still wasn't comfortable with everything. And I don't think I am right now. (7 Oct)

When they first moved into their apartment, simultaneously beginning university, they agreed it would be best if they allowed one another to lead separate routines in the daytime. They did not want to be too entangled with
one another. Reasoning that their maturity and socialization would be hampered if they were constantly together, they attempted to establish independent routines and patterns. It is not long before this artifice is revealed as artificial; the independent stance could not be maintained. “I think we both tried to develop separate lifestyles. And we were stressing to get our own friends. We forgot that we can help each other” (23 Sep).

From Shane's point of view the essential challenge in the relationship is twofold. He had to live it and learn it; he also had to live outside it analyzing it. That is his way.

The big thing is that I constantly analyzed everything. I'm always making sure that things are flowing. The only problem with our relationship is that we've always found problems. It's like a soap opera... we always wanted to find problems (7 Oct). It's a strange sort of competition of expectations. (18 Nov)

As well as needing to understand their relationship, Shane admits to an urge to control it. Michelle did not acquiesce.

We're very careful about being critical of each other and the relationship (7 Oct). Up until two weeks ago I was really uptight and in control. I've always had to have control of everything but she didn't like it if I made fun of her, jokingly. She thought I was putting myself above her. Our relationship has developed to the point where I can just sorta back off. (4 Nov)

At our transition team meeting very near the end of the liminal phase it is quite obvious that they are still engaged in the thrust and parry of learning to
relate. Shane still needed to be in control. Michelle still insisted on being treated with respect. They even have a butter and toast story to illustrate how they discover the ego kinks which exist between them. Shane, in attempting to be gracious and helpful, had offered to make French toast for Michelle. She was delighted by the offer but asked him to make it her way. “She didn’t want me to put butter in there but I put it in anyway because I was cooking it. This was my way to cook it” (18 Nov).

During his recounting of this anecdote, which had begun with smiles and laughs, the feeling in the room becomes ominous. Michelle is reliving the sensations. Her resentments begin to resurface. Smiles become frozen, then weaker, then scowls. Shane does not see that his gracious impulse has resulted in a patronizing insult. Michelle, fighting for her dignity and sensitive to the slightest impugning of her independence, become angry again. Shane, sensing the change in tone, attempts to retrieve a principle.

It seems like, though, every time this kinda arises, it's when I have not seen how she feels. I'm the bad guy here, because I'm the one who defied her and wouldn't compromise, but it works the other way.

[Michelle interrupts with] As if it does! (18 Nov)

Once each of them have relieved the details of this incident their moods improve. There seems to be no rancor. Shane is eager to point out all the advantages in their relationship, especially the sharing.

I think the thing we do best is talk about our days and funny things that happen, and our little innovative ideas. . . . It's a big commitment and it's a lot of working things out. Living together is OK. You've got nothing to lose. You only have
something to gain. That was my theory and still is. Our relationship is 100% better that it used to be. (18 Nov)

Yet they have made the transition process more complex by adding the dimension of living together. As far as Shane is concerned, the comments he made six weeks before still apply. Navigating a relationship during the first term transition enhances stress.

The thing I'm finding is that we jumped into a lot, Michelle and I. This school is a lot different. The living is a lot different. In our relationship we have to deal with sharing a lot, which we used to do, but it's more careful now, more intense. (7 Oct)

After the first thrills of moving from home and moving together have subsided Michelle begins to examine the way she thought about the people around her. She had been accustomed to feeling confident about asserting herself. She had thought of herself as strong, independent, and eager for change. During this liminal phase she begins to have less confidence. She begins to realize that she is more sensitive to the opinions of others than she had previously thought.

I always thought, 'I don't care what people around me think.' But now I'm reflecting, I do care. . .a lot. About my status, about my whole situation. Everybody knew me, knew my position. And everything I did was to maintain that position or make a better one. (10 Oct)

She and Shane had sought the independence of living in a bigger centre, apart from family, apart from old school friends, apart even from new school friends. What Michelle had not realized is that independence can easily
lead to loneliness and that loneliness can lead to alienation. Later she might be able to use that sensitivity and not be a victim of it. It is almost like a disorder. It is very painful, because this new world of university is not what she thought it would be. She only knows she exists because she had a number. This is not the way things used to be and it is not the way she anticipated it being.

I'm used to living in a small town where I feel comfortable. Now it's a totally different kind of comfortable where I can do whatever I want, but it's a feeling that nobody cares anymore. (10 Oct)

Even though she lives with Shane who wants to be a helpful, supportive partner, she is unable to tell him all her fears and confusions. She needs help. The future is unclear, the present a challenge of anxieties. She does not feel secure or confident.

I did talk to Shane about the problem I was facing but it's hard to totally lean on him because he's experiencing the same thing, not to the same degree as I am but we're both experiencing kinds of trouble that way. (10 Oct)

Yet she and Shane figure largely in one another's planning, worrying, and helping. It is clear, even in the preliminal stage, that Shane forms a large part of Michelle's community. By the second transition team meeting she is acknowledging this. They are arranging to be together much more than Michelle had thought they would.

We used to sit apart but now we sit together in the balcony. I think that one of the first problems that we had was my independence. Actually, we just discovered last night that
we are here for each other and not against each other. . . .

Now we sit together. (23 Sep)

Not only do they learn to be together in class, they are also developing patterns of shopping for groceries together, going out to a pub once a week together and, whenever possible, having dinner at home together. Like Shane, Michelle feels that

We're working hard. We've come pretty far. I think it's just because we really like each other a lot. . . . All the competing stuff is just something we have to get over before we can finally go, 'Whew!' (18 Nov)

Michelle has not made many friends during this period but in October she is happy that she has made connection with 'two excellent friends.' In November it is obvious that she has not developed a group, or community of friends like others in the study. Part of her alienation comes from her sense of the size of the community but it also has something to do with her schedule and her living arrangements.

I feel that if I went to a smaller university that I would have a much more secure feeling than I do right now (10 Oct). I like to work out every day, well, I'm working towards that, and I have a friend that I hang out with sometimes. That's pretty well all I do. Sometimes I do little errands. I cook dinner. (18 Nov)

During this period she realizes that the transition team meetings are valuable to her for at least two reasons; they provide another way for her to explore the relationship issues with Shane, and they provide some sense of community. "I like this. I like doing this. It's really nice because it clears the air
and there's three other people that I can make connections with and stuff. It's pretty nice" (10 Oct).

There is very little which enhances Elaine's sense of community although she is becoming more familiar with the campus. Her community of friends is not growing.

Finding my way around well. Feel comfortable on campus yet something's wrong (Journal, 13 Sep). It's hard to find time to see my boyfriend but I'm trying (so is he). I try to go out with him and George -- only friends I have. Haven't heard from anyone-- sad. Doesn't anyone miss me? Guess they're happy with their lives. (Journal, 18 Sep)

Isolation pervades her senses. Throughout the fall term Elaine's mood oscillates from almost happy to very unhappy. She is unable to pretend to be enjoying any part of the university experience.

I'm lonely. I don't get to do some of the stuff that other people do (4 Nov). I was feeling really down last week. I had my boyfriend over to my house and I was all down. I had a bit of a fight with him. . . . I think I hit rock bottom that night and I just realized that it had gotten way out of hand; I've got to cheer myself up. (7 Oct)

She does not feel the sense of belonging; indeed, she keenly feels the lack of it. Yet she cannot bring herself to become like the students around her. In the preliminal phase she had been amazed and annoyed that students didn't seem to appreciate the university opportunity. During the liminal phase she feels the same way but talks about the issue a great deal less. She is turning in on herself. During the liminal phase her attention is taken up with psychological
survival. She still seethes when she thinks of cavalier attitudes and the attendant waste of drinking parties and deadlines missed, but she is not paying as much attention to such issues. She is in an uncomfortable dilemma, shunning the behavior yet wistful for the company of those happier students. “I do resent people who don't take it seriously because in some ways they make me feel I don't belong because I'm not doing what they're doing” (7 Oct).

Donna's striking success and clear vision do not make her feel any better. In this theme, Sense of Community, their difference is most striking. Donna's thoroughly and rapidly becoming integrated into the new community has two effects on Elaine, and neither are good. Firstly, it makes Donna not need to connect to Elaine. To pursue Donna, Elaine would have to become dependent and, she feels, "...too much of a burden" (Journal, 26 Sep). Secondly, it shows Elaine, graphically, what she is missing in not belonging. The potential for friendship is sabotaged by their different schedules, styles, and attitudes to the new environment. For Elaine, it is just one part of a melange of insecurities.

I didn't like my courses. I don't feel good here. I don't wanna be on campus. ... I don't know anybody. I just started going through everything that was making me ill (7 Oct). More health problems but under control now --still a bit stressed-- not happy with self lately. Feel a bit vulnerable. (Journal 28 Nov)

Students' Preparations and Preparedness

During the liminal phase students developed a clearer sense of how well prepared they were for the transition. Some are able to study independently, organizing work and play schedules without difficulty, while others feel a nagging sense of insecurity about plans and work. For some the post-
secondary setting is a continuation of previously tested patterns while for others it is a departure which presents problems.

Donna feels that she prepared herself for university by adopting certain patterns which help her learn and remember. She is an avid reader, always approaching reading in a scholarly way.

My reading prepared me better than my work in high school probably because I'm such a keen reader. I got used to skimming and picking out the details that I thought were important for my understanding. (10 Oct)

Despite her having gotten very high marks in high school, she doesn't think of herself as gifted or talented. She is simply focused.

I wouldn't call myself clever, I just worked hard. I cannot be a procrastinator. It drives me nuts. My essay isn't due for a week and already I'm going, 'Omigosh, I gotta get this done.' It really bothers me if I'm not done, like, five days before it's actually due because I like to review it. That's when you can do last minute improvements. (5 Nov)

Notwithstanding her having established effective work habits there were times when she wasn't sure about her decision to attend university. Fueled by some anxiety in the preliminary stage, she actually contemplates dropping out for a short time.

I think the first couple of weeks before school started I started worrying about hating it. Everything was so new. I even went home after the first week and I was thinking,
'Okay, if I quit now I can get most of my money back.' (10 Oct)

These doubts do not last. Once she begins classes and makes friends her academic preparations and enthusiasm carry her energetically into the work of being a first year student.

While Trudy won no prizes in high school she did at least develop the desire to complete her assignments and the energy to do so independently.

I never totally didn't do homework, cause I couldn't do that. That's bad. I'd just get frustrated and do only half or something. But I'd always try. I'd either read it and do it in my head or write it out or something. But not just not do it. Then you wouldn't know what was going on. (25 Sep)

She dealt with high school as best she could and was moderately successful. She did not realize in high school that she was developing energy for work. In fact, when she arrives at community college she surprises herself, pleasantly. "We had an assignment due on Wednesday last week but I had it done by Monday which is very odd for me. I used to leave it for the last minute" (25 Sep).

Trudy is also pleasantly surprised that she could do the coursework. Tests are no longer a mystery, work is no longer drudgery. She was often frustrated with the work in high school. In the community college she can cope. She has more confidence. "Even just sitting there, writing a test I just know what to write. Like before I'd have no idea" (16 Oct).

She has strong views about the students she sees who do not do the work assigned or who wasted time. Just like Elaine, Trudy feels that that is
'stupid.' She particularly decries the business of skipping classes. "Why would you wanna do that to yourself? You're paying for that, literally, like, you're paying your money. Why not just do it the first time" (13 Nov)?

Trudy is enjoying the atmosphere and enjoying her success. She has positive, specific suggestions for high school students who are preparing to attend community college.

It's important to visit so you know how you feel about the place. I'd have students come and spend a day here. But, like, come for the afternoon and check it out and see how they feel about the place, and like maybe sit in on a few classes. (13 Nov)

Shane's preparations as a college athlete worked. His days are organized around practices, workouts and classes, in that order. "It's a heavier schedule than high school but I played volleyball year round for the last few years" (23 Sep).

He is less well prepared for the academic work, having had a mediocre relationship with the grind of homework.

I never really tried hard until grade 13. I mean I tried in my first year of high school and managed to get 60's and stuff up to grade 12. It wasn't until OAC that I had to start trying to get my marks up. (5 Nov)

The university work is often not inspiring. His interest is neither piqued nor directed. Consequently, he is feeling overwhelmed and outpaced by the course requirements throughout the liminal phase.
I was always late. I'm just that kinda guy. And it's tough when you read stuff like, 'This happens, therefore this happens but this may not happen so therefore, and all that. I have fallen behind. I find it very boring at times. It has to do with my course selection. It started out bad. I'll get it back on track sometime soon. (5 Nov)

One aspect of his preparedness which he finds upsetting is his lack of desire to speak in class. This has created a problem, not in the classes of thousands, but in the tutorials and the one seminar class. He resists the pressure to speak.

I'm still lacking a motivation for conversation in tutorials and stuff. Some of the stuff is so dry. I find it boring. I haven't really got into the conversations yet. Maybe when I'm into it more it will be better. Maybe it's just that I'm not interested at all in what they're talking about. (4 Nov)

Early in this phase Shane seems to have settled vaguely on a career in journalism but he has not discovered how to go about it, being satisfied to complete this year in the courses he has already chosen, allowing the momentum of his living arrangements and athletic commitments to keep his attention occupied. He accepts responsibility for whatever plans and preparations are necessary.

I don't believe anybody can prepare you any better. They can say what they want but, to a certain extent, it's a person's responsibility. Journalism seems really stable to me so it seems like the real thing, except I don't know what
courses I need to take and the kind of degrees I need and all that stuff. (7 Oct)

In high school, Michelle did not enjoy the classes. They were not viewed as being part of her preparation because she hated them.

I slept almost every class. I was so terribly bored out of my skull. I skipped a lot of classes, too, like when I turned 18 and got 'sign out' privileges, God!! I went to about one class a day I did all the stuff but I slept through. Oh! It was just awful. (7 Nov)

She found that she could read the texts, do the assigned worked in an hour in the evening and spend most of her school days 'having fun'. She saw no point in attending classes. She did quite well without them. The only courses she liked were independent studies which were typically research based. She enjoyed the pattern of working alone, completing assignments on her own time, and seeing the teacher for occasional interviews.

I like to do independent studies. They're my forte because it's something I can teach myself, right? I always got 90's on independent studies. In my English independent study I got 96%. (7 Nov)

Even with her penchant for independent studies she is having difficulty establishing good work patterns and determining how to achieve good results. "I know my level of achievement isn't as high as it was in high school (10 Oct). I don't think about organizing study. I just do it" (5 Nov).

Later in this phase Michelle begins to realize what is necessary to succeed in her university courses. She had been struggling to express herself
in her writing without making a positive impression on tutors or lecturers but now it becomes clear that if she writes supporting certain themes, which she knew the professors and tutors favored, she would do better. It disappoints her but she knows what procedures she needs to follow.

The best mark I got was in a paper I wrote in, like, one hour one night. I did one copy and got my highest mark. It's just like I'm taking the rules and applying what they tell me, and doing what I'm supposed to do. I play the university game. It's kind of a morbid thing to think but I think that I'm learning to play the game. Coursework is not alarming. It's becoming easier. . . . It's just taking some getting used to, and now I have a pattern. (18 Nov)

Elaine is willing to work as hard in university as she had in high school. Irritated by the frivolous attitudes other students exhibited, in a journal entry she writes, “One girl in English borrows my notes, doesn't pay attention. It bothers me a bit. She just doesn't put out the necessary effort” (26 Sep). While she has a strong work ethic, a history of academic success, and a willingness to work, emotional upset grievously hampers her potential during the early fall.

Everything I read those first three weeks, I don't remember a word of it. Everything I studied, I don't know. Last weekend I started working but I was so concerned with not liking it that I didn't bother trying. (7 Oct)

She reached a critical emotional point during that time. She admits to contemplating escape. “I guess I felt that I can't cut it. That's it. It's over. I'm gonna quit. And I knew I wouldn't do that. But I didn't feel I had any way of controlling it” (7 Oct).
Thoroughness becomes a problem. In high school Elaine had developed a pattern of doing more than was required. Apparently her teachers had accommodated this trait, but now she feels she needs to rethink that pattern.

I know I'm gonna have to change. If I don't get it done early I'm not going to get it done. My teachers thought I was a very smart individual and I would be able to do anything. They knew that the work was really good. It was just late. I would write ten pages when five were required. (7 Oct)

After that first three weeks Elaine tries to focus on her work and begins to succeed at doing so. She is able to stifle, at least for a time, her anxiety. Her mood lifts and she plunges into her assignments.

This weekend I didn't care, I just did it. And I understood it. And I felt like I was getting somewhere. My mom last night said, 'You're so happy. Your eyes, they glow' (7 Oct). I'm usually a victim of the late penalty. Not this year though. So far I've been able to keep up. (4 Nov)

During the liminal phase she manages to do the work but her mood oscillates. In a late October journal entry she writes, "Having better time yet... must be personal problem not really school oriented. Have been sleeping in a lot" (Journal, 30 Oct).

During our 4 November meeting I note that Elaine is calm but somewhat despondent. After our meeting I walk with her to her next class, seeing the quiet places she had found to study. These places had allowed her to work. After I leave her I decide to spend a little time in her favorite study spot to see if I could share the atmosphere which is solace for her.
It is aged and venerable. A church college with lots of pillars and scrollwork; lots of wood, all of it dark and lustrous with the patina of academic age. The library itself is wonderfully olden with a balcony overlooking tilted tables inspired by an age when there were very few books so precious that they had to be chained. It's small and quiet, the only concession to the twentieth century being one or two quiet little computers tucked discreetly into corners. (Casebook, 4 Nov)

Elaine feels strongly that finding spots to study, learning her way around, locating all the shortcuts and having a sense of the campus is most critical. She has definite, specific advice for high school students in this regard.

Find somebody who's doing it. Call the school or something. Shadow for a day. I think they should. I think it's a wonderful idea. . . . Don't go when they have their big come-to-us day. Don't come that day because you're not seeing the real campus. That's not the real place. That's what they want you to see. (4 Nov)

By the very end of the liminal phase Elaine realizes that one of her subjects needs to be switched. She had not developed any clear reasons for her subject choices so she decides to make a rather dramatic switch in one of them for quite practical reasons. "Have switched to astronomy instead of Latin next term. Not as early in the morning, more interesting and saves $ --don't have to come Fridays" (Journal 28 Nov).
Institutions' Preparations

This section has been most difficult to deal with in that there are many sub-themes. It is more than a matter of administrative preparations. Herein we find the spirit which is fostered by the organizations, or indeed any features which have an impact on students getting ready for or going through the transition process. The section thus deals with any of the institutions involved.

At no time in the study does Donna relent in shuddering at the thought of high school. She detested every moment but not every feature. She thought certain features of high school preparation were useful.

As for school, the only thing I think it helped me with was organization, especially in my last year because you had to have your rough copy due on this date and you had to have this done on that day. So it really helps you get an idea of how long to allow yourself (10 Oct). It was such a pain but it really helps me when I go to plan. (7 Nov)

One of the major difficulties she feels high school students faced is a sense of distance from teachers. One might expect that warmth, intimacy, and shared experiences would have bound small town high school teachers and students as a smaller community within a small community. On the contrary, Donna sees teachers and students as separate camps or classes, particularly for those students close to her.

I had two teachers in high school that I really liked and that I wouldn't have a problem approaching; but I know, from talking to my friends and my brother, that there's so many people that they would never talk to. (7 Oct)
Classes in high school were tedious for her while classes at university are quite the opposite. She is enthusiastic about classes, readings, and level of instruction.

I just really enjoy the reading even though there's a lot of reading to do. I'm pretty well pleased with everything. I'm really enjoying my professors. I'm really interested in everything they have to say. (23 Sep)

I could not resist asking about the registrar who had made her so angry earlier. She smiles at the recollection. It had annoyed her but did not spoil her term, perhaps not even her day. “I would never go back to chat with that particular registrar but I've had no problem dealing with the lady in the office about my OSAP loans” (23 Sep).

The dilapidated residence room, which had almost sent her home, was quickly improved. Moreover she soon discovers that it is less of a problem than she had originally thought because there are so many places she could go to study.

In my residence room I got a lot more stuff now, personal stuff. So it made it a little easier. I got a lot more posters, rugs, just stuff that meant something to me. It covered up all the things I had to contend with. Once it got to be my space then I found personal comfort. I haven't used my residence room as a place to study yet. There's a great library in residence and I use that a lot or I sit on a bench outside. (23 Sep)
Perhaps the atmosphere of her residence would not suit those who like contemporary decor but she is thrilled by the traditional. During a tour with her in November I see that she had entered another world and another time. She is in harmony with the design of her residence. She has a choice of dining halls. The one she is most eager to show me is a culture apart from her experience, but one she most thoroughly imbibes.

One of the dining halls she uses is formal, very formal and very British. Grace is rendered in Latin. The head table is occupied by dons and professors. Dinners are served by attendants. No cafeteria this. (Casebook, 15 Nov)

High school for Trudy was a mediocre business. She neither detested it, like Donna, nor enjoyed it. She understood and appeared to accept that she would not get terrible marks or great marks. She does not ascribe blame for this. Yet her lack of enthusiasm for high school preparation becomes apparent when one considers her joy, and surprise at that joy, with regard to her success in the community college.

Even in classes I haven't taken before I have, 70's. I haven't failed anything and I'm used to failing stuff. . . . I didn't fail all the time or I wouldn't have graduated, but it wasn't a big deal if I failed something. (16 Oct)

There is a freedom in community college which she enjoys. Early in the term she decides to attend a concert during the school week. This will mean leaving one of her classes early. It is interesting to watch the play of emotions as she explains that she is going without permission and that she wants to make a good impression on her teachers as she is realizing that she does not really have to justify her actions. I believe I observe small steps towards
independence during that utterance. The college is a place which allows her to grow.

I wouldn't say that I was going to a concert. I would say, like, 'I have a personal matter to attend to,' or something. I don't want them to think that my social life is more important than school, 'cause it's not. It's just a one time thing. (25 Sep)

Trudy also feels a sense of freedom in her computer class. The instructor has not limited students' use of software so she feels comfortable exploring with it.

Half the time I'm on the internet anyways. I really like fooling around on the internet 'cause I never really used it before, until here. It's fun. It's really cool. Somebody in Hungary is talking to me, and I'm able to keep in contact with a friend in Waterloo. (16 Oct)

Trudy does not need anyone's help with transition. She has 'no problems' and becomes steadily happier with community college as the liminal phase proceeds. Her desire to go to university has almost disappeared by mid November. The college suits itself to her so well that she is no longer worried about university.

Well, I don't care that the university didn't accept me or anything now because my marks are good. I don't know whether to reapply there again because I don't know if I want to go there. Half a diploma doesn't give me anything. (13 Nov)
She is delighted with her experience and her success, yet she recognizes that she is lucky. She is not impressed with tours arranged by institutions, emphasizing that tours are artificial. The institution's preparation for them is insufficient or so efficient that prospective students do not get a realistic view of the campus. Students have to see for themselves and get a sense of the college.

I know places have a day where it's all new people, like, to check it out. But that's different because it's the college with a bunch of new little people there. It's not the actual college. (13 Nov)

Shane is experiencing the rigors and challenges of a student moderately motivated and struggling for direction. The dire warnings of his high school teachers still echo, but he still does not appreciate those warnings. He does not see them as helpful. “I've been warned, and warned, and warned, and cautioned about the first year. They try to weed you out. . . . I don't like that” (7 Oct).

It is not a question of his realizing that the teachers were right. He does not believe they were right. Like Donna, he believes they were distant, a class apart. Shane does not speak with anger or resentment over this distance, rather he describes a condition too deeply enculturated or ingrained or personal even to analyze or change.

I think it's a personality thing though. . . . It's hard to say to a teacher, 'Ya gotta be more approachable,' because a lot of them don't care. I wouldn't say don't care. It's just not in their nature. (7 Oct)
At no time in the study does Shane describe any teacher as helpful, or interesting, or inspiring but he did fare well academically in high school. University marks are lower but he is optimistic.

Marks are tougher. One teacher's pretty picky and he's given me 7 out of 12 on three essays. So it doesn't look like I'm progressing but there is definitely changing. . . . I'm curious, not discouraged. (4 Nov)

For Shane the courses mean being mired in information. He is frustrated with the way courses unfold and material is presented.

I find it boring at times and I find it interesting at times. A lot of my courses are that way. It's like I have to go through formulas and stuff to get to the good stuff. You know, formulas like macro-micro. (23 Sep)

Shane has three courses where classes were very large. In them one could become lost in a crowd of up to 1700 students. I had heard participants describe these classes and was trying to get a sense of how thousands of students in a space could constitute a class. It is not until Shane takes me to his classroom that I see how truly massive the spaces are.

Next stop was the hall where Shane and Michelle attended lectures in the next hour. It was a huge amphitheatre of several levels, big enough to contain the population of a small town though it certainly does not have a small town feel. (Casebook, 12 Nov)

In one of his small classes Shane is struggling with the problem of speaking in front of the group. While he is thoughtful and articulate in our
transition team meetings, he has not mastered the problem of being shy in the tutorial or seminar setting. For this reason the transition team meetings are filling a need that is not being addressed in any university course work.

When I get in our group I have to give everybody else a chance and I have to make sure I'm focused through the conversation. Then once you start to talk about things you really find out who you are and where you're going. I know that you're studying and stuff and it's good for you but it's a chance for me to talk too. (7 Oct)

During this liminal phase Michelle's antipathy to high school strengthens. By November she has developed the freedom to express the impression that in several ways the high school experience could have been a better preparation. When she first began high school her teachers, motivated by the notion of under-representation of girls in math and science (Karp & Shakeshaft, 1997; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1994) observed that she had done very well in sciences in junior high and avidly encouraged her to concentrate on mathematics and science in high school. So she did that, hating it. Stung by the dilemma of being prodded into the sciences and not feeling welcomed, Michelle was especially resentful of the role that the institution played. She liked science neither for its curricular substance nor its activity style.

When I was in the sciences I always felt like I was underrated. Nobody wanted to hear what I had to say, especially the teachers. When you're in a younger high school class they don't promote creativity. (7 Nov)

She also grew to hate small group assignments which she felt were a waste of time.
I hate doing those. Two people would really do all the work and three people wouldn't do anything. I'd rather do it myself than have to carry another three people on my shoulders. (7 Nov)

Like Shane, Michelle expresses resentment at the teachers for having tried to worry students about what would happen during the transition in the big, bad city.

Something silly that a lot of teachers did to prepare me for university was tell a lot of horror stories and misconceptions like I'm gonna become an alcoholic so I shouldn't go to pubs and stuff. (7 Nov)

Again during this liminal phase she speaks of the distance between staff and students. This seems to affect her most deeply. She is more than wistful when she speaks of the gap between groups. On the verge of tears, her tone of voice thinning, one can hear the plea for change in her voice. Indeed throughout the interviews and meetings, when issues touch on the preparation of the institutions, Michelle is emotionally engaged, angry at opportunities lost, angry at errors, angry at distance between people. These feelings seem to cause her stress but they do not weaken her so much that she cannot articulate her view of the problem.

It would be so much nicer if the students and the teachers were together, if students and teachers ate together, if students and teachers had the same washroom, if students and teachers had the same smoking area. . . . I've always placed teachers on a pedestal and I could never reach
them. I was underneath them. I have always felt that. (7 Nov)

Perhaps admiration had characterized her pedestal gazing at some time in her school life, but that is no longer apparent. There is distance, to be sure, but it is not a distance shining with respect, quite the contrary.

Okay, I'm going to draw you a picture... Teacher, raised higher than the students, first of all sitting down, looking at his notes, talking, telling us what we have to know. 'Look in your textbook. We'll read this out loud... blah, blah, blah.' I slept almost every class. I slept and I figured out the pages in the textbook. I'd go home. I'd read to myself, feed myself the knowledge and pull off an 80 in the class. I think we should invite the teachers to sit in their classes, objectively. Look around, if you see a student sleeping, is that not a sign? (7 Nov)

While Michelle wrestles with her emotions about the high school experience, throughout the liminal phase she also struggles to find herself in the amorphous environment of the university. In the one place she feels she was too well known, in the other place it is the opposite. In both cases it is a problem for her. It is like going from one extreme to the other.

I feel like such a big number. I should just stick it on my forehead (23 Sep). I know that I am existing because I am a number and because I have my student card and because I attend class and I do the readings and I do the university stuff. But it doesn't feel personal at all. I think I'll feel better when I get things back that say my name at the top. I haven't received anything yet. (10 Oct)
She is lost in a big place. She is confused. She is anxious. She feels unsupported by the university. By the first week of October, Michelle needs help. In her desperation she begins to fear for her emotional and physical health.

I have never talked yet to a registrar or a counselor affiliated with university stuff. I mean I've made myself quite affiliated with psychiatric services, but I haven't as yet been acknowledged as being a student by anyone. I went because I really felt lost. There's a three week waiting list, but I just couldn't wait for three weeks. So I declared myself an emergency and got in on a particular day. Something was missing. Something was wrong. I couldn't figure out why. It's nothing I can pinpoint. My eating habits were messed up. I couldn't sleep. I was distressed, and all buddy [the counselor] told me, essentially, is that I am normal and I'm experiencing a lot of the things that people experience. But I had no idea it was going to be like this. (10 Oct)

Elaine was invited to help initiate the transition process of this year's graduates at her high school. Specifically, she was asked to speak at an information night about her first term experiences. I wonder about this. Knowing that she is having a difficult time with the transition process I think she might dampen other students' enthusiasm. I also wonder if the experiences are too raw and hurtful for her to benefit from talking about it in such a public forum. With her penchant for thoroughness and honesty she plunges into the project, planning to give a realistic picture.

Been asked to speak to OAC's about experiences. Don't want to give a bad image. But want them to know it's not as glamorous as they think. They must plan ahead too

Perhaps the counselor ought to have met with Elaine to plan the evening's work. Perhaps a panel of previous graduates would have given a more balanced, if not optimistic, presentation. Elaine is very articulate, sensitive and intelligent, but in the confused and troubled state which characterizes her transition, she could hardly be expected to speak about the joys of attending university. For her, there are none.

On a more mundane but still critical preparation issue, high school teachers had tried to trim Elaine's writing to prepare her for university. Her teachers thought she wrote too much. They also thought that while they were patient with her, university professors would be much less patient, ascribing a rather unusual (perhaps even mythical) marking scheme to those ivory tower evaluators.

I'm long-winded. Teachers used to write it on the test. 'This is a simple answer, Elaine.' And the rest of the class would laugh. In high school they said if the professor says two pages, a page more and they stop marking. A page less and you don't get the mark. (7 Oct)

The experience of being laughed at did not make her comfortable there nor did it immure her from the effects of ridicule in the new university environment. Perhaps it was quite the contrary as is often the case with the 'toughening-up' attempts which may only serve to sensitize, not strengthen. In the middle of the fall term she feels ridiculed by a professor and suffers embarrassment. Another student might have not been as affected as she is. In her case, given her tenuous hold on a set of reasons for courses chosen, it is
enough to make her lose all interest in that course. "Professor kind of made fun of me because I didn't read as well as he would expect me to. Just makes me want to switch to new subject. Next term, maybe computers or astronomy" (Journal, 11 Nov).

While the university was big and strange to her at first, as the fall term progresses she discovers that it contains many nooks and crannies, particularly one old-fashioned library, where she could study. It is this aspect of the new institution which she seems to appreciate most. "I discovered that really quiet, good spot to work. It's really pretty. It's got a fireplace and a chandelier lights and stuff. . . . It's really calm" (4 Nov).

This oasis of a study area may be providing a critical element of support allowing her to negotiate what has otherwise become a terribly disillusioning, threatening experience.

Support from Parents

This factor is complex and interesting. Since the focus of the study is the participants' perception I did not attempt to obtain data from parents. Though it was a temptation, it seemed outside the bounds of the case (Stake, 1988). It would be useful to interview parents if one were attempting to gauge parent support in some general fashion. What is essential is to get a sense of how participants viewed the support they did receive. It is also illuminating to get a sense of what kinds of support mattered to them. Financial support from parents certainly eased some issues for some participants, but support is more ubiquitous and subtle than that. Parents' attitudes, parents' interests, parents' history with post-secondary institutions, and possibly even the nature of parents' work seem intricately woven into the tapestry of transitions. Moreover, these supports appear to reach back in time to encompass participants' entire lives.
with the family. Certainly, support from parents seems to be important, but it is a long time in forming.

It appears that support varies for all participants in the preliminal phase, but all parents were generally supportive. The degree of specific interest parents seems to have held varies according to the attention given that issue by participants. This seems to have become less of an issue for some participants as the term lengthens simply because they are in a different environment where home influences are far away. Others stay home during the first term, and that creates interesting tensions for transition.

Donna's confidence is solid. Some of that confidence may come from having had a firm home base of support. Her father was interested in Celtic studies and typically read the non-fiction which is attuned to his daughter's interests. He is also a university graduate who insists that his children go to university and live in residence for at least one year. He has always felt that his time in residence was important and special. Donna says that he thinks of his time in residence as the most important time in his life. There was never any doubt that she would attend university. Her parents were not able to provide all the funds she would need but they provided enough so that with summer work and OSAP loans she could manage.

My dad went to university so it was always a really big thing for me to go and carry on the family tradition and be, like, the second generation to go to university in my dad's family. (7 Nov)

Her settling in so well has created an interesting tension in the family. She is so thoroughly immersed in the new friendships that time with her family has been severely curtailed, enough so that her mother feels slighted. In this
stage of the study the tension is noticeable without being dramatic, at least as far as Donna is concerned.

I have to work this weekend but for the next two weekends. I won't be working so I'm saying "Mom, I'm coming home Friday night but I'm going right back Saturday because I don't want to miss the weekend with them. I want to go back because we have all these plans. My mom doesn't like it because even when I'm home, I'm out with friends, just coming home to sleep. She feels that she doesn't see me enough. I guess the reason it doesn't bother me is that I still talk to her twice during the weekend. I see her at home so it's not a big deal. (10 Oct)

Trudy lives within a short drive of her community college. She lives with her parents, never having intended otherwise. Her sister, several years her senior, has moved out leaving her as the only child at home. She seems to think of herself as a child at home, paying the coin of independence for the dollars of support.

I'm not a bad kid. I don't do bad stuff. It's just that they pay for my car and everything. They hold that over me, like, 'If you do something bad, we're not going to give you the car.' My parents know that I'd never smoke, I'd never get drunk, and I'd never do drugs. They know I think it's stupid. I think they should leave me alone about stuff like that. They should just trust me. (16 Oct)

In certain ways she has been begging to assert her independence, albeit slowly. On one occasion she became angry when her mom was cleaning her room, moving things around. Trudy is very glad she has bought most of her
things with money she’s earned because she likes the idea that her parents could not claim them.

It drove me nuts. This is my room. They say, 'But it's our house.' And that just bugs me 'cause it's just mean. That means I have nothing. If they ever were to say, 'Oh, you can't have that,' I don't think so!! I bought it with my money. Like, get away! (16 Oct)

She is still quite connected to home in another sense. She feels the need to impress her parents with her work. “If I do a good test, I tell them. If I don't do a good test, I don't tell them. For my math tests, when I got a 90 and a 95, I put the test on the fridge” (13 Nov).

Throughout the liminal phase Shane remains wistful about leaving home. He realizes that he liked being at home. Increasingly he recognizes and recalls things which made home so pleasant for him.

I’ve been really excited about going to university for the longest time. And I was ready for it, and I still think I am, but I miss them parenting me. It sounds strange because you always tell 'em to leave you alone and let you make up your own mind but I miss them doing little things for me like laundry, and putting towels out in the morning when I'd go for a shower [laughter]. I miss their company because I really got along with my parents. (7 Oct)

Six weeks later Shane is trying to connect his relationship with his parents to his relationship with Michelle. Their relationship being new and newly ensconced in an adult configuration, he studies it with an academic interest as well as a personal interest.
I've heard theories about when you look for a partner you look for somebody like your mother or father 'cause that's what you've grown to like. And I don't know whether that's inhibiting, you know, to believe that she's just replacing my parents and therefore I haven't grown any. But I guess she's just replacing my parents in the spiritual or sensual instead of the responsible sense. I guess I'm responsible for myself now. I guess that, in itself, is a maturing thing. (18 Nov)

In September, Shane and Michelle have to negotiate several issues. These issues are wearisome and ubiquitous for them. Then relationships intermesh, Shane's parents helping him deal with relationships issues he was facing with Michelle.

Our relationship wasn't really enjoyable until about Friday [20 Sep]. She went to her home for the weekend and I went home to my home. It was just good to get back to normal living almost. I realize that my parents were really supportive. (23 Sep)

It is not until the middle of this phase that Michelle talks about her parents, even then she does not say very much. There are hints of tension but nothing specific. In November she speaks of having gotten herself into a situation which was resolved by her being transferred from one school to another. This was a severe problem for her where she feels her parents supported her.

I was a bad teenager, one of those who changed schools in grade 10 because I got into big trouble in grade 9. Then I was out of trouble and doing really well in school. I owed
that to my parents because they got me away from the bad
group of kids. (7 Nov)

She shows respect and gratitude but her feelings about her parents
reveal a sense of loss or wistfulness. She has been consistently and
vociferously complaining about the distance between teachers and students in
school. Her father is a teacher. It is difficult to decide whether distance at home
caused distance at school or vice versa, but in the dynamics of families and
schools changing over time it is probable that both mutually informed,
interwoven in muddy reality, difficult to conveniently categorize. “My father was
a teacher, there was always a big distance between my father and I and I still do
place my dad on a pedestal. I think that probably carries over” (7 Nov).

She never mentions her mom, nor does she speak affectionately of any
aspect of home life, but in her relationship with Shane she describes the kinds
of things one associates with parents and parenting.

Shane’s kinda taken on my parents’ role and I think I’ve
kinda taken on his parents’ role. And so now that I think of it,
maybe there is a need that we’ve sorta grown into. I’m not
desperate for attention but I really like it now. Sometimes a
hug is a big deal to me. I think Shane and I both help each
other. I can’t imagine myself living with a different
roommate. I think that we just support each other really well.
(18 Nov)

In August, Elaine gave the impression that her dad felt she would have to
find the money she needed herself or not bother to go. He has money, but
believing that she should learn to cope, doesn’t intend to simply pass it over.
When she decided, at the end of September, that she could only attend daytime
meetings I was surprised that her father offered to pay long distance charges so
that she could meet with us by telephone. In November, Elaine reports another item of support, “My parents surprised me. They pay for my transportation” (4 Nov). Her parents support her with more than money. She is open with them about her misgivings about university. They see that she is stressed and, along with her boyfriend, try to get her to be optimistic.

I don’t know if I would have picked up on it if my boyfriend and I hadn’t had the big fight. He said something about how I was destroying myself, the exact same words my parents used (7 Oct). Had long talk with mom and dad. Everyone thinks I am destroying myself. –Must fix. Hard tho’. (Journal, 5 Oct)

On one occasion Elaine speaks with her mom about coming home late. Her mom thinks it is a good idea and encourages her to do so. “My mom said, 'It doesn't matter what time you come home, you're at least doing something with your time” (4 Nov). But Elaine cannot bring herself to stay late. Swim clubs, meetings with friends, social gatherings of any kind, nothing appeals to her strongly enough to delay her returning home.

I like going home because I think that the closest people I have are there. I’d rather be on my way home ‘cause everything's home for the day. I don't have to worry about the way home and the bus and the train and the subway. I admit I’m not ready to be by myself, on my own. I could do it if I had to. I could do it but I'm not ready for it. (4 Nov)

She also thinks that some other students ought to live at home. They should live in a more controlled fashion. She is aghast at the stories she hears about parties and erstwhile school mates.
There's other people who, I think, might have been better off if they'd stayed home. They would have had something constant. I have a lot of friends who've done some terrible, strange things. Some are sleeping with people for no reason. Some are doing drugs or drinking. Some are failing school but used to do well. (4 Nov)

Ironically, Elaine’s parents make no demands on her and give her a great deal of support with money, food, lodging, companionship, advice, interest, and love, yet her transition is quite difficult. Perhaps, without that support, the results would have been vastly better or vastly worse. She might have been forced to succeed or the transition might have been tragically truncated. We can never really know what would have happened without the support. Did it weaken her will by making her dependent, or did it strengthen her so that she could survive the emotional onslaught the transition had become? In any case, she feels she is being supported by parents.

Role of the Student

Working through the liminal phase does nothing to mellow Donna’s view of high school. If anything, her criticisms of the pedagogical aspects of high school become sharper, more comprehensive and more vehement.

It's . . . like, it's just, Ugh!! We spent, Gosh!, like a month and a half on Lord of the Flies in grade 11! How boring was that?! There's so much more you could look at, so much more you could do. In high school everything is so monotonous and so routine. Every day you go to the same classes and you're there for 40 minutes and you cover such a little area, just filling in time. (7 Nov)
She did not like the monotony but more than that she sees it as harmful. She feels that the slow pacing of work was dysfunctional to students' preparation for the transition to university. She feels that high school encouraged a poor understanding of the pacing of work.

In high school we'd get maybe four weeks to read one book in English whereas you'd really only need two nights. Courses in university are much faster paced than in high school. I actually prefer that. I learn much better than with those small amounts of work they give you in high school where it's . . . read ten pages and do the questions on them. In high school you move way too slowly. You're not really ready for the fast pace at which university courses move. It's quite easy to get left behind. (10 Oct)

Donna also chafed in high school because she had so little control over her curriculum. In this sense she seems to echo powerfully Knowles's (1990) notion of pedagogy victimizing learners or Freires's (1970) 'banking education' model. She wanted to be involved on deciding what she was going to study but she feels that it had all been decided for her. She finds this more than annoying; it is dangerous. Donna feels that the stifling of creativity and lack of input by students stops them from learning and stops them from being engaged in the work. It is insulting and demeaning to her.

Not enough is done where you could create a thought or you could think, 'Oh, this means something,' and follow it up. That's what I didn't like about school. It's always someone else's direction. I might have cared more about some things if I had've been able to do it myself. I think they need to increase the amount of responsibility they give you,
and give you a little more credit for the capability they think you have. (7 Nov)

Donna does not like the way the institution treated her generally and she does not like the way most teachers taught specifically. She detested copying notes from the board, finding that meaningless and slow. She hated long lectures and she resented being obliged to do set assignments for marks.

One teacher I had would write so much stuff down (23 Sep). If the teacher is going to stand up and talk and walk around the classroom for sixty or eighty minutes I'm going to sit there and 'veg'. And you're like, 'Ugh! I gotta go to class (7 Nov). You were always marked. I never wrote because I wanted to. (5 Nov)

Curiously, she does not seem angry at specific teachers, She is more inclined to resent the way they were obliged to work. In contrast she enjoys the way professors work. For her they are expert, worth listening to, and focused.

Unlike teachers, professors are so specialized, at least in what I'm doing. They really know their stuff. Teachers were restricted in what they were able to go off on. They had a set plan that was approved. (7 Nov)

Respect is a significant feature of the Role of the Student question for Donna. In high school she did not feel that she was respected whereas in university she does.

High school teachers deal with you as if you have to be there rather than you want to be there, whereas at university they realize that you're there because you want to be. They
give you a closer to equal status with themselves (10 Oct). I think it's really important to let the high school students know that you respect them. (7 Nov)

Many critical issues are positive for Trudy. Her vision is sound, she is establishing herself in the community, and she is happily making progress. Curiously, the least positive aspects of her transition concern the Role of the Student theme. This seems to have occurred for two reasons. Firstly, there are courses in which she is treated like a high school student who had to simply follow instructions and secondly, there are curricular areas which she did not like.

While Knowles (1990) describes a smooth devolution for the student from pedagogy to andragogy, for Trudy this is not the case. Style is the same.

The teacher is pretty much the same. Same style, like, this is the lesson. This is the homework. And the content is pretty much the same thing (16 Oct). There's a late penalty for assignments, same as in high school, like so many percent per day. (13 Nov)

She did not like her English courses in high school and she likes them less in community college. In this course she does not feel she has any input. It is boring, repetitive, and meaningless for her.

I still don't like English. It's dumb. It doesn't seem like we're learning anything. We had this whole exchange essay thing. Most of the people in class were down like, twenty percent. We don't hand anything in. We just have little quizzes. Like what you do is put in a comma or a semi-
colon. Like we don't do anything interesting (13 Nov). All we
do is workbook exercises and that's it. (16 Oct)

Fortunately she enjoys other subjects more. She is content with her
marks in other subjects. She is particularly pleased that her new business
oriented math course is still a positive, successful experience. “Math is my best
course. It was always my worst. Which is really weird. Like, grade twelve I got a
52. Now I have a 92. I know what I'm doing” (13 Nov).

It is obvious during our interview that the English, while disappointing, is
not surprising to her and does not have much impact on her mood. When she
speaks about her success in math she becomes animated; that is a surprise. It
has a quite positive impact on her outlook.

She is convinced that success is quite possible for everyone there but
she does not think that other students take their work very seriously. In this she
sounds as though she and Elaine had compared notes and agreed precisely on
this point. Yet they have never met.

You're paying your money to come here, get your
education, get your diploma, but if you're not going to do the
work, you're not going to get it (25 Sep). You have to work
for what you get. (13 Nov)

Nevertheless, Trudy does not range widely in her study interests nor
does she study beyond assigned work. She has not become studious or
scholarly, merely successful.

Whatever is done in class I would take that as what is to be
done. But if it's in the outline and they don't say anything
about it. I probably wouldn't do it, 'cause sometimes like, they stray from the outline. (25 Sep)

She is annoyed with the pedagogical emphasis on 'doing things for marks' in both high school and community college. She struggles with the notion, something troubles her about the cheapness of being pushed around by adults, made to behave by the threat of a negative evaluation. Done repeatedly, these tenets colonize the spirit like the indoctrinating effects of those religions which preach that something is right because it is written. Minds shut down. Eyes glaze over. Trudy does not articulate a rationale for holistic evaluation, or even competent, thoughtful evaluation, but she knows using marks as weapons is wrong. She could feel it.

In high school there was such an emphasis on marks for doing work. the teacher would say, "If you guys don't do this work you won't get, whatever. A lot of people don't do homework here in community college. They're like, 'Well, how much is it worth?' You should take it upon yourself to do it. (25 Sep)

While she is quite content to leave planning to the instructors, Trudy is maturing in her attitude --andragogically-- about school work. She is responsible for her part in the process. While other participants in the study would have wanted a larger stake in curricular decisions, within the scope of her notion of the hierarchical model she visualized, she was independently managing her extrinsically designed tasks. She sees a clear division of roles and responsibilities.

It's not the teacher's responsibility, obviously, to say, 'This is what you missed.' If you miss something you go and find out. In high school you have to have a note and you take it
to the office. It used to be the school's responsibility. Now it's your own. (25 Sep)

Most professors do treat Shane in an adult fashion in the sense that they leave all the responsibility for learning to him. This is so simply by virtue of class size. His classes are so large that he is lost in them. This suits him because he is able to listen or not as he chooses. He can choose to attend or not, to sleep or not. Almost by default, he is treated andragogically; he is left to his own devices. The problem with small classes for him is that he is exposed to pedagogy in that the instructor could see him, assess him, assume some responsibility for him. This happened. He does not like it. He does not want to be scrutinized and improved. The only impromptu meeting he initiates with me is because of his exposure in a small class. The instructor had wanted everyone to participate in class discussion. Shane had held back until finally, in the first week in November the professor makes a sarcastic remark which upsets him.

Shane called last night saying he wanted to see me about an incident in class. The professor has hurt his feelings by seeming to undervalue Shane's comments. He feels that the seminar situation and professor are forcing him to behave in a more outgoing fashion than is comfortable for him. There wasn't much said, just a hint of belittling, enough to make the others laugh and him feel small. Shane is a tall -- 6' 5"-- strong, athletic person who also just happens to be a sensitive, gracious young man who avoids conflict. He was hurt and stung. He discussed the situation with Michelle. She helped him see that he could maintain his personality. He did not have to be gregarious and engaging suddenly. Shane also felt that he shouldn't have to be abused in this fashion. (Casebook, 13 Nov)
Shane is upset. He is used to this controlling behavior in high school but is not ready for it at university.

I find it irritating and almost pressuring in tutorials where they try to promote conversation. I don't like that. In high school I used to ask a lot of questions. I wouldn't dare ask questions here. (4 Nov)

Shane's lack of clear direction made his course selection haphazard. Courses were loosely connected or not connected in any way which had a long term focus. He feels that he needed to explore. He knows his course selections are an experiment. He is not naive, he realizes that a focus is required, but at the same time it is obvious that this lack of focus did nothing to ease his transition.

A lot of my courses I don't enjoy right now. The only course I do like is effective writing. I've really moved across the spectrum. It's good 'cause I get a chance to figure out what I really wanna do. (22 Sep)

The lack of unifying threads across subjects parallels a similar lack within subjects. Shane finds that things do not make sense to him. In order to pass tests he simply has to learn subject content. This is not going to enhance his maturity as a scholar but he is not concerned about that. His concerns are much more basic. For now, he wants to pass.

This cramming stuff. The thing is, if you don't find the subject interesting, you're not going to think about it. And so the only way you can learn is to memorize it for a test because I couldn't give a clue whether there's social interaction or
symbolic interaction but I cram for a test. It'll be gone in two
months. There's little tidbits I find really fascinating. But a lot
of it I find really redundant. So I just memorize it. (5 Nov)

He is ambivalent about high school's pedagogical stance. He wants the
freedom and responsibility of university but he misses the predictability and the
safety of high school.

High school is a different setting. In university you are
responsible for everything for yourself. In high school you
have a pattern and it's almost like the bells and the ringing
and all that stuff is something that you're conditioned to do.
But here there is no conditioning. (4 Nov)

Late in the phase Shane finds aspects of university courses that he likes.
He finds that forbidden topics in high school are no longer forbidden. He feels
that in high school older students were constrained because of the presence of
younger students.

I'm writing an essay about sexuality in a way that I couldn't
in high school. If you had any books on pornography in our
high school library, people would be scribbling all over
them. Grade nines would go nuts over it. Because you're
still lumped in with the grade nines, you're still pretty
immature. (5 Nov)

In mid November Shane begins to sense work and study patterns at
university. He begins to learn the protocol of making sentences sound suitably
learned and questing. He begins to come to terms with being bored, treating
university the way many treat jobs which they feel compelled to do without that
passion of commitment.
You know how they tell us all the writing rules? Sometimes they're looking for, not necessarily your adherence to the rules, but the way you work the rules. As soon as you understand that you can make a complex sentence that just blows 'em away because it's got a real catch to it. At first I thought it was tough and it still is tough but I'm sorta starting to realize that it's a sorta constant thing. I always have work to do. I've a more positive outlook about university now. It's not anything that I really hate, any more. (18 Nov)

Michelle had one high school course where she felt respected, treated like an adult. In many ways it had few characteristics of her other high school courses. It seems, from her description, that it was organized in ways in which Malcolm Knowles would have termed andragogical. Student input was ubiquitous and valued. Students felt elevated and engaged. In style, tone and substance this suited her very much.

I had an effective woman teacher in women's studies. It was something that was new to me so I was really interested in that class. There were always presentations in that class, too. We had an option. People liked to come to class. Some days we would watch movies and discuss books. That was so excellent because we'd just sit in a circle. She'd ask us our opinions. Before, nobody ever asked me, "What do you think of Napoleon?" And the circle idea was really good. I never fell asleep in that class. (7 Nov)

Ironically the woman's course where she felt most valued is associated with an incident which stands out as being one of the most demeaning and upsetting she had ever experienced in high school.
Teachers have to be integrating with students. It makes me mad that in the tech hall of my old high school (it was actually where I had my women's studies course) and in that tech hall there's a man's washroom but not a women's washroom. One day I just had to go the bathroom so bad that I used the staff washroom, the staff women's washroom. And a teacher came in and she yelled and yelled at me because I was in her washroom. (7 Nov)

For Michelle most high school learning was anything but andragogical. She was a victim of the learning process, not a participant in it. She went to school because there was no choice but she went as little as possible either by sleeping through the class or signing herself out as much as possible or taking independent courses whenever possible. She followed procedures. She drank the cup of knowledge without slaking any thirst. Michelle achieved high standing in high school but for her it is a shaky high standing, superficial and unsatisfying.

In high school classes there was nothing emotional I could connect to. I was always on the honor roll but it was only because the night before I'd study. In biology I could never remember leaving the class. I couldn't remember what happened because all I did was take notes. Even if I just dissected something it was so pukey that I didn't want to remember it. I didn't know what anything was. And then the night before I'd just look at all my notes and all my stupid handouts and read them and memorize them for the test. I was reading some of my old history essays. They were really bad. It was just complete regurgitation from class. It was all so meaningless. When you learn things that way
you don't really learn. It goes in, you spill it out, then it leaves. If teachers could just act as a mediator between the students and the knowledge, and just help the students find the knowledge, and find themselves within the knowledge, it would be so much better than it is now. It would be so much more enjoyable. (7 Nov)

It is interesting that as the first term proceeded Michelle's review of the high school pedagogical process becomes stronger. At one meeting in September she compliments the teaching style of her high school teachers. At first she says, “I would say we had an excellent high school education. Many teachers just talked so we had to learn to note what was important” (23 Sep).

Later the notion of note taking in high school dredges quite a different, more powerful response.

Copying, copying, copying! Copying what other students said. Copying what the teacher wrote on the board. This was definitely the most useless thing we did. I have the greatest respect for a teacher who is effective but if you choose to be a teacher, you choose to invite students, invite your pupils into a whole spectrum of things that you have available. And from what I've seen, teachers use the smallest, the farthest end of the spectrum. It's just...Ugh! (7 Nov)

From high school, where things were too planned and too predetermined, Michelle proceeded to university where she has the opposite problem, at least with one course. She feels there is insufficient direction by the professor. Anxiety supplants her boredom.
In one course I have a problem. I think the professor’s really good but the course that he’s arranged for us is something off the top of his head. He makes it up the night before. Why can’t he have it in a book like many of the other teachers so I know what he plans to do? A lot of the course is just reading articles which I don’t see the relevance for yet. I need a guide, a structure. (23 Sep)

One course seems to have the right pedagogy/andragogy balance for her.

I like the English. It’s a small group, there’s a lot more assignments. It’s a lot more personalized. You can actually express yourself and be a lot more creative in that class. In any other class that I’m taking there’s no outlet for creativity and interaction. (23 Sep)

Michelle feels somewhat more important in the learning formula than she did in high school. She has more right to express opinions, more room to design responses. While the university is a huge amorphous place, in some respects she feels she is more of an actor than a prop.

In high school I found that the teachers concentrated a lot on the method that you used. For example, in writing essays (I didn’t do anything else but), ... everything was so mathematical. In university I have a chance to explain what I want to do, like bring in new insights and not have to worry so much about a completely formal format. I can introduce things that I’ve never done before. Even the method of organizing an essay they taught us in high school doesn’t
apply now. You had to have all the research done and then decide what you think. Whereas now I figure out what I believe first. I feel like professors are real people because I've placed myself in a different position. I place myself on a pedestal now because I'm paying. I want to learn this and I'm paying him. (7 Nov)

Elaine had a difficult time in the preliminal phase. Later, it becomes even more difficult. Coping is such a consuming issue for her that she does not have any emotional energy left to criticize educational structures very much. Despite my probing, she does not seem to be aware of pedagogical/andragogical concerns. She is not struggling for self-expression, she is struggling for self. Moreover, data indicate that in her world view, terms such as ought and should are paramount. She is driven by a sense of being judged based on how well she measures up to standards of behavior which she has internalized. She seems to approach both kinds of institutions with the gentle posture of one who seeks to know the correct procedures. She does not rail against bureaucracy. Elaine does not complain about lectures, boredom, or group work either in high school or university. Her critical facility is attuned to the way she and other students fulfill responsibilities. Looking around her, she is not impressed. Looking inward, she is not pleased.

I have a friend who wanted to be a scientist. Now I knew she'd never make it. She knows to show up to class but she doesn't do it. She's failing five classes and she's only taking five classes (4 Nov). I have a very bad tendency to leave things to the last minute. And I've gotten away with it waaaay too many times. (7 Oct)

When we discuss the issue of late penalties I expect Elaine to resent being punished and treated, pedagogically, like a naughty child. I am wrong.
She is not aware of any problem with the idea of late penalty at high school or university.

I think the late penalty is right just for the simple fact that if I was late I deserved it (4 Nov). I always go beyond the minimum. The counter of that is that I'm always late. (7 Oct)

Because Elaine is so eager to fulfill her perceived obligations, and high school had many specific restrictions and directives, she found high school more demanding than university.

I was really surprised at history in university. She wanted half what we used to do in high school. One day I brought my essay in when I was very sick and the prof said, 'You don't have to bring it in when you're sick.' When I was in high school you did. You had to have it on his desk that day. You didn't have an excuse, unless you were in a coffin. (4 Nov)

Elaine accepted teachers' pronouncements, even those that seem to me to be unjust and arbitrary.

Most students came here because their friends came here. And that was the only criterion. Our teachers told us that if they found out that we were picking it just because of that, they were going to nail us. They were going to make our marks as bad as they could be because that was not why we were supposed to be going. (7 Oct)

Throughout the liminal phase Elaine's journal comments support the notion that survival is a much more important issue for her than growth. She is
not concerned about criticizing the difference between pedagogy and andragogy. She is not especially concerned about various teaching methods or the world views which subtend them.

Find work piling up a lot, but not a lot of assignments. Miss that. Just reading (Journal, 4 Oct). Have had some stress from health problems so I haven't been focusing very well {Got extension for some of my essays --T.A.'s very understanding} (Journal, 11 Nov). Have had some quizzes and assignments. Didn't really work hard at it. (Journal, 28 Nov)

Desire for Change

In a sense the entire study is about change. The idea of transition could not easily exist exclusively of the notion of change. Consequently the study of a state of change is implicit throughout each of the themes. The particular focus of this theme is on the desire, not the change itself. Entirely rooted in participant perceptions, desire generated questions which required participants to reflect on their past desire for change, their further thoughts about that past desire and, in some cases, their present thoughts about further changes in the future.

Donna, predictably, is extremely pleased to have left high school. In retrospect, she determines various kinds of reasons for desiring a change from that place. One of these reasons had to do with her classmates. She has friends in class but many classmates were acquaintances she does not respect. She feels uncomfortable around them. They have no ambition, no desire, no willingness to work. It upsets her and bores her to be working with unmotivated individuals.
They didn't want to go any further. I would rather work with people who are similar to myself, who go into the issue further. Sometimes you sit in a group and you have someone beside you who doesn't ever care about what he is going to say. And they say the stupidest things, and somebody says . . . 'Ya. OK. Let's put that down and we'll get it over with.' It's not intelligent. It's not creative. It's just obvious. (7 Nov)

Donna wanted a change from those associations. She wanted to work with students who were interested. Unmotivated students in the context of a curriculum which for her meandered interminably, exacerbated her desire to leave high school.

You expand so little past the day before. You learn a concept in two weeks that would just take a day in university. It's just so very slow (7 Nov). In high school I just wanted to get there and get out. Every day it was just like 'OK. God! When was 3 o'clock going to roll around. (5 Nov)

She is not in university residence very long before she realizes that the relationship with her hometown boyfriend had gown stale. They had separated and gotten back together on a number of occasions already. With her change of place Donna realizes that she had desired a change in that relationship which she had not previously acknowledged or at least articulated so precisely.

He's a fantastic guy, great friend and I like him a lot and I love him but I don't want to marry him. He expects the little farm wife with ten children and a stay-at-home mom. I want the travel, the career, and maybe kids at forty. (10 Oct)
Donna is delighted to have made the change but she accepts that she's in a changing process, a set of transitions. She accepts these and looks forward to the changes occurring in their turn.

I don't feel the same way about university as I did about high school, but it's still not something I wanna be in for the rest of my life. It helps me push off to somewhere else that I wanna be. (5 Nov)

For Trudy there are comparatively few changes. She is able to stay at home. While she does not rave about her high school, she also does not appear to have suffered the same depth of yearning as Donna. She would like to leave home to accomplish that change but is much too practical to do so before she feels ready. It sometimes rankles that she is a child at home, not enough, however, to motivate her to find the money.

It'd be cool in my own place but I wouldn't want all the responsibility and bills. It's easier on the student, but I'm just kinda like, sick of my house. Like, my parents are really getting on my nerves. It's just like they're always there. (16 Oct)

Shane has not changed his mind about the importance and necessity for change. He wanted to change, grow, mature, and play volleyball at a higher level but he had not felt a strong need to escape either high school, home or hometown. He feels that he went through pivotal, personal issues prior to his transition to university.

High school, for me, was more experimental. I guess for the longest time I've been trying to figure out myself and figure
out what I lack and all that stuff. I went through a big change
in high school from this little geeky kid. (7 Oct)

Yet he is glad to have made the change. He does not long to return to
high school even though he misses the family connection. By November he no
longer wants to see or think about high school. It is over. It does not beckon.
Commencement was an irritation, badly sequenced simply because it
traditionally seems to have taken school systems that long to determine who
has really graduated. Shane is not happy that circumstances have pushed this
event into the fall of the academic year.

It was weird going back for commencement. I felt it was
over. I suppose I had to go (5 Nov). It should have been
three or four months ago 'cause I'd closed the door on high
school. To go back in that setting and have the same
teachers talk and have that whole procedure was really
awkward for me. (4 Nov)

Shane's desire for change is tarnished by some of the transition
processes. He was motivated to succeed in high school because he wanted to
be accepted by university. Now that he has arrived, that desire has not
readdressed itself to the next phase. For him it is more of an issue of dealing
with the vicissitudes of settling in. Had he had a clearer focus in choosing
courses some of his enthusiasm might have remained. As it is, he finds his
attitude swinging dramatically.

Oh, I think I'm getting back into it now. First I started to hate
it. Then I loved it. Then I hated it again 'cause I wasn't
impressed with my courses. I just didn't find it amusing.
What am I doing at this school? It's not fun . . . . And now I'm
starting to like it again, probably because of volleyball. (23 Sep)

In mid November Shane explains that he is not wasting as much time watching television as he was earlier. He is beginning to spend more time at study. “I don't watch TV as much now. When I sit down to breakfast I turn it on or when I'm really stressed. I almost feel guilty sometimes, about TV” (18 Nov).

In his thoughtful manner Shane has developed a metaphor for transition which seems to concern desire for change directly. At first, preliminarily, desire is powerful. Liminally, desire dissipates. For Shane, this seems quite apt since desire for change requires a distance vision to fuel it. “A good example would be like an astronaut. It's obviously an awesome feeling to go up there, but once you're there you just sorta go with the flow” (18 Nov).

Michelle, too, expected a greater change than she got. She was eager to leave the old status and place, very eager. She had thought that there would be wonderful changes with powerful impacts transforming her. She is disillusioned.

I thought of it as a change to gain a new identity. But what I found is that I'm still the same person, almost to a 'T'. The only thing different about me is that I've had a bit of a culture shock. (10 Oct)

Her sense of distance with high school teachers is not a simple matter. While she observes the distance and desires to change herself and change the distance, Michelle is emotionally entangled with her high school. At times I have the impression that she really loved her teachers. Could it be that she saw them caught up in role playing they could no more control than she could? They were in charge of students but they had no choice but to be in charge. They were
imprisoned by circumstance, culture and expectation which may have gone beneath their consciousness in a panoptic sense (Foucault, 1977).

I cried at commencement. High school felt like it went by really fast, like a summer camp (5 Nov). It's like the domination thing. Like when somebody says, 'I want you to do this.' Nobody wants to listen to somebody else. Nobody wants to be a follower. They tell you. They tell you what is right. They tell you how to do it and then they expect back from you what they told you. It would have been better if the teacher had said, 'This is the topic. What do you think about it? How do you feel about it?' So I can learn from within myself. (7 Nov)

Elaine expresses no desire for change in the preliminal phase. As the liminal phase proceeds she desires change less and less. She desires the opposite. Repeatedly she says the change is too much. In an impromptu meeting she initiates 22 October she says that she wishes first year was just a few months and that these few months were already over. University is a grind and a trial.

Finally slept full night. Just really don't like being here (Journal 11 Sep). Been very pessimistic about everything. Seem to just want it to end. Counting down weeks. (Journal, 18 Sep)

The change Elaine had made did not suit her. Her transition, while it is not going as planned, is going as she feared it would. From time to time an ambiguous, ominous note echoes in her utterances. While the transitional change is rejected, she knows she will have to change the way she views things, just for protection.
If someone was as down as I was I know exactly what they're thinking. It's not good. What they need is to realize that if they don't change, everything that is stable in their life is gone. (7 Oct)

As she sees other students change she is disgusted. It is a different kind of change from the one feels she needs to make. Their freedoms and their experimenting are all nasty to her. Elaine is clinging to a set of values which are unlike those of her peers. Indeed they serve to separate her from her peers. Her observations of other students seem to confuse her more, anchoring her attitude in resentment which is the kind of ground which provides no security from drift. She is defining herself in the negatives of others' behavior.

Friends home for Thanksgiving. Big surprise --some drugs, smoking, drinking, sleeping around. Wow!! I never thought they'd all change so much so fast. That desperate to fit in? I am confused as to what I should do. Can't accept, Can't ignore. (Journal 12 Oct)

Later her resentment of these changes deepens because she perceives that it makes her more and more isolated. Elaine wants to forgive them for changing but she cannot quite do so. This has become another issue to bedevil her.

I'm not one to judge because they can do whatever they want. They paid for it, but I think the things they valued, they don't value anymore. Whether they are just growing up now I really don't know. It makes it hard on the rest of us who really didn't change as much as that. These people really don't seem like the same people. People who you think are
going to be your friends, when they left, totally changed. (4 Nov)

Community College Stigma

Donna’s vision precludes her considering community college. Moreover, her parents were thoroughly in favor of her attending university. The stigma attached to community college does not seem to have any impact on her thinking.

I wanna do the university experience. I was never keen on high school. Now this is my chance to actually enjoy school (7 Oct). A university experience is just something that I don't think you can ever replace. I think that was one of the most important things that my parents stressed to me. (10 Oct)

For Trudy, who had been painfully aware of the stigma in August, the decision to attend community college had passed through emotional phases chronologically. At first the decision was grudging, then it was joyful. During the liminal phase the joy moved from celebration to disdain and pity for those poor souls who had elected to go to university.

I was at a party and there's this girl I know and she's going to university for business administration. She hasn't done any of the stuff that I've done. All she's done is memorization stuff. I couldn't sit there and do lectures. 'This is what accounting is, blah, blah, blah, blah. . .' while we're sitting there and doing it. (16 Oct)

A month later she describes a situation which she thinks shows that the community college is a better institution than university. In computer class the
instructor had been combining a lecture/demonstration method which created problems for some students. A small group of students complain to him and he adjusts his style so that more students could do the work.

He used to lecture the whole class for two hours. And he'd be like, 'Click on this,' or 'Click on that,' and if something didn't work in the process you'd get behind the whole class. A lot of people talked to him and now he says, 'Work at your own pace' (13 Nov).

Stigma is not an issue for Shane. He needed to attend university to foster his fledgling career in volleyball. He also wanted to meet the challenge. He recognizes that there is a certain status attached to university but he values community college and is considering the practical aspects of attending one after university and after traveling around the globe. He sees community college as a preparation for a career while university is a transitional, growing stage.

I think I would do some sorta college practical thing. I would integrate myself in the coop or something like that (7 Oct). University won't mean any more to me because the only reason I'm here is because I wouldn't know where else I could go. And I don't expect to become this great other person. I just wanna get my credibility accepted. (5 Nov)

For Michelle, university is also a goal which she has to accomplish but she is no longer convinced that it was her best choice. I sense that stigma had some bearing on her original decision to attend and will encourage her to complete.

I'm going to attend university and I'm going to get a degree. It'd be stupid to drop it. I've lived my life believing that
university is what I had to do and now I'm not sure if it's the right place for me. (10 Oct)

Elaine feels she was herded into university because community college would be beneath her. She resents high school for stopping her from feeling free to choose community college.

Everyone thinks I'm too smart for college. Did I do this for me or was it expectation (Journal, 19 Sep)? I think it's a crime the way our school pushed university. I was told I was too smart for community college. (4 Nov)

As early as mid-September the issue of whether or not she ought to have chosen community college becomes a large part of her turmoil. Stigma is a curious theme in that it matters little to others or at least its mattering varies widely. For Elaine it may have been the most critical issue. She seems to have always wanted to go to community college but did not dare do so because of the stigma attached. This is not an issue she could allow to lie dormant. It festers and like a dental cavity is probed and picked at and worried until it is the source of anxiety infecting everything around it.

Want to quit and try college, not because it's easier, just more interesting. I would like to learn skills toward a job. Can't see what good courses will do me. I should have gone to college (Journal, 19 Sep). Then I think, drop down to college -- then no. I don't know what to do. (Journal 26 Sep)

Now that Elaine has begun she does not want to quit nor does she want to be seen as a quitter. "I almost did apply to college. I'm tom. I wanna stay with
the university 'cause I started it, but there's stuff I'm gonna learn which is a waste" (4 Nov).

Elaine yearns to be more career focused. She sees a crispness of purpose about her friends who had chosen college. Her boyfriend attends community college. She begins to envy those community college people. More and more she yearns for study which is more practical.

I wanna work right towards a job. I think that for a little while there it made me think I should go to college because that's exactly how it's set up -- to go to a job. . .a lot of people were telling me I wasn't for college. So I started to wonder did I pick university for myself or did I pick it because of them. Should I be here? So I started to resent people because they had it under control and I didn't. (7 Oct)

During November she decides to apply for community college. She has been waffling and wondering, worrying about impressions but generally and consistently discontented at university. She first tells me of her decision to explore options at community college at a shadowing session. I am impressed with the change in her tone and manner. She does not have the sparkling eyes of those that hope in desperation. Rather she is quietly and serenely happy, a state I had not seen in her before.

I am joyous for her. She has a focus, a purpose. She thinks that some people will think less of her for switching to community college, but she is beginning not to care as much. She is optimistic for the first time since I've met her. (Casebook, 12 Nov)
Commuting Distance from School

Donna does not have to contend with commuting distance. As a student in residence she has everything close by and she is delighted by that. She becomes more and more part of the community.

I really settled in. Right now I'm really happy with my situation. Living in residence forces me to make new friends (23 Sep). I completely love it because everything I want to do is right down the road or two doors down. (7 Oct)

Even though she attends a big university in a big city, her decision to live in residence focuses her community so that it is a manageable size. Donna does not adjust to a big community. She does not have to. She carves out a wee niche of it and adjusts to that. She has created a village atmosphere.

I've kinda found the happy medium of people I want to hang around with. I guess what I like about residence is everything is small. You really get to know everyone in your year that's staying in residence. (10 Oct)

She sees residence as an important aspect of her easy transition, recognizing that an increase in commuting distance would have made first year less friendly and less efficient.

If I didn't stay in residence the degree of friendship would be different. It's got to be hard for Elaine to make friends or to move to any degree of friendship where you would go and hang out with them for a weekend or purposely leave home early to be able to spend time with them. I believe what my father told me. You have to live in residence. He
told me the best year of his life was spent in residence. (10 Oct)

Commuting distance remains a non-issue for Trudy. She has the car. With it, she is ten minutes from campus. She is in the community where she grew up. In many ways her transition was much less wrenching than it was for the others. She is as close to community college in traveling time, as she had been to her high school.

Shane recognizes that even though he and Michelle are only thirty minutes from university, they have isolated themselves. They are strangers together in a strange land.

A lot of people are from here and they have their own friends and there's probably lots of people meeting new friends but we live off campus. It's really tough. We are both feeling a little lost. There's not many people you see twice around here. (23 Sep)

While he realizes that residence would have made his transition easier, he associates it with immaturity. For him it would have made the transition too small. In his desire to mature he sees that living apart from students with his partner as a more worthwhile step for him, a more substantial step toward becoming a man.

For some reason, I don't like residence. I don't like that kind of stuff because I feel you're backtracking. It's like going to camp and you turn around and you almost lose sight of who you are really. You're just drinking beer and being a teenager again. I like the responsibility of my life, the steps. (4 Nov)
For Michelle the relationship, living apart from others, and commuting distance, are a blessing and a curse. She likes Shane's support but perhaps she has put herself in a position where she has created a need for more support than she would have if she had embraced the university community by living in it. Would she have been so lonely if she had been in residence?

During the same interview session she reveals the best and the worst features of their living arrangements.

I like it because Shane is totally a support that's there all the time. . . . It gets depressing if you just sit in the basement and do homework a lot of the time. It's nice to explore relationships outside the one Shane and I have. (10 Oct)

Shane and Michelle are tough and noble, sensitive and intelligent, but working out a common law marriage style relationship on top of the other transitional issues does seem to complicate their emotional lives. Cutting themselves off from easy access to the life of the university seems to aggravate that problem, particularly for Michelle. “Sometimes it just feels like I'm not important, or our relationship is not important or dinnertime is not important or something. . . .” (18 Nov)

Commuting is another serious problem for Elaine. She didn't want to be at the university at all, so having to spent three hours commuting seems a gratuitous punishment. She never felt that she had freely chosen to live at home even though she fastened herself to home with psychological hoops of steel. It is more a question of circumstance which became a compulsion. As early as September 13 she writes in her journal that she hates to have to come in on Fridays. She had graciously taken herself out of the evening transitional team meetings before the end of September because she detested being late getting
home. It started being a problem and it continues to be a problem all through the liminal phase. Curiously, her commuting time had a negative impact on her relationship with her boyfriend.

He's got homework, I've got homework or neither of us wants to drive. We've both driven all day (7 Oct). We don't see each other much. Really hard. Feels like long distance relationship. (Journal, 12 Oct)

By November she is poignantly aware of the commuting distance and its effect on the emotional distance she is experiencing.

If you stay near university socially you're much stronger, especially if you stay in residence. Everything is geared for residence. I think everybody should look at it more than I did. I really didn't think about it ahead of time, I see everybody and they all belong to something. (4 Nov)

Summary

Across the nine themes and five participants the variety of experience and perception being reported at this middle phase in the study seem to deepen. Generally there were few new conditions. Those who were happy in the preliminal stage become happier in the liminal stage, while those who had earlier concerns show deepening concerns. Great discrepancies in firmness of vision and sense of community continue in this phase seeming to have more impact on the lives and feelings of students. Students who were most prepared are generally most comfortable with the work and study required. At this stage students' preparedness differences became more noticeable in the degree of confidence which they show. In considering institutions, most become less satisfied that high school did a good job of preparing them. Students are still
hoping to become independent but it is during this phase that they begin to realize how much support they had at home. Some show signs of being wistful about leaving home. With regard to Role of the Student, students have become more critical about the way high school instructed them providing little challenge or interest. All seem to regard it as somewhat belittling. Some have also noticed aspects of university or college which are more pedagogical than they had anticipated. They feel somewhat disappointed at not having quite as much freedom as was apparent in the preliminary phase. Those who had a strong vision seem to have gotten the change they desired while the others are disappointed with the change. Community College Stigma is an issue which, during this phase, is revealed as having had an impact on others who felt compelled to attend university for the social status that implied. Commuting for some becomes more of a problem as the term proceeds.
Chapter Six
The Post Liminal Phase

When I first began the analysis of data for this phase I was concerned that there was nothing new to report. On reflecting I realize that that is quite reasonable. Van Gennep (1960), Ahola-Sidaway (1991), and Turner (1967) support the notion that this third phase is much less dramatic than the earlier phase. Abrupt changes are not expected. It is, after all, a period of consolidation and relative stability whether it is termed 'incorporation' (Van Gennep), 'integration' (Ahola-Sidaway), or 'aggregation' (Turner). It is a much quieter time than the previous phases. Students have accommodated the change, made decisions, and come to terms with the new environment in some way or another.

All participants knew the study’s time limits. They realized that data collection would cease at the end of the term so they tended to review previously considered issues and suggest advice for stakeholders in the process, chiefly students and teachers. Nevertheless, there were some new incidents and insights which speckle the post-liminal phase.

Again the themes below follow the same pattern as the previous two chapters. The revisiting of the themes provide a sense of the changing views of participants as they become incorporated:

Vision

During this period Donna’s dreams and plans continue to flourish. She is irrevocably and optimistically committed to Celtic studies. Her vision is so strong that the path and the way along the path is clear. All is part of the vision. When I ask her if she would drop out of university if she were offered a secure,
interesting job, she demurs. The university experience, which she is enjoying immensely, has become an integral part of her vision and part of her security.

I think I would still prefer the education in case ten years down the road maybe I'm making a lot of money and it's the job I wanted but I'm not happy in it and if I don't have the education to back myself up then I'm stuck. So I'd rather stay in on that account (16 Dec).

Like Donna, Trudy does not change her intentions even slightly during this phase even though they had not been long fixed. She points out that high school students often don't have a clear vision of their future. In a sense, she is lucky because it was not until the middle of her final year that she decided what she would pursue. She doesn't claim any credit for having decided nor does she insist that students must decide at a particular time. In fact, she maintains that it is very difficult for people of that age to make such decisions.

January, I figured it out, just before we had to submit our applications. Before that I had no idea. Most people don't. It's really hard for people to say what they choose to do. You're, like, eighteen. You don't know. They say, 'I think I'm going to do this,' and then they switch, constantly, until they find something, which is such a time waster. (18 Dec)

She is happy about her educational plan, so much so that she would not leave her community college course even if she were offered a full-time, attractive job. She has developed a momentum to follow her vision along it's apparent path. "I don't wanna have an Incomplete. I think now I'm gonna finish this diploma" (18 Dec).
At our December meetings Shane no longer mentions any future career options other than journalism. He no longer speaks of sales, psychology, or any of the other choices he had been considering. This does not make him any happier about being at university. In fact, he seems to be toying with the idea of not continuing his formal studies. There is no plan to leave, just a dangling thought. At one point he seems to be preparing an explanation for pursuing a career without completing the degree.

You never stop learning. I would never want to stop exploring ideas. That's why I wanna be a journalist. If I quit school now and became a journalist, I'm still reading and I'm still pursuing ideas. So it's no different except for the fact that I'd do it my own way. (16 Dec)

In his softly probing fashion he is questioning many things in his transition. The vision is not in focus but he does not accept all the responsibility for that lack of focus. In a way, he feels that the keeping of subjects distinct adds to the confusion of students. He feels that there are inconsistencies which ought to be resolved in some systemic fashion.

I don't understand why there has to be a distinct division between math and science. When I went to high school, I had good marks in math. I hate math now. I like English and I was never good in English. I still don't know what I want to do. (2 Dec)

Even though he is successful in his role as a university volleyball player, even though he has a supportive relationship with this partner, even though he had eagerly sought the opportunity to go to university, he is uncomfortable. When I ask Shane if he would drop university in order to take up a secure job he says, without hesitation, "I'd go for it" (16 Dec).
Michelle is convinced about the value of lifelong education but she is not as certain about the value of university. In the liminal phase she had had a very difficult, stressful time adjusting to her new surroundings. Now she is left with a belief in the world of ideas but a vastly reduced interest in formal educational structures. She was rocked by her experience. She would like to take the dream job and leave her present program, but she would also like to continue learning in university in some way or another. Her vision of the future is not really any clearer than it was in the liminal phase.

If somebody offered me a job that I'd be happy with for the rest of my life, I'd definitely take it, but I don't think I'm ever going to stop going to university. I like what I'm learning. I don't learn skills but I learn ideas and I learn about myself. (16 Dec)

Elaine, in November, had become interested in leaving university and switching to community college. Even in the preliminal phase she had a confused vision and was ambivalent about university. Now, in December, she is mechanically attending classes, driven more by duty than by desire.

Some days I don't feel like talking about the subject and I sit and I wait, and I wait, and I wait. Then I run to my next class and I don't do anything in that room. All I do is get a mark for sitting in the room. (16 Dec)

Elaine would certainly leave university for the dream job. She plans to leave in order to attend community college anyway. Her focus has settled on skill oriented programs. Her vision does not involve university after first year is completed.
Sense of Community

The various themes postulated in this thesis constitute my version of the issues which these students engaged during their transition. They are not binary issues; nor are they issues which can be satisfied in a checklist fashion. For each participant the engagement was different, differently prepared for, differently conceived, and differently executed. Needs were met in some ways by one participant and in some other ways by some other participant. Nowhere is this variability more obvious than in Sense of Community for Donna and Trudy.

Residence is a powerful, positive factor for Donna. By December she has forgotten her earlier preliminal misgivings and has only good things to say about residence life. It is a sure method of meeting new people which is very important for her establishing a sense of community. It is convenient; it allows her to have just enough independence to experiment with relationships, parties, and schedules. Residence provides limits but these limits are less constraining for her than the limits of the previous year at home. She could explore, learning more about herself in that gentle exploration. She has, metaphorically speaking, a larger room to grow in. She is convinced that living in residence is the best form of accommodation she could have chosen.

And I think it's a good adjustment in terms of dealing with the social life. I mean dealing with having the freedom to go out whenever you want, stay out as long as you want, have people in your room as late as you want. When you're in residence, everything's a little clearer. So even if you have a class at ten o'clock and you get to bed at four, you can still get up at ten to ten. Whereas if you live in an apartment twenty minutes away, you couldn't do that. (5 Dec)
Donna adores residence and feels that everyone must go through it to get the maximum advantage from the post-secondary experience—which for her is, of course, university experience. Trudy has no experience with residence and did not consider it. By a geographical irony her home is closer to her campus than the residence for that campus. This is simply because her community college has a number of campuses but only one with a residence on site quite distant from her campus. Trudy has gained her sense of community quite slowly in some respects. She developed a small number of acquaintances. She has become comfortable in the setting but it was not the dramatic plunge of residence orientation with its manic, ubiquitous parties. It is a much more subtle process, taking exactly the full, first term to complete. By the post-liminal phase she is incorporated in something like the new community. Not only is she comfortable and content, she belonged. "We do have a little clique. There's six of us. We pretty much have all the same classes together so we just go around together everywhere now" (18 Dec).

Separation from the old status is also taking place slowly, not really complete until December. Trudy had attempted to maintain connections with some of her high school friends in an attempt to draw these communities together. It did not work. By the end of the term she is finding that the new college friends are now her friends, while the high school friends have become acquaintances or merely a memory.

I don't talk to the high school crowd any more. I phoned them last week to see if they wanted to go out with these new friends, and none of them were home. And then I left messages and I haven't heard from them yet. I don't have to bother with that anymore. I want friends who are around. (18 Dec)
For Shane and Michelle, the sense of community is not strong. Incorporation into the life of the university does not seem to be taking place to any extent which can give them comfort or support. They have made adjustments, but the energy and time which they might have devoted to developing a range of new friendships has gone into learning to live together. Shane is more fortunate than Michelle in this regard in having a built-in, ready-made community in the volleyball team membership. Early in the previous phase he had established a rapport with his teammates. He is situated comfortably in the volleyball organization and, unlike his partner, does not seem to suffer the same loneliness that dogs her spirit and drains her energy. He is aware that there are services available for players who need counseling but he does not think he needs these services. “Our volleyball team has programs. We can go talk if we need help. . . . We have psychologists, sports psychologists to work with. . . . I haven’t gone yet” (16 Dec).

In contrast, Michelle is still painfully aware of loneliness. She expects to feel more of a sense of community than she does. Neither classes, nor social events, nor living arrangements have generated opportunities for her to experience the kind of incorporation she desires. “I am expected, in a lot of my classes, to be a number. . . . In a big class it’s really kind of comforting but also so impersonal. It’s really uncomfortable to be just a number” (16 Dec).

Elaine has developed no sense of community at the university. In the preliminal and liminal phases it appeared as though she would rely on her home community as her only community. In several interviews during the fall it had become apparent that she was resisting involvement with other students, in part because she thought them cavalier in their attitudes about skipping classes and schoolwork generally. During the post-liminal phase she reveals no success at integrating with the new community. On the contrary, misconceived
efforts dominate our discussion of community. One particular effort ends in bathos.

Our college has a program for non-res [students not in residence]. Except the common rooms aren't big enough for everybody and they never plan ahead. They had a get together for non-res people. It was from 12 'til 2 pm. We got there at quarter to one and there was no pizza left. (16 Dec)

Students' Preparation and Preparedness

Until December, Donna never doubted her academic preparations or intellectual preparedness. She had gotten high marks in high school. She is actively interested and engaged in her course of study. Still, she wonders if she is prepared enough. Her Celtic studies course is easy for her but her archaeology is more challenging than she had imagined it could be.

I think I studied maybe an hour and a half for my Celtic Culture midterm and I breezed through it. But I guess I'm stressed because I spent way more time studying for archeology than I would ever study for anything in high school. Before I would never stay up until three o'clock in the morning, ever. I just found out that no matter how many hours during the day I spent, I never felt prepared enough to write archaeology. (5 Dec)

She found out that the course work was more demanding than she had anticipated. Her style of working has always been thorough and methodical. She had become accustomed to drafting assignments well in advance of deadlines in order to have time to revise and edit. She also believes in that
exhaustive method of writing assignments. It had gotten her several scholarships and excellent marks, but now she believes she is overwhelmed.

Lately I've had a very, very busy time . . . I had a mass of essays to work on. They were coming out of my ears. It's not that I wasn't prepared to sit down and write them, it's just that they were fairly long papers and I like to do about three or four rough drafts. (5 Dec)

This feeling of being challenged by work is new to her. Donna had always enjoyed working hard and getting high marks for that work. Now she no longer has the luxury of deciding to work hard; she feels compelled to do so. Moreover, she is no longer confident of receiving high marks. Her expectations have been humbled by this process of having to struggle to achieve.

I really, really, really felt pressured and I always used to think I wouldn't be happy with something in the 70's, but I would be so happy if I got 75 on all my tests. It's just a big change in attitude that I would actually be happy with 75% on my tests. It's just because I found it very stressful. (5 Dec)

This experience does not seem to have weakened her resolve to achieve. It merely seems to have helped her to more closely analyze what achievement will mean for her. Donna recognizes that she is going through a transition process and needs time to complete it. Her use of the term 'liminal' reveals that she has become familiar with the language of the study. It is interesting to speculate how much this clever young women has appropriated some of the concepts that we have wrestled with throughout the term.

First year is always going to be a liminal stage where you're kind of adjusting, readjusting and finding whatever works
for you (5 Dec). I'm just not ready to say, 'OK, I'm ready for the world. I just wanna stay in that transition between being a kid and being the responsible adult.' (16 Dec)

Trudy's academic preparations were adequate while her posture about study, developed in high school and refined at community college, continues to be one of disdain for those peers who are inefficient at study because of a lack of commitment. In thinking back to high school she doesn't admire students who crammed for examination without working steadily throughout the term. She views this as wasteful, more so now in community college where students have to spend money on education in more obvious and direct ways than they did in high school.

In high school people used to do bad on the term and then cram for the exam (Journal, 8 Dec). To me, this is the whole thing, you're spending your money so why not go to classes and do your work so you won't have to pay again. (18 Dec)

She has not had to borrow any money through a combination of good fortune, good management and a steady job. She often thinks in terms of the financial waste of skipping classes or not completing assignments. She doesn't want to waste her money so she works steadily and attends all sessions, completing work as it is set. She has expressed no difficulty in keeping up with study at this stage although her life is full. She is either in school or at her workplace every day. "I don't have any problems with school, except I never get a break, like, one day where I'm just gonna do nothing" (18 Dec).

Shane hasn't warmed to the professors during this first term. Neither his high school work nor the preliminal and liminal phases have made him feel that educators have any particular interest in ensuring that students learn.
Most of them, they know the concepts so they just talk and let their thoughts go this way or that based on what they're thinking, but they're not making sure that you understand it. They're just blabbing and actually thinking out loud. (2 Dec)

Shane realizes that he can't depend on professors to take an active interest in his success so he has to manage for himself. He has become tougher, more self-assured, more independent, and perhaps a little cynical about the university experience.

People who aren't controlled, they're usually the ones who flunk out or drop out or whatever (2 Dec). I think you can get a lot out of university though. If you do it your way. You can make it your own. You can be really ignorant with stuff that you don't like. (16 Dec)

His drawing away from university community mores is nowhere more obvious than in his attitude about making presentations in class. In the middle of the term he was shy about making class presentations, shy about joining seminar discussions. He is self-conscious and does not want to draw attention to himself. Now his feelings have stiffened. Not only does he want to avoid presentations, he absolutely will avoid them. In a best of all possible worlds he might have wrestled with the demon of shyness and learned to make presentations but, by the post-liminal phase the opposite has happened. He has come to a solid negative decision. In his developing he is learning resistance.

I have no business in presentations. I hate them. And so I have no intention of doing any presentation that they say. I'll just not go to class because I don't want to stand up there. I
wanna learn and I want the idea to come to me. Forget the rest. (16 Dec)

Michelle's resentment of her high school experience still flourishes in this phase although the drama and terror she experienced in the liminal phase is abated. She looks back seeing that she was not engaged in the choices she was making in the early stages of high school. They were made for her. At first she accepted them because she felt that she could not do anything else.

In grade ten you have to take math, you have to take science, you have to take a typing course or something and you have to take phys. ed. I didn't know what I was doing in grade ten. The guidance counselor said, 'You have to take this,' so it was like, all over. I just signed my name. (2 Dec)

In her struggles to make meaning of the two kinds of environments she realizes that in high school subjects were isolated. She wasn't able to see connections between them. Now, as Michelle is incorporated into the academic milieu of the university, she is beginning to see connections everywhere. Her transition had been dangerously unstable at times yet by December, she sees a set of patterns emerging. Where there was chaos she is beginning to see wholeness.

In high school each subject had a lot of walls built around it. Nothing really overlapped in high school. In university, because I know what I'm interested in, all of them overlap. (2 Dec)

In a sense, Elaine must have been the ideal student for those teachers who particularly prized good manners, a sense of duty, and a willingness to complete homework. In her academic preparation she was assiduous. She did
not look for ways to reduce her preparations or her workload. Quite the contrary, she was eager to complete all the work. Even before she began high school she worked hard and thoroughly, perhaps a little too thoroughly. “In elementary school I used to do more than the teacher asked. And the mark went right down because I didn’t do exactly what they wanted” (16 Dec).

School work was never difficult for her. She engages in it willingly. This was never an issue. While some participants may struggle with the increased workload, she does not. Her questioning, anxiety, and confusion seemed, for her, to relate to social or emotional preparedness. She never felt any lack of academic preparation.

I like doing work. I don’t care about the mark. If I like what I said and everything, I hand it in. After that I really don’t care. It’s just that I got spoiled in high school. I found the work really easy. I still find it really easy. (16 Dec)

Institutions’ Preparation

How do participants now view the ways in which high school and post-secondary school prepared to assist them with their transitions? Donna is not quite as effusive as she was in earlier phases. Now that she has become somewhat settled, accustomed to university and residence life, she can review the term and face examinations with a sober realization of the vicissitudes of the transition. For most of the first term she has been very happy but she does insist that there are times when students in transition must have someone with whom to discuss worrisome issues. In the early stages she feels it was necessary to confide in old friends with whom she shared a history.

I’m really happy where I am now . . . but I think for the initial period you need someone that’s a familiar face to talk to
rather than just talking to someone who doesn't really know you or know where you're coming from. (16 Dec)

On the other hand, she has nothing but praise for the assistance she has been receiving through her residence organization. There was a great deal of help with many kinds of matters affecting transition, particularly during the summer preceding entrance.

When I went down to pick up all my information about registering and things like that they actually offered me academic counseling which they suggested to all first year students... You talked about what program you wanted to go into... what to expect in your first year, what are the changes coming up. And you could voice any concerns that you had... There is a counseling office right at the [residence] that you can go and talk to whenever you need to. So it's available and we got this huge package the first week that said if you want anyone to talk to here's the number to call. And every so often they post up notices saying 'Do you need a little time to let some stress off, or need to talk about something, c'mon down, give us a call. We'd like to hear from you.' So they really try to make it accessible. (16 Dec)

She is also delighted with the academic assistance she has been receiving from one subject's tutorials. She feels that the tutorial sessions are critically helpful to her progress, helping her summarize, memorize, and identify significant aspects of that course. In contrasting reaction to other participants -to follow-- she explains the ways in which her tutorial enhances her success.
My tutorial is not like baby sitting at all. My T.A. [teaching assistant] always expands on what we were taught in class, and she does handouts for us. She goes over the same chapters we have to read. She picks out important points. She gives hypothetical test questions, and I have forty pages photocopied from the notes she made for our class for the last test and it's so thorough and it's so good. I think I'd still go to the tutorial even if I didn't get a mark, but I know there's a lot of crappy tutorials. I mean everyone that I know has a crappy leader and they always come and copy the notes I get from my T.A. because she's really good. (16 Dec)

Where Donna values transmission learning, her transition from one institution to the next has not been the 'painful initiation rite' McLaren (1993, p. 25) describes. Note taking, organizing, and writing skills gleaned in high school are very helpful to her now.

Trudy is also very pleased with her work and progress in the first term. She is not encountering academic difficulties or emotional stresses so she does not seek any type of advice or counseling. Nor is she particularly aware of any kinds of help available at the community college. There is for her and her counterparts, a feeling that the institution is prepared for those who are interested in working, nothing more. She isn't aware of any tutorials, success centers, or counseling sessions which may be offered. She and her peers were free to choose. They could choose to attend or not, to listen or not, to drop out or not. I sense from her that students are not supervised or monitored very closely by anyone or by any systemic process.

I don't really know people who ran into trouble. Like, basically, what people did was choose if they were going to
come to class or not. And when they made that choice, that was it. As far as people with problems are concerned, if they ran into trouble in the first few weeks they were out of here, and I don't know how they are doing. (18 Dec)

Nevertheless, this perceived 'laissez-faire' attitude does not trouble Trudy because she is happy, has decided to stay, and likes how she is doing. She particularly comments on the fairly supportive approach to assessment which the college has adopted for the first term. "I like the fact that during the first term [we] get marked on our classwork. No exams is good because I would get stressed" (Journal, 8 Dec).

She also likes the free time between classes. In high school she felt that all her time was accounted for. There was just enough time for everything Trudy wanted to do. Students had to be in some class or another all through the school day for most years until the final year. In community college there is a welcome relief from that kind of intensity because "...here our classes are pretty much broken up. Like, you have three hours in between all the time" (18 Dec).

Shane thinks that transitions counseling is a good idea, not to be thrust at students, but simply available. Unlike Donna he doesn't see peers as the best counselors. He feels that an older person is easier for him to rely on because the relationship can be confined to that set of expectations. He would not want to go to parties with a person who is an advisor. He also insists that it is during the university period as opposed to the high school period that counseling is necessary.

[Transitions counseling] would probably be useful if people wanted it, in university because that's when you need it. . . . I think it's important to have an adult figure. . . . I think it's pretty tough to talk to another student because you also
have to be social. It would be easier for me, personally. I like talking to you because you're years ahead [I say, 'Oh, many,' and participants chuckle]. (16 Dec)

Again, unlike Donna, Shane resents the tutorials. They are an aspect of institutions' preparations that makes him feel constrained. The fact that marks are assigned for attendance he finds particularly irksome. "It seems like the name tutorial is like tutor. If you want tutoring, then you go. And if you don't want it, you don't go" (16 Dec). He also resents restrictions presented in the way one particular assignment is to be completed. For him, far too many conditions are presented which limit his freedom to design the work.

In one course they demand that you quote from ten journals and you can't take them from the library so we go photocopy or we have to go sit and read. And you have to use a quote from each one but it's only five pages long. I mean, gimme a break! Everybody's essay is gonna look exactly the same. There's no creativity allowed there. (16 Dec)

He feels hemmed in by these restrictions. He senses that there is a limit to his freedom to think. He wants to explore new paths but he feels compelled to trudge along the old worn trails blazed by previous educators and students.

A lot of time when you hand in something teachers and professors are forgetting that there's an artistic part of it. Like, instead of accepting it they say that something is wrong because that's the way they wouldn't do it. . . . I don't see how people can learn that way. (2 Dec)
Michelle is still thinking and speaking of problems associated with high school preparation. She says that "everything was so rigid in high school" (2 Dec). She also feels that there was not much room for creative or independent development. For her it was just doing work that had already been sufficiently done. "All that I've been proving through high school is crap that's been proved a thousand times before then. There's just so much information" (2 Dec).

Like Shane and Donna, Michelle feels that counseling is important. She used emergency counseling during the liminal phase when she felt anxious but she is ambivalent about counseling services available through the university.

People definitely need someone to talk to when they begin post-secondary. ... I did go to counseling. It was never offered to me. ... It would have been so much nicer if someone had stuck their hand out and said, 'Hey, we care about you.' (16 Dec)

Like her mate, Shane, Michelle is not enthusiastic about peer counseling. She prefers trained and experienced advisors. "I just think I would be so much more comfortable talking to someone who works in the field rather than, you know, friends at school or stuff like that" (16 Dec).

She is not excited about the way the university has prepared to teach her. In one course the professor frustrates her because he "doesn't speak properly" (2 Dec). She has difficulty understanding the lectures simply because the professor's accent is difficult for her to decipher. She generally does not like the lecture method typically employed by her professors, preferring to read the relevant material on her own time. "The only way I've learned in university is through a textbook. There's only one lecturer I like and I like him because I understand what he's saying" (2 Dec).
Elaine accepts whatever conditions were imposed or implied. Although she had had many difficulties and felt the need to seek advice from me on a number of occasions throughout the term, she does not complain about professors' teaching styles. However, she does complain about one of her TAs. He was so shy that he wasn't able to give any advice or instill any confidence. This made her very uncomfortable so she arranged a switch, but with tepid results. "I just realized this guy is not comfortable enough in himself. My new T.A., she's OK. She's not awful, she just doesn't wanna attach to me" (16 Dec).

In one case she is not satisfied about the evaluation process at university. She feels that she got a lower mark than she deserved while someone else in class got a higher mark for, she thinks, a less substantial and less polished effort.

I got, "You used this semi-colon incorrectly but this topic is very difficult and you handled it extremely well. . . 'B'. That was the only thing I did wrong was a semi-colon and I got a 'B'. The girl beside me had all kinds of corrections and she got a 'B+'. And her book was as easy as they get and mine was as hard as they get. (16 Dec)

Support from Parents

Participants have less to say about support from parents in this phase than they had previously. They had gone through an important transition, making changes which were physical, social, and emotional while at each of their homes things seemed more stable and settled. Parents and home seem to be less of a concern than course evaluations, say. Nevertheless, parental support remains a valid, though not terribly problematic issue.
Donna has gained a new respect for her father's wisdom in insisting that she go to residence in her first year. At first she felt that he was imposing, now she feels grateful.

I was really peeved that my father demanded that I stay in residence first year because he was in residence first year. And it was a real eye opener for him to get his responsibilities straight, to know where things were, to make friends, to feel comfortable with the atmosphere. I think it was just such a stepping stone for him, I mean the transition... and I guess I'd rather take the second year in residence to make sure that I am comfortable; I know what I'm doing; I know where I'm going. (5 Dec)

For her the residence has become an important interim place, a place between the dependence of a child at home and the independence of an adult responsible for maintaining her own residence. Donna appreciates the difficulties inherent in maintaining her own private accommodation and she does not feel ready.

It's not that I'm afraid for it to happen and it's not that I don't think I could handle it, I'm just not ready for adult responsibilities yet. And so I'm in a transitional stage. I think university is a pretty good stepping stone and staying in residence is the stepping stone. You never do your own dishes. There were more chores at home. Now that I've gone into this type of environment, I like it better than being more independent. I mean, I don't think I ever put it into words before this second but I think that's what it is. It's just
that maybe I'm not ready to say I'm an adult, independent from the family unit. (5 Dec)

Donna enjoys support from her parents in a number of ways. On one trip home her mother surprises her with a favorite dessert which she appreciates as only someone who has braved a term of institutional cooking can. “My mom made me a cheesecake last weekend and I think I sat and ate the whole pan because it was just so wow!! Good food, desserts, cakes. . .hmmmm” (5 Dec).

Trudy feels that everyone at the community college is oriented toward becoming independent of parental support. They have chosen to attend because they think it will improve their chances of being able to find a job. “Everyone in the program wants the same thing, pretty much. Like, if they are here they wanna get a job. . . . It's not, 'Well, my daddy's paying for my tuition so I have to come' “ (18 Dec).

While her goal is independence her present situation of living at home is very convenient for her. "I have my own room for my new computer and TV. . . . The back room is more like my rec room (18 Dec). Because her parents have another room where they watch TV, Trudy has, in effect, an apartment to herself. Not only is it convenient, her living arrangements are a great financial benefit to her. While many students her age are piling up debt she is managing to save.

Oh, I save half my pay cheque. It goes into my own savings account. I have another spending account where I put a bit of my pay cheque or my other cheque from the government 'cause my mom's disabled. . . . I'll save it or buy RRSP's and stuff. I like saving money. I don't need a lot of stuff right now. (18 Dec)
Even though he did not take advantage of support from the volleyball team Shane says, "I wish my college had counselors attached to it" (16 Dec). His moving away from home to set up house with Michelle may have been abrupt for him. He, more than any of the others, is looking forward to how he will behave as a parent. Interestingly, he does not focus on caring or money but rather a habit of mind as the main parenting issue. "If I ever had a kid one thing I wanna teach him is to try and understand things . . . as opposed to memorizing things and wanting this great knowledge" (16 Dec).

Michelle, perhaps because her dad is a teacher, sometimes considers parents as just another group in an alien, adult-centered world. This was emphasized in her experience with math. She was alone in her battle to convince various segments of the educational establishment to allow her to proceed through high school without taking mathematics in her last three years.

I didn't take math, I don't think I even had grade eleven math. . . . I had to go through a lot. I had to go through guidance counselors and teachers and my parents and, like, everyone in order for me not to take math. (2 Dec)

Moreover, it is Michelle alone who expresses the need for there to be some kind of emotional connection between the teacher and the student. At our last team meeting she concludes that she ' . . .never felt before that it was necessary for you to have a relationship with your teacher but it's hard to learn if you don't" (16 Dec).

During the liminal phase Elaine realized that she had much more parental support than she had acknowledged. Her mother and father found extra money and, by virtue of her living at home, paid for food and lodging. They also paid her commuting expenses. So there was a great deal of financial support. Unfortunately, because of her commuting, her natural reserve, and her
concern about whether or not she is doing the correct program, she had not established new friends at the university. She particularly realizes that she wants to share confidences with someone from her old high school. The team, which ought to have been ideally situated to provide that support, could not help her because she was gone before it met in the evenings. Members of the team had offered themselves but the schedules of its members do not mesh. Her parents, who are willing to provide whatever help they can, are unable to be peers. They are a different generation, a different age.

From all the kids I've talked to, they at least talk to one person they went to school with before, even if they weren't too close to that person. They have something in common. Somebody who's going through exactly what you are. (16 Dec)

Role of the Student

In this phase Donna discovers that university is more pedagogical than she had thought. She feels that, at least in one case, her evaluation was arbitrary and unfair. She does not expect this. The rosy glow which surrounded her thinking earlier is tarnished particularly by her evaluation in one essay. In her view, the professor does not evaluate reasonably.

But then there is my classics essay. . . . My prof marked it on a bias. Every point that I made he said, 'When I read the book I didn't see it that way.' He didn't even bother to look at my thesis. I got a 68%. I never got anything below an 88% on an essay before. I was really peeved. . . . I was going to file a complaint because it was very obvious that he marked it on a bias. Then I felt it's not worth it. If he's that much of a
jerk he's not going to change his opinion. . . . I was just in shock. (5 Dec)

She never objects to the idea of learning to remember many things but in one course she finds that it is too much. Not only is there too much information, the examination in that course is very demanding and very detailed. In that regard, she thought that high school had been less rigid.

I guess I expected it to be difficult because we covered such a volume of work in a short period of time. . . . It was a lot of concepts and a lot of dates. In the exam you had fifteen minutes to write an essay. You had match, multiple choice, short answer and a huge essay that's worth thirty marks! Also, the second it had reached the time allotted it was like, "OK, you're done," and they took the exam in. Normally in high school they would let you finish your paragraph, or your sentence at least. (5 Dec)

Donna doesn't appreciate some pedagogical aspects of her university courses, especially in one case where she doesn't have an opportunity to become acquainted with the professor because the class is too large. She does, however, become acquainted with the teaching assistant who is in charge of one of the tutorials for that course. That suits her very well because the teaching assistant seeks ways to make it easy for students to recognize and memorize information which is significant for the examination.

Most of my classes are small so I've talked to all my professors. . . . anthropology is the only one that's really large, about 250. My T.A. is really good and I figure that I learn more from her than I learn from my professor anyhow (16 Dec). My T.A. did study notes for us. The study notes
encompassed thirty pages. Throughout the study notes she'd write things such as, "This is a good test question," or "The professor would especially like you to know this." (5 Dec)

Even though she experiences some aspects of course work which upset her she still enjoys the challenge and energy at university. It is invigorating for her, expanding her educational horizons. In this post-liminal phase she loses some of her exuberance but she still thinks the experience is worthwhile. She accepts the idea of being forced to new and higher levels of achievement.

Most of the stuff is marked by the professor. They're very critical and I find my marks aren't handed to me on a platter. I have to work my ass off to get the marks I'm getting. . . . They add so many new perspectives when I go to class, things that I would never have thought of. It always, I guess, pushes me (16 Dec). It's not a negative feeling. It's not a positive feeling, but it's kinda somewhere in between being just there and being positive. (5 Dec)

For Trudy the bloom of post-secondary education is not fading in the post-liminal phase. She manages her finances, her work, and her study schedule. She likes these new community college surroundings. She is not demanding more freedom and more independence. Far from it. She is most willing to do what is required by her institution including showing up for class and spending time at the college between classes. She thinks it is a mistake for students to skip classes or even to appear just for classes not staying to socialize. She disagrees with the pattern of "a lot of people whose attitude is come to class and leave" (18 Dec).
She is content with the subjects and the way they are taught. Her focus is to complete the job oriented college program so whether she is learning andragogically or pedagogically doesn't concern her. She is quite certain that the diploma program is worthwhile and helpful. Her plan to go to university, once strong, is now just an afterthought. When she finishes she'll "...apply to university or just continue [with arts administration] at the college level" (18 Dec).

The best part of learning for her is the sense of success she feels. This continues to make her feel positive about learning at the community college throughout the term. Assignments and in-class evaluations do not frighten her. "I understand what is taught. If you go to class and understand then there is no problem with the test" (Journal, 10 Dec).

In this phase Shane continues to compare university and high school ways of doing things. He sees a fundamental difference in the way learning is meant to take place. He feels that school forced him to memorize things. This he hates. He feels that high school is guilty of not placing enough emphasis on understanding.

The thing is that I would like not to be given something. . . . The whole thing about learning to me is understanding. You can't memorize if you don't understand. . . . I don't think high school teachers do that enough. (2 Dec)

He also resents what he perceives as a teacher desire for control in high school. He feels that there was too much emphasis on patterns of thought. While he sees that discipline to prevent chaos in the halls is justified, he would have liked less control imposed on the way school work was organized.
I don't understand why you have to control in teaching. I guess maybe you have to control the institution. Rules for order are OK. There's a difference though. Rules for learning are kinda dumb. (2 Dec)

He feels that university is less controlling, allowing him to express his thoughts in ways he never could in high school. He thinks back to the pedagogy of high school where the completion of a particular task was at least as important as knowing how to accomplish the task. He feels that teachers in his home town are more inclined to do work for students in order to get the work completed.

I remember, in grade eleven, I was struggling with a class and one of the teachers that I went to see, she pretty much wrote my thesis for me. Here I wouldn't say they'd do anything close to that. (2 Dec)

Notwithstanding the differences in how the learner is viewed at these institutions, Shane sees some similarities in the way the learner is 'handled.' In both cases Shane sees that those in control have an agenda which they intend to adhere to. The student is forced to follow this agenda. The learner is manipulated to behave in certain normative ways, less so in university perhaps. Whenever Shane felt manipulated he resented it and resisted it.

In high school I didn't like the way they plan it for you, instead of letting you plan it for yourself. It even happens in university I think. Remember when I talked about being forced into tutorial discussion? (2 Dec)

In a more subtle way Shane recognizes the effect of the gulf between the learner and the learned. He thinks of it as confidence, older students having
more confidence. Yet he feels that these older students are still a class apart and a class below the professors. In this sense the professor and the teacher have power and authority in common, hierarchical notions of the academy having colonized his spirit.

Older students have more faith in themselves than younger students but I wouldn't say they have total faith. . . . I still feel like there's a sense where we have to look up to the teacher. (2 Dec)

Like Shane, Michelle feels that high school teachers underestimated the capacity of students. She thinks that originality was not fostered in high school. Moreover, in her view, education suffered because conclusions were ready made; the answers were already in the back of the book; questions were not really questions, merely exercises.

I don't think that high school teachers realize that when you're fifteen years old you can come up with, you know, and deduct, your own ideas. . . . Teachers don't give enough credit to students. . . . There's so much more advantage to school when you are able to come to your own conclusions. (2 Dec)

She feels that in high school teachers had to be accountable for students' success. This forced them to establish control. In the university setting she has no sense that professors feel any need to ensure that students succeed.

The teachers here, the professors, aren't really responsible for us. In the high school setting the teachers are
responsible for us. . . for passing us and keeping us in order. (2 Dec)

Still, like Shane, she feels as separated from the professors as she did from the teachers. For her, evaluation is the key to control. The one who evaluates has the power.

We get our marks from the teachers and the professors. Our mark right now is the only guideline that we have to tell us that we're doing well. So we have no choice but to look up to the teacher. (2 Dec)

An extreme form of the use of marks for control is the assigning of 10% for attendance at tutorials. Michelle finds this demeaning. She resents and resists it. Her eyes flash angrily as she thinks of the manipulation of marks for attendance. She refuses to meekly abide by the practice.

Marks mean nothing to me for tutorials and I go when I want to go. . . . It seems that you should get your 10% for going to the tutorial because you have to sit in crap! (16 Dec)

In terms of her academic performance and her attitude about that performance, she has reached an accommodation, at least as far as essay writing is concerned. It is not that she believes that the perceived mandatory writing pattern is good or true or right, it is just that in this area Michelle wants to succeed and to please the instructor so she is willing to perform in those ways which will produce the best marks. She learned this technique in high school and feels that it works fine in university as well.

I used to do essays in OAC the night before. I'd stay up until midnight, write an essay, and pull off an eighty. And I still do
that. . . . And I'm such a tight-ass essay writer right now. Like every time I read Shane's essays I'm like, [pointing to various imaginary spots in an imaginary essay] "That's not right. That's not right. The thesis statement is in the wrong spot." (2 Dec)

Notwithstanding her shattering experience at university, Elaine does not complain much about the way university courses are taught. She does, however, have a concern about the evaluation procedure where the professor requires the completion of essays only.

I have a problem in one course because my mark is three essays and a final. The final's an essay. So how are you proving what? I obviously know the material 'cause I used it, but you're proving one person's opinion or my opinion and I'm paying for that! (16 Dec)

Elaine feels compelled to attend tutorials but she wishes that she did not have to do so. She would prefer to return home but sits, nevertheless, in a situation which does not make her happy. It merely gives her one percent.

My T.A. basically goes over it again. I would really like it if you only had to go when you needed to go. But you get a mark for it, so I sit in the room instead of going home. (16 Dec)

There is another point concerning tutorials which other participants support but which Elaine articulates best. She describes a process which seems very results oriented as opposed to process oriented. Results are good as long as one is satisfied that the intended result is that the students parrot things already learned by others. There is no evidence from participants that
tutorials or the teaching assistants in charge of them fostered anything other than memorizing or 'banking' as Freire (1970) would call it. Elaine, as patient and loyal to duty as she is, finds this frustrating.

My history T.A. goes through and she says, "Read this page and this page. I know what's on the test. . . . He always puts this on the test. Know this. . . . If we're going to talk about this know this." (16 Dec)

This process is the very antithesis of andragogy, yet Elaine is generally grateful for these efforts. She sees them as helpful. She views teaching assistants and professors as people who are devoted to students. Through her veil of anxiety she sees university professionals as more helpful than high school professionals.

That's the difference between university and high school. In high school you're working for the teacher and in university the teacher's working for you. . . . They go out of their way. They bend over backwards to do something for you. (16 Dec)

Desire for Change

Donna was eager to leave high school but she had been quite comfortable at home and was not anxious to change her place of residence. As she looks over the term, she sees that while transition has involved a number of changes, it hasn't involved as many changes for her as it has for others. As she compares herself to others on the team she feels that she has taken a more manageable step.
I don't have as many crisis as maybe Shane and Michelle are experiencing because they are doing a lot of stuff for themselves, whereas I'm looking after me and my school and my education. (5 Dec)

Donna had had a strong desire to leave high school. It had been stultifying and slow for her. The pacing of subject topics seemed monotonous and boring. She had been eager for challenge and change. In high school the work had been so uniformly easy that high marks were easy to obtain regardless of how well she liked the subject. One thing that she had not anticipated, in the rarefied, challenging atmosphere of the university, was that her attitude about a subject would have a noticeable impact on her grades. As it happens it is a great impact for her. Suddenly she has been thrust into being academically mortal.

I have some tests back. But there's a big difference, I find, in what I enjoy studying, and what I don't necessarily enjoy studying. I had a test in Ancient and Near East which is a course I really enjoy and I got 96 on it. And I got a test back in anthropology which I didn't enjoy and got 75. So there's a huge difference. (5 Dec)

She sees her father as being an important figure in guiding her decisions about university and her mother as being a constant source of guidance about issues she faced as the term proceeded. Now, she agrees with her parents that the really important changes have, at least initially, more to do with psychological and socializing issues than academic ones. A sense of being comfortable in the new environment, incorporated, is a key concern.

The transition from being away from home to making friends to being comfortable with university. And that's what he
wanted for us; he wanted us to be comfortable with the university environment, to know where things were, to make friends, to be comfortable with where you were. (5 Dec)

Trudy had no great desire for change. Indeed, she made relatively few changes. In comparison to others in the study she made the fewest transitions, changing only her place of school. Her residence is the same, her part-time job is the same. This suits her. One change she had not anticipated is an improvement in her marks, especially math. The switch from the more theoretical math of high school to the more practical business math of community college is pleasant for her in two different ways. Firstly, it gives her success in an area where success was not expected, and secondly, it fits her notion of what math should be for both her part-time job and her future work in arts administration. She feels it is worthwhile. “Math is good. You could apply it. It's like accounting. In relation to the store. . .balancing and stuff like that. . .”(18 Dec).

Shane wanted to change schools and towns because he had felt restricted. In thinking back to high school he feels that the sanctions imposed had a deleterious effect on students. Now, at university, despite the questioning and pangs of worry, he is at least free of most of the restrictions of high school where there were "...too many rules. . . [like] no eating in the hall. If the rules weren't there people would be pretty normal" (2 Dec).

One of the things that Michelle detested was the boring lectures at high school. She had developed a pattern of signing out thereby skipping many classes in high school, while most of the ones she didn't skip, she slept through. This was the aspect of her academic life she most strongly desired to change. Ironically, and sadly, it does not change. Even though she finds the university work more engaging in a general sense, she still had to face boring lectures which she resents.
...like, my psychology, for example. There's absolutely no need for me to go to that lecture and waste an hour of my day, or two hours of my week because it makes no sense. And all that stuff is covered in the textbook. (2 Dec)

Even though she feels that her professors work on her behalf, Elaine thinks that they are not successful in their attempts to improve her writing. She is ambivalent about being at university throughout the time of the study, and beyond - as I later found out. The one thing that she might have benefited by, enhanced learning, is missing as far as she is concerned. High school taught her to write essays. She does not feel that she has gained any new knowledge or insights during the first term. This may have aggravated her desire to leave as the term progressed.

I learned how to write an essay in grade nine. I learned how to write better in ten and eleven. And I learned how to really prove a thesis in grade twelve and thirteen. I haven't learned anything since I came to university. (16 Dec)

Community College Stigma

When I first began interviewing participants I was amazed at how entry to university was heralded with a week of ritual and celebration while entry to community college was a much more mundane affair. This was so striking that I sent an e-mail message commenting on this difference to the registrar at the college (Appendix A). This lack of public enthusiasm from the community college entrants seems to support the notion of stigma. Traditionally and historically these community colleges variously grew out of vocational training programs, a blue collar stream. I began to see the reasons why Trudy had felt so badly about being forced to enter community college. Before she left high
school she had learned that community college was a place to go if you failed to go to university.

For Donna there was never any question of where she belonged. As she says, the university, particularly with first year in residence, had a profound impact on her father who planned that his children would have that experience. Even if she had not been predestined by parental expectation, her choice of post-secondary work implied that university was necessary, college insufficient. She says, "I want to be at university because my work is so specialized I couldn't get it at college" (16 Dec).

Trudy went through the anxiety of rejection long before beginning her first term. Having been refused entry by the university she applied to the community college by default. Disappointed at first she very quickly had learned that community college was perfect for her. Throughout the entire term she never regrets the outcome of that initial reshuffling of her choice of post-secondary institutions. "At the beginning I wasn't sure if I made the right choice but now I think I have. I like it here" (Journal, 8 Dec).

The stigma which caused her pain and confusion the previous summer has given way to a sense of smugness as she perceives that the community college diploma is likely to be more helpful than a university degree. She has come to feel that the diploma will help her get a job while the university degree will not. "There's a few who went to university and they came here. . . . One girl has a degree but she couldn't get a job so she's doing co-op [at the community college]" (18 Dec).

Shane feels he was being manipulated toward university with regard to the course selection process in high school. As it happens, his volleyball interest would have helped him decide to attend university but, more than that, the high school institution seems, to him at least, to favor the university
institution. This is the other side of the stigma coin. There was a constant, subtle effort to offer university as a 'best' choice.

I think they promote it too early. . . . I mean when I was in high school I had to pick the right courses. I had to pick from grade nine up to grade thirteen to make sure that I was set for going to university. (2 Dec)

Michelle's transition has been a voyage of discovery. Of course, the same must be said of the other participants as well. It just seems that her realizations are so dramatic and definite. Discovering life at university, life in the big city, and life as a common law spouse have all deepened her fund of experience. She has also discovered things about herself that surprise her. One of the things was that community college stigma has colonized her thinking. Michelle realizes that university has been made a 'best' choice in her culture, community college being a much less prestigious place. In part, she would like to be free to leave one institution and go to the other but fears it would be seen as a failure. She also realizes that she cannot face this loss of status. She might have benefited more by attending community college but it is too late. Now she feels compelled to stay in university. She is not free to make an unfettered vocational or educational choice. Michelle's choice is informed, nay ruled, by the culture which embodies community college stigma on the one hand and university prestige on the other.

I think far too much prestige goes along with having a university degree. I listened to myself on the telephone. My friend asked why I didn't drop out of university and go to college. And I said, "I'm gonna go to college later but I need a university degree,. . ." and I caught myself and like, it just felt really bad to say that because I'm too good for everyone else in the world because I go to university. (16 Dec)
Elaine has wrestled with the demon of stigma most. In the liminal phase she felt as though she were in the wrong place. She always knew she wanted a job oriented post-secondary experience but she had always felt that if she did not go to university she would embarrass herself. Her happiest conclusions on her inward journey of discovery were those in which she decided to ignore, as best she could, those cultural imperatives to stay. At this final moment in the term she feels that university is a fine choice for some but not for all. University is good "...if it's for you. The problem is it's supposed to be for everybody and I don't think it is" (16 Dec).

Commuting Distance

In this, the last stage of the study, Donna confides about a problem her dad has been facing with her younger brother. He is a shy fellow who seems to be trying to avoid leaving home. He doesn't want to go to residence. He doesn't even want to go to university unless he can commute daily from home. Her father is in a quandary since he feels that the university residence experience is extremely valuable and important yet he does not want to force his son into an experience which he is not willing to try graciously. Donna feels so powerfully about the benefits of the experience in teaching independence that she thinks her father should actively and continuously encourage him to live on campus.

My dad's reluctant to push him but I think he has to live in residence. For me, it was a really big, big step, and I hated to take it, but I would definitely recommend it for the first year because I think you need to. (5 Dec)

Being so close to the place of her studying has created opportunities which would have been difficult to replicate had she lived even a moderate distance away. She is, for example, able to have a study group in her residence
room of those students who were particularly interested in her field. "I had a study group going in my room for a while and I was thinking about another one" (5 Dec).

She also feels that living on campus allows students to get over the period of staying up late at parties more quickly than those who live off campus. The residence students can meet friends, drink, and stay up as late as they wish whenever they wish. She argues that this makes those activities lose their attractiveness more quickly for the residence students. When one becomes used to the opportunity it loses its allure.

I mean, the novelty has worn off for most of us. Now it's . . . get down to work. You know when you have to work and when you can't go out. So, there's that period of adjustment. Whereas if you're living in an apartment, you may never have that period of adjustment because going out and partying 'til four in the morning is still pretty novel to you because you don't get to do it all the time, or whenever you want. (5 Dec)

Trudy was close to work, home, and college. It was very convenient for her. She could do her regular work shift and manage to cover an absent worker's shift at short notice. This enables her to learn the business well and earn more by virtue of the extra hours. She also establishes a good rapport with her employer who, I discover in a April member check meeting, offers her a full-time management position in a second shop he is opening. She is flattered but decides to continue her studies.

Shane does not like the idea of residence living as previously noted. He wants to live in a city and he wants to play volleyball for a university team; these are the things that motivate him. To him, all universities are the same
academically. He doesn't think that it made any difference where he studied. His desire to live in a city but not in residence meant that his opportunities to make social connections are reduced. He did not view this as a problem.

I looked for living conditions and for volleyball. You gotta choose city or rural or whatever, 'cause at least 50% of the time at school is living. When you get there you'll find courses that you like and so academics is irrelevant. I remember when I was picking universities I never thought about academics at all, 'cause I knew that every university you go through, you get the same thing... and that neither is seen as better or worse. (16 Dec)

Michelle continues to be apart from the campus while she is part of the campus. She thinks that her camaraderie with Shane is fine but she wants something more so that she will not feel like 'such a number'. She too, does not see the commuting distance from university as a problem. Her attention is focused more on the university as impersonal. Michelle feels her alienation could have been less of a problem if the institution had been more proactive in assisting with transition issues.

I always had Shane to talk to and stuff. . .but what I really would have wanted for the first few months was a letter in the mail that said, 'We care about our first year students, so if you want some sort of hand, give us a call,' or whatever. (16 Dec)

Elaine is aware of proactive efforts her university made on behalf of first year students but the commuting distance, as an overriding concern, seemed to obliterate any chance of these efforts having an ameliorating effect on her mood. Almost lemming-like, she is obsessed with returning home each evening.
as quickly as possible. She does not want to arrive home late during the post-liminal phase any more than she did in the earlier phases. She is determined to get the daily commute completed as early as possible. What was a conscious decision had become something akin to a compulsion. Even a room set aside at her college specifically for those students in her situation is of little use to her.

At my college they have a room for off-campus people but most kids don't do it. . . . I was gonna do it but then they usually meet in the late afternoon or evening, when I can't go because I commute. (16 Dec)

Another initiative sponsored by her university is the off-campus club. This is designed to foster friendship building for students in various years at her college. It is a mentoring system based on the notion that senior students could assist freshman students to adjust to university life, particularly those who do not reside on campus. Again, Elaine views the commuting distance as an insurmountable barrier. “I commute” had almost become a mantra.

The off campus club, you talk to a last year's student. You're matched up with someone. . . It would be wonderful except that I don't live in the area. I commute. (16 Dec)

Summary

During the final phase of the study the main directions of student perception remain on course. While those who had all along seemed to be having a successful transition continue to do so. By the time chosen for the start of the post-liminal phase, participants seem to have gone through the major upheavals of transition and settled on a plan and a posture for the future. All profess to have gained an understanding of themselves and the process of transition. In the main, comments are reiterative of the liminal phase. It was that
phase where the bulk of the learning seems to have taken place. Where vision and sense of community were strong they are now stronger and incorporation seems to be complete. For other students there are still varying degrees of lingering doubts. Students' preparations and preparedness is only now being tested. Students are finding work more difficult than they had anticipated. Deadlines, the crush of assignments, and the term examinations combine to heighten anxiety for some students. Some students feel that transitions counseling would be useful for first year students generally. The large class/tutorial combination is resented by most students who feel that marks for attendance are not appropriate. There is a continuation of growing appreciation for the support parents have given. All have availed themselves of some kind of support through the term. In some cases they have viewed this support to be crucial or at least very important to them. In this phase students are less inclined to think of post-secondary institutions as fostering the independence and respect of andragogy. They find that much is decided in arbitrary ways as it was in high school. In most cases they have learned to do assignments according to their notions of what the instructor wants. They view themselves as receivers of evaluation not participants in the evaluation process. Generally, students view the change as having been psychological and social as much as academic. Most feel that the change was important and most learned that each new state brings a new set of conditions and challenges. Most are more phlegmatic about change than they were in August. At this point community college stigma becomes clearer and more powerful. In one case it clearly limited a student's choice while in another it may have tragically dictated that choice. Data reveal that commuting distance is directly related to sense of community. Travel inconvenience, for some, deepens the sense of feeling apart while no travel (or very little travel) seems to have aided a sense of incorporation for others.
Chapter 7

Discussion

In this research I have attempted to avoid going outside what I perceive to be the bounds of the case (Stake, 1988). The issue which launched and guides this study is student transition from high school to post-secondary school; hence one boundary is time – the time frame of the transition period as well as the time of life of the participants in the study. A second issue is associated with coming of age and leaving home. Each participant has quite different experiences in this regard (Doyle, 1993) so that their stories illuminate, for me at least, some of the varying ways the family and the young adult relationship can change as the child moves towards financial and social maturity. Hence another boundary is leaving home. A third issue which has emerged in the study is the issue of the journey of the evolving sense of self. This was information I did not seek since I had thought of psychological development as outside the boundaries of the study as well as outside my area of qualification. Yet the evolving and developing self issue thrust itself into many interviews. These issues form the text underlying Tinto's analysis of Van Gennep's contribution to his 'theory of individual departure' (1987). Participants saw themselves through their internal perceptions, through what they perceived were the perceptions of others, and through what were the stated opinions of others. These interior and exterior views informed their developing sense of self and had various impacts on the transitions (Klonaris, 1985). Hence the development of self-esteem, self-confidence, maturity, independence, and incorporation are all interwoven in the tapestry of transitions constituting a third boundary which is really more of a frontier (Kinney, 1993).

In order that transitional issues do not become lost in a welter of psychology I have arranged the following discussion in the same pattern as the previous three chapters. Without dividing the discussion person by person I attempt to summarize those issues which caused a change of participants'
perceptions within the contexts of the themes which had emerged throughout the data analysis. In that process I attempt to show how the developing self and the incorporating self variously impact on one another (Kinney, 1993, Tinto, 1987). Since the nine themes were developed independently as grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), they act as a third force impacting on this discussion as well as a context for the discussion. Hence I am considering how participants' views change over the period of the study along the same themes which become:

1. Changes in value of Vision
2. Changes in importance of Sense of Community
3. Changes in Students' Preparations and Preparedness
4. Changes in views of Institutions' Preparation
5. Changes in Support from Parents
6. Changes in Role of the Student
7. Changes in Function of Desire for change
8. Changes in influence of Community College Stigma
9. Changes in Commuting Distance

Changes in Value of Vision

Mowrer-Popiel (1993) and Tracey & Carlett (1995) argue that transition to college is a cultural and psychological shock to students. It is a massive change requiring a strong sense of purpose fueled by a clear vision. Is vision a cause or an effect? For this study, for these participants, it appears to have been both. It would be valuable and efficient if one could say that having a strong, explicit vision implies that someone will have a smooth transition from high school to post-secondary. But there are two problems with that assertion. Firstly, I can only draw conclusions from the data presented from the five students whose transitions I followed. Secondly, while it is reasonable to say that certain characteristics of vision are associated or correlated with success, it might be presumptuous to argue that they are the cause of success. For example, it is
tempting to argue that strong vision carries Donna through the early, relatively minor, transitional vicissitudes. That seems to be the case. However, her vision may be a symptom of some deeper, unassessed factor such as self-confidence or personality. Perhaps she is the kind of person who would have a generally smooth transition from any stage to any stage regardless of the inputs of schools or significant others. On the other hand, it is possible that Elaine is destined to struggle with any change regardless of the circumstances or assistance from others. Nevertheless, as a characteristic, it seems to have played a major role in how smoothly these participants worked through the first term.

Initially, I detected a vast difference in the vision of participants. This, on reflection, appears to be due to how closely held the visions were. In other words, the visions inferred from the participants were weak if they were supplied by others, strong if they were firmly adopted or designed by the participant. At the very first meeting Donna and Trudy, who felt that their transitions were fairly easy, had a strong sense of what the distant future would hold. They knew what they wanted the post-secondary education to lead to. They knew specifically what they wanted to do after post-secondary. They knew the characteristics of the lives they wished to lead. They had a feel and a sense for the future. While this vision may have come from a sense of confidence, it also fed a sense of confidence and hope. This is particularly poignant for Trudy whose vision remained intact even though she was rejected by the university and had to go to a local community college. She had to redefine her path but managed to keep her eye on the goal. Shane, the only male, appears to be in the middle of the group. He had a piece of a vision. His volleyball was a present strength as well as part of a future dream. It was a strong thread which governed his choice of university and fueled his imagination. Michelle and Elaine did not have this thread. Both had a general idea that university was the necessary next step but neither had a clear vision of what would follow.
In the liminal phase, which constituted the bulk of the study's time and data, I begin to see subtle changes in vision and some dramatic effects of the lack of it. For those whose transition was smoothest, Donna and Trudy, there were no dramatic shifts in thinking. They were confident about the future even if they had to change plans. Shane began to become more uncomfortable in this phase. The volleyball was stable and productive while his relationship was an ever changing smorgasbord of feeling for him. His self-confidence in this liminal phase seems to have been challenged. He was confused by the new environments, not only university but also the apartment and the relationship. The exploring inward, begun in high school, was still continuing. For him the journey inward was not a question of 'What will I become?' but more a question of "Who am I?" He was stating a central question of highly socialized belief systems described by Rokeach (1973). To know himself was complex because he felt compelled to know how he was seen. In this way he hoped to know himself. This kind of challenging adjustment characterizes the remaining participants more dramatically. Both Michelle and Elaine, who do not have strong goals but rather general directions, stumbled through the term suffering anxiety which at times was tinged with terror or depression. Both entered the liminal phase with a view to explore without realizing that explorers always carry maps or at least a compass. Neither Shane, Michelle nor Elaine had maps or landmarks, hence nothing to ground a vision. This lack of stability seems to have caused them to doubt themselves.

In the post-liminal phase I pursued a new question with participants. Essentially, I asked them if they would prefer to stay in the post-secondary institution or go to the ideal, secure job without completing the educational program. The two participants who began with a clear vision were determined to continue with study while the others, whose vision has been less clear, were ambivalent about their study programs. Shane would leave. Michelle would also leave though she values learning, and Elaine had already decided leave to go to a community college. Curiously, vision seems to have caused the
confidence which Donna and Trudy began with to be bolstered by the first term experience while at the same time, the confidence of the remaining participants was shaken by the first term experience. For these latter participants there are few instances of goals becoming clarified in a positive, optimistic sense. Shane has determined that he would skip class rather than make a presentation. While Michelle was resilient, she had become somewhat dispirited and disillusioned about university. Elaine learned to be afraid of the campus and decided to leave it. The energy of a strong vision seems to have provided the momentum that Donna and Trudy used to propel themselves through the first term. For the others, the opposite seems to have been the case. For all participants, the strength, comprehensiveness and clarity of the vision seems to correlate uniformly and precisely with the ease of the first term's transition.

This table and the eight which follow in this chapter are an attempt to capture various features of different transition views. While these issues are technically absolute, the continua indicate which trends predominate across the data collection.

Table 7.1
Vision

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<th>SEAMLESS</th>
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<td>Students' uncrical acceptance of others' goals</td>
<td>Exploring career ideas</td>
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Vision is more than career goal. It is that image which students hold of the future. Those who had the easiest transitions seemed to be those who had the clearest, most detailed set of images of what they would be doing several years after graduation.
Changes in Importance of Sense of Community

Shoemaker (1995) Jalomo (1995) and Shere (1993) stress the academic and psychological importance of firmly establishing a sense of comfort and belonging for students. Sense of Community is another way of saying sense of belonging to a group. However, it is more than camaraderie because the perceptual environment goes beyond the notion of people. It also goes beyond the notion of places. Instead, it is a swirl of affects where the spiritual environment is a blend of all those things which set the mood and which exist, in some sense or another, in the surroundings. For some, woodwork shining with the patina of years provided a sense of comfort. For others, comfort was in the security of intimacy in relationships. Busyness alternatively threatened or invigorated. Activity contributed to the sense of community depending how and when and in what circumstances it was ensconced. At times the Sense of Community and Vision are closely linked with overlapping and mutually supporting data informing them. At other times, separate threads are clearly discernible. As a factor, it is dramatically important to issues concerning incorporation of the self into the new society. Indeed, it appears to be almost the same issue except that in the transition literature (Van Gennep, 1909/1960; Turner, 1967; Ahola-Sidaway, 1991) the term is reserved for that final, third phase where candidates can be said to belong, whereas in this study I have used Sense of Community in a developmental sense throughout the first term. Moreover incorporation is completed ritual (Turner, 1967) which is not strictly dependent on the initiate’s perception, whereas Sense of Community is firmly rooted in perception and owes no tribute to ritualistic acceptance. Incorporation is public and ritualistic while Sense of Community is more related to perception.

Each of the participants had a different plan for 'settling in'. Donna had grudgingly agreed to go to residence and while there were some indications that the residence would suit her there were also indications that it might not. She was not sure about this. Trudy was close to home so she was going to stay
home. This was not a disappointment to her because part of her thinking about the transition was that she would have to try to save as much money as she could for the future. She didn't want to spend money on food and housing when her parents were willing to supply those things. She had no expectations of community building in the new environment but was pleasantly surprised at how well she began to feel a sense of belonging. Shane and Michelle intended being their own, exclusive, new community. Because they were going to live together, they felt that that would provide a sufficient sense of community. Both were eager and excited about the prospect of the change of place and having their own apartment together where they could be independent of others. They felt that this was a giant step toward maturity and the 'finding-oneself' process. Elaine was aware that she was not going to have an easy time in becoming accustomed to the new campus or the new students. That was immediately the case. She resisted community building steps thereby setting herself up for a most difficult transition. She felt she was not going to feel a sense of belonging and she didn't. Nothing and no one was capable of making her feel relaxed about this new place. The campus was large. Peers were not serious about their work. She was prepared to be repelled and she was. Her community was her family and friends back in her home town.

In the liminal phase, most of the term, participants learned ways of relating to their new school environments. For Donna the new community quickly became the community she had been hoping for. Except for family, all meaningful relationships were new. She had been frustrated with the immaturity of high school peers and the lack of interest they had in ideas. She had been eager for new stimulating conversations and she found them in the new community. She was becoming more than incorporated, she was immersed. Trudy's experience was also positive though less dramatic. She did not live with the new classmates. Her routines, outside of school hours, did not change. Yet she was developing new friends in the college and she did like the acceptance and belonging she felt there. For Shane and Michelle developing a sense of
community did not proceed as well as they had hoped. The eagerness was largely replaced by a clinging to one another for support, understanding, and development. Shane's athletic involvement gave him a sense of belonging not simply because of the 'team spirit' which had been deliberately fostered but also because the practices and workout routines kept him so busy that he had little time to worry. Michelle, on the other hand, had time to worry. She was not close enough to campus to easily be part of campus life though if she had lived with a group of other female students and not felt compelled to study relationships issues quite so intensely, she might have become more involved with campus. They had many spats, often about bruised egos, words misunderstood, or intentions misinterpreted. They had invested so much energy in the relationship that they were a group apart, staying apart from the rest of the community. Elaine fought the transition, herself, and what she perceived as the attitudes of teachers, family, and peers. Her resentments did not diminish during this period. Almost everything seemed to frustrate her. She did enhance her sense of community somewhat by learning her way around the campus. She took pride in her knowledge of shortcuts and good places to study. Unfortunately she did not establish any solid connections in the new community with people. She came to depend more and more on her boyfriend for advice, guidance, and support.

Post-liminally, Donna was well incorporated into the life of the university and the residence. She was at a point where she promoted the notion that the residence experience is not only valuable, it is necessary. She saw it as the logical transition for her. She was neither independent as a working adult nor was she dependent as she was at home. For Donna and Trudy separation from high school friends was now complete. To all intents and purposes the friends that they were now engaged with were entirely drawn from the social life of the new educational institution. They were defining themselves as part of the new space. They were successful in that new space. For the other participants the sense of community did not grow. Whatever sense of alienation they felt in the
liminal phase they also felt in the post-liminal phase. They were disillusioned and disappointed with the lack of a sense of community but did not know how to fix the problem. In Elaine's case it would not be logical to try since she had decided to leave university to go to community college. For her, the balance of the school year would be anti-climactic, a question of merely completing the year for the sake of doing so.

Table 7.2
Sense of Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>&lt;----Students' view of transition-----&gt;</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinging to</td>
<td>Clinging to</td>
<td>Mixes with old and new friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>family</td>
<td>established early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinging to</td>
<td>previous peer relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixes with old</td>
<td>and new friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New friendships</td>
<td>established early</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who had the greatest sense of belonging in the new environment had a dramatically easier time in making the transition. These findings are consistent with results of studies conducted by Pearl (1993) and Brandt (1991). For this study the ease of transition seems to be directly associated with participants' willingness to become part of the new society in the new location. Rather obvious in retrospect, it was, nevertheless, not given equally serious consideration by all participants. In this case it has something like the status of an imperative.

Changes in Students' Preparations and Preparedness

Chaskes (1996) compares student transition to immigration. It is difficult to properly predict every kind of need in the new land or the new school. How did a student's preparations facilitate the transition in various phases? The answers seem inconsistent. Schools seemed to have tended to focus on preparing as the key to any kind of success. The Boy Scout motto of 'Be Prepared' seems generally thought of as more of an article of faith than a motto.
This study does nothing to denigrate the usefulness of preparing but it does illuminate certain aspects of the process which complicate the notion that the best prepared students automatically have the easiest transitions. For these participants it was not that simple. Were all other factors equal then the best prepared would probably have fared best but it is the interplay of other factors which made that simplistic notion more complex. At first blush, Donna's detesting school would seem to have predisposed her to avoiding certain of the mundane tasks imposed in courses at the university. Yet that was not so. She seemed to enjoy everything. At the same time Elaine's compulsive desire to do more than was required in any given assignment would seem to have predisposed her to an easy transition by virtue of her eagerness to work thoroughly and independently. Yet that also was not so. Overall, the mix of factors seems to have been more potent than preparation by itself.

In the preliminal phase it was obvious that while Donna had made good preparations, there were elements of preparing which were not strictly under her control. Most particularly, the first trip to Ireland which inspired her and sparked her interest was not something which she had planned. Similarly, her parents encouraging her reading and her having had an inspiring, thoughtful history teacher were factors which were fortunate as opposed to deliberate. She did, however, seize these phenomena and grow with them thereby becoming intensely enthusiastic in her vision. Trudy's preparations were not nearly as uniform. She had planned to go to university so she took OAC courses with that goal in mind. She could have gained entry to the community college without having taken those courses so she feels that she spent an extra year in high school for no useful purpose. She didn't work hard in high school nor did she do particularly well in high school examinations. As preparations for post-secondary education go, hers seem mediocre as do Shane's. He was more concerned with developing a sense of who he was, and who he was in the context of peers to pay much attention to school work. His focus in high school was developing his athletic ability and finding which set of people he belonged
with. For Michelle preparations also present a complex set of issues and patterns. She was most eager to get away from high school and, in fact, did not attend classes very consistently in her last high school year. Like Donna, she had many complaints about her high school experience. Elaine, though trepidatious, had much in her preparations to warrant university success. She worked hard at her studies. She was thorough in her work. She felt duty bound to take her school work seriously. She attempted to go to every class. None of these efforts ameliorated the apparent effects of a lack of firm vision or sense of community. They may have provided some stability and a sense of values but they did not afford comfort.

The liminal phase is that time for correcting the directions, establishing work routines, and laying the social groundwork for the post-secondary institution (Freure, 1991). It is at this time that one might expect that students' preparations would make a critical difference to their academic transition. This appears to be so in Donna's case. In a general sense she prepared herself by being a reader, a reader of specific, career-oriented, scholarly tastes. These tastes were supported, encouraged, and even mentored at home. Her readiness enabled her to approach most subjects with an engaged, active, informed interest. Study was lively for her. Trudy's preparations were also a good support for her. Though shyer in style and less inclined to debate than Donna she had nevertheless developed a clear dislike for student habits which were non-productive. I wonder if the discipline she learned in her part time job wasn't an active ingredient in the construction of her dependable, competent nature. Her view of studies would be described by many teachers as mature, stable, work-oriented, and no trouble for them. Shane's preparations incorporated a lack or enthusiasm for many of the academic assignments in high school. University courses, too, failed to ignite his interest. He is an engaging, thoughtful, articulate young man delighted to discuss emotional, psychological, and academic interests but impatient with any imposed work which doesn't particularly interest him. It was all imposed. He was coasting, not
reading as much as he knows he should. Michelle, negotiating several issues at an emotional level, had entered university glad to escape the boredom of high school classes but found she had to struggle with boredom again in university. She had developed, by default, a sense of self-directedness in learning and this seems to have helped her to continue long, lonely hours of study in the apartment. She was disappointed that her own interpretations were given less credence than she had anticipated. Again she was forced to determine patterns of acceptable response. But she could. And she did. It cost her something, though. It seems to have cost her an innocence of interest. Elaine, on the surface of it, was well prepared academically. She had had high achievement in high school. She had a dogged urge to work but her emotions were in such disarray that she couldn't work, at least not as efficiently as she would have liked. Of themselves, the academic preparations were not enough. Her commitment to subjects was tenuous. She was exploring, but with no clear goals she really couldn't sort out which issues mattered most to her. She had not been prepared for this.

It was not until the December rush of assignment deadlines and examination preparations that Donna wondered if she was prepared enough. She felt that she had never been challenged academically until this post-liminal phase. It was a change for her but she was ready for it. She realized that she would get lower marks but that did not cause her to feel despair. Trudy's comfortable control of her finances combined with her security at work and at home helped to provide a sense of preparedness. Her attitude about work, similar in tone to Elaine's, did not cause her any discomfort. Like Elaine she saw no point in wasting time by skipping classes or not completing assignments. The difference between these two participants in this regard was that Trudy had one or two close friends at the college who agreed with her while Elaine felt she was alone in her opinion. Both Shane and Michelle viewed their preparations as having been insufficient. As the term progressed they seem to have drawn together in their opinions of both university and high school. In the
preliminal phase they seemed more positive about being ready; in the final
days of the term they are both seeing more and more problems with their state
of preparedness. Both have developed a sense of diffidence about their
schooling retreating to tricks and systems to survive the term. Elaine also has
retreated from any emotional connection to the academic work. She never
complained about having any difficulty with doing the work. For her the difficulty
was centered on her not being where she felt she belonged. Her preparations,
in retrospect, seem to have guaranteed that she would have difficulty. They
were anti-preparations.

Table 7.3
Students' Preparation and Preparedness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' view of transition</td>
<td>Students' view of transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific arrangements-late summer</td>
<td>Specific arrangements-previous spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few visits to campus</td>
<td>Several visits to campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses chosen in fall</td>
<td>Courses planned in previous spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students' preparation and preparedness is the name given to those
issues which relate to how students got themselves ready for the transition. It
embodies academic preparation as well as the more mundane issues of
choosing living arrangements, arranging finances as well as emotionally
preparing for the change. It is confined to those things which students do to
ready themselves. Predictably, those who had done the most detailed
preparation well in advance had the least trouble with the transition. What was
not so obvious was that there was no guarantee, merely a requirement.

Changes in Views of Institutions' Preparation

According to Mowrer-Popiel (1993), Rosenbaum (1996), Shoemaker
(1995), and Cross (1982), institutions have much to do to facilitate student
transitions. How did high school prepare students for the transition? How did post-secondary schools help the students in their transitions? They seem to have done so in various ways and to varying degrees. It is, of course, participants' perceptions which inform; the institutions' administrators themselves might have a quite different set of responses from the participants. It is difficult to imagine that high school educators themselves would concur with Donna's scathing remarks about high school while at the same time university administrators might wonder why Elaine had such difficulty adjusting to the university environment. These educators could posit that her transition was doomed before she even began thereby implying that no efforts could have helped. In this regard Upcraft and Gardiner (1989) and Tinto (1996) argue for an expanding of the colleges' responsibility in assisting the process. Be that as it may, both cases illuminate issues which merit at least discussion if not attention. Data reveal that Donna was inundated with help while Elaine was hard pressed to locate any. Perhaps she couldn't find it because she was not looking properly. Perhaps it was not there. I can't help but wonder what would have happened if Elaine and Donna had had their accommodation arrangements reversed.

In August, Donna was enthusiastic about all the mailings and counseling sessions sponsored by her particular residence college. Even though she was somewhat dismayed at the condition of her room and the bureaucratic fuss she had had, she was pleased with the university's preparations. This was not true of the high school which had mainly bored her and kept her from working at her own pace at things which interested her. Trudy had little to say about high school or community college preparations. The change was one which neither frightened nor excited her at first. She soon began to have her interest awakened because she found that she was being treated with respect. This sense of being an andragogical client rather than a pedagogical pupil, symbolized by the first name basis of all the actors, ultimately seems to have given her a new sense of self respect and consequently a renewed interest in
her future. Shane was annoyed by high school. The threats of difficult work ahead did not inspire him to take high school work more seriously; instead, they made him more skeptical about teachers' advice of every kind. Michelle was more than skeptical about teachers' advice. She was disgusted. Generally, she thought that counseling was shoddy and ill-conceived. Both of them did not feel well oriented by the orientation process. University was an alien place for them as it certainly was for Elaine whose initial experience made her want to return home during orientation week. She missed most orientation activity, initial lectures, and residence accommodation. For her, the institution was out of touch.

In the liminal phase Donna mentioned certain things that the high school had done to prepare her, the organizing of essays being the most important. The process was tedious as was most of high school, but she felt it was worthwhile because it provided her with a ready, set pattern of planning term papers section by section. The university, both the work and accommodation, was seeming better and better. She liked her small classes, she liked gothic architecture. She liked the place and the feeling she got from being in the place. She bristled with a sense of being in control of events and issues. For Trudy there were some classes she liked more than others, but all were either acceptable or better than acceptable. She was enjoying the community college. As the term progressed she felt a growing sense of competence and ease. Shane did not appreciate his large classes nor, as it happened, his small classes. In the large classes he was alienated by the anonymity while in one small class he was threatened by the lack of it. In this phase he still thought of high school preparations as a series of warnings which offended him. Michelle seemed even more conscious of a sense of loss when she considered high school preparations. She was struck by how much could have been done to create a sense of togetherness. Her recollections teemed with boredom, frustration, and a sense of longing. This paralleled her developing sense of the university experience. Here she was alienated and anxious to the point of
seeking help from counseling services. Instead of being in the state of invigorating challenges that she had predicted, she was in a state of emotional distress. Elaine was also in a state of emotional distress. Nothing welcomed her. She did not feel invigorated, challenged or, in any sense, settled. The courses she had selected did not lead toward any particular field of study. University was not connecting to any part of her future vision. It was but a hurdle of looming proportion. She did not avail herself of any procedures to obtain advice about her academic decisions nor did she seem aware of any requirement or advisability to do so.

Donna bubbled enthusiastically about the institution in the post-liminal phase. She was able to catalogue an impressive list of ways in which her residence organization facilitated transition. She was also delighted by the tutorials. Overall, Trudy had no such catalogue but it didn't matter to her. The community college was small and friendly. She was made to feel comfortably successful so her transition was anything but difficult. Shane generally felt that the university placed demands which made him feel resentful. Demands about assignments, class performance, tutorial attendance, all enhanced his urge to resist. Even though he had to respond to quite rigorous demands as a university athlete these did not bother him since he had chosen that commitment and he was excited by that involvement. These, however, were separate and distinct from other university related demands for which he had a much lower sense of commitment. He and Michelle had begun to suspect that they were obliged to agree with the ideas presented in class. She came to feel that high school and university educators did not really allow freedom of expression. Both of them thought that more counseling should have been available for students in the first term. Elaine had few criticisms of courses or instructors although she did have a teaching assistant who was so shy that she had to switch. She also had concerns about evaluation procedures. Criteria for evaluation were not clear to her. There was a lack of comforting objectivity implicit in the procedure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 7.4</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutions' Preparations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIFFICULT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teachers inspire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and students separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers inspired fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time for guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Secondary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusing orientation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inefficient registration process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section the efforts of the high school and the post-secondary institution are assessed from the point of view of the participants. Which practices facilitate the change? Which factors impeded? Participants commented on both the sending and the receiving institutions.

Changes in Support from Parents

The stress of this transitional period is intensified because it is a time in the life of participants when they feel an urge to 'pull up roots' (Sheehy, 1977). Sheehy argues that the period when a person is 18–22 years old is a time of predictable crisis. One is engaged in learning independence, redefining one's personality and wrenching away from parental control. It is a journey into the mind and spirit filled with the passion of eager excitement, anxious terror, or a unique mix of both. Inevitably this becomes an exploration into the self and the self ensconced in society. Parents occupy a curious, not-altogether-envious
position during this time. They must learn to be there and not be there, to be distant at times and close at times. They must learn that children's need for a sense of space can blind them to their parents' need for togetherness. For some children it is critically important to show parents an independence verging on disdain. Parents may find it cute to show baby pictures while their children may not think it cute at all. They do not wish to be reminded. Parents have to recognize children's inner need for stature predisposes them to continuously separate themselves from parents spatially, temporarily, socially, emotionally, religiously, and totally. Such is the psychological theory of Sheehy (1977), yet in the involved whorls and worlds of research into lived experience (Van Mannen, 1990) variety and variation is endless. These participants did not precisely ‘fit’ a pattern. All were 18 to 22 years of age, all were in transition, but all eschewed or depended on parental support differently, differently from the passages literature and differently from one another.

In the preliminal phase Donna revealed that her parents had always supported her interests and hopes. For her, support was solid and continuous as well as subtly directed to her distant heritage. Her choice of program, university, and even residence fitted comfortably into what had become a shared, familial view of her future. For Trudy there was less of an active participation but parents were solid providers. She had no worries about finances, accommodation, food clothing, transportation, or even parking. She felt very lucky with regard to support from her parents. In August Shane was ambivalent about leaving home. While he was sensing an exciting threshold of change he was wistful about vacating the place where he was so welcomed and so comfortable. Michelle was not ambivalent in August. She was eager to launch into the future with its promises of new places to live and study, a new living arrangement with Shane, and a new sense of independence. She was excited about all these changes and expressed willingness, nay eagerness to leave home and get started on the new phase of her development. Things seemed reversed for Elaine in comparison to the other participants. She
admires her father's toughness feeling that he wants her to be tough like he has always been. She felt he was insisting on her being a little more independent than she was ready to be. She felt as though she had to pay her own way. Curiously, she was explaining that she had to pay her own expenses while at the same time she reported that there were a number of ways her parents were supporting her financially. Independence for her was something of a dilemma, she was saving for university, planning to shoulder the burden of the expenses but still manifestly dependent on her parents.

Donna was so thoroughly settled in residence and university social life that in the liminal phase she rushed through shortened weekend home visits to get back to her friends. She exuded happiness and confidence being in the university environment. She did not want to spend much time at home or in her home town. Trudy was permitted to use more of the house as her own space during this period. She slowly developed some sense of independence with regard to work, savings plans, and hours to study but her parents' support and proximity seems to have kept her dependent since she was, after all, the child at home. There were signs of her becoming slightly less patient with parental control but this impatience was but a sliver, not nearly substantial enough for her to consider leaving the house. This was in striking contrast to Shane and Michelle who were struggling with their new relationship in its new setting. They had been excited about all the changes but during the fall they both seemed to realize that the change was too abrupt. Shane realized that he needed to go back and consult parents while Michelle began to review her past relationship with her family almost as intently as she worked through issues with Shane. Part of her maturing process was rethinking her place in the family. During the term Elaine realized how much support she was receiving. Her troubled term kept her physically close to her parents. She grew more and more dependent on that home support. Her journey inward was a bumpy ride where daily contact with home was required. She reached out to her parents and, insofar as they could, they steadied her passage.
In December, Donna, thoroughly part of her new community, recognized the transitory state of her transition. While she had sought independence, it was a hedged independence. Residence and university for her was testing the waters of independence. She was not eager to plunge. She also recognized her father's wisdom in insisting on her going through a phase in residence for at least a year. By December she was content to stay in residence another year. She had a sober view of her semi-dependent status. So, too, did Trudy, although her dependence on parental support had not really changed through the term. Donna and Trudy, notwithstanding their vastly different circumstances, had a strikingly similar attitude about their transitional status. Both recognized that independence would come later. Both were happy to wait until they were more ready to be independent. Both were patiently building and planning. Neither wished to escape parental influence yet both were easing slowly away from it. Both were very comfortable in their attitudes about parents' support. Shane remained ambivalent. He had been excited about the prospect of changes while simultaneously content with family life in August. While he was certainly less excited about the changes in December he thought the changes were necessary and valuable. Still, he felt a sense of loss for having to leave the support of his parents. I could detect no change in his attitude about parental support for the duration of the study. Because he had moved in with Michelle I had anticipated some shift in his views since he spent so much time with her and so little with parents. That shift does not appear to have happened. Was he stable and stalwart in his values or did so many kinds of changes occur that he simply rooted his spirit in a set of emotional anchors centered on home and parents? I suspect the latter. Michelle's term had been an emotional roller coaster ride. When I first met her I'd asked if she planned to return home on weekends but she had not thought she would do so very often. In August she was someone immersed in plans for the future. By December she had become oriented quite differently. She was focused on surviving the present. She needed emotional connections. She needed love and support. She wanted
support or at least some sense of psychological connecting from the instructors but realized that that was a wasted wish. Her emotional support was Shane. She had invested much in that relationship with him. These two had invested a great deal of emotional energy in fine tuning and reassessing their relationship. It was as though they had hoped that the relationship would generate all the emotional strength that would have been there from lovers and parents. They tried to be all things to one another. In a sense they had cut themselves off too thoroughly from parental support. For Elaine, it was the opposite. She was at home every evening. Her parents continued to support her through the term. During the latter stages of the study Elaine no longer spoke of her father's desire for her to be independent. Whether parental support was efficacious is problematic. She seemed to need it. It was there. Her stormy transition period featured parental support ubiquitously. By the end of the data collection period she had decided to get a diploma close to home and to settle close to home. There seems to have been no evidence of any change toward becoming independent nor even any desire for independence from parental support.

**Table 7.5**
Support From Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>&lt;----Students' view of transition-----&gt;</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents vague about funds</td>
<td>Financial plan in place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents not aware of academic plans</td>
<td>Active support of academic plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents generally supportive of plans</td>
<td>Interested in specific plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents supportive of interests</td>
<td>Shared interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents challenging children's decisions</td>
<td>Respectful of children's decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More complex than it would first appear, parental support was difficult to characterize, particularly second hand. Generally it seemed that the more
specific, well-planned, directed support had the most positive impact on ease of transition, at least in terms of how participants felt about that support.

Changes in Role of the Student

Selman and Dampier (1991) credit Knowles for his description of the concept of andragogy. "The term andragogy has been championed by Malcolm Knowles to juxtapose it with the term pedagogy, meaning the art and science of teaching children" (p.85). Knowles attempts to differentiate between those sets of ideas that one commonly associates with the teaching of children and those sets of ideas which one associates with the teaching of adults. Here I am particularly interested in how participants’ attitudes changed regarding the efficacy of pedagogy. Did they feel that in high school they were treated as children who needed to be told what was good for them? Were there things which teachers presupposed about learning which in some ways stifled the development of the learners? How did their views of the institution change as they moved from one place to the other, throughout the duration of the data collection? Presupposing, as I had done in a previous study (Tucker, 1995b) that pedagogy was deployed in high school and andragogy was deployed in post-secondary institutions was, at the very least, an oversimplification. Data revealed that in this regard post-secondary institutions were more like high schools than not. As far as participants in this study were concerned, there was very little change in the relationship between the learner and the learned from one place of learning to the next. There was some easing of restriction and supervision but it was still the instructor who made all the decisions about plans, needs, course activities, and evaluations. The lack of formal collective structure, implicit community responsibility, explicit legislative responsibility, and the common law principle of 'in loco parentis,' where teachers act in the place of parents (Anderson, 1994), contribute to an impression of andragogy in the colleges and universities, but andragogical practice appears to be more circumstantial than designated. Students in this study did not contribute to
planning courses or designating needs but they were freer to skip classes than they had been in high school, a glimmer of andragogy in the breech.

Donna hated high school because it was boring, not because of teachers' treating her like a child. She expressed no particular concerns about systemic prejudgments, administrative policies or teacher strategies. She was eager to begin university so she could be involved with work that was interesting for her. She wanted the challenge. Trudy was not really excited. She was more dogged than excited. The course she had chosen wasn't precisely what she wanted. It was merely a second best means of achieving that vision. It was business administration while she really had hoped to be involved in arts administration at university. Her first intention at community college was to gain a year of schooling which she thought would enhance her chance of being admitted to university on her second application attempt. During that summer it never occurred to her that she would want to complete the community college program. It was intended to be a holding action. Having no intention of staying there she was most content to allow educational directions to be steered by the institution. She never seemed to speak the jargon of someone who was looking inwards, certainly not explicitly.

For Shane it was all a journey inwards. High school was a place in time and his platform for learning but his interest then was primarily finding where he fitted socially. As he proceeded to university he wanted freedom and independence and self-knowledge. His perception of the transition was quite different from Donna's. Where she sought growth through the world of ideas predicated on her studies, Shane was most keenly interested in finding and expressing himself in psychological and social terms. Academically he was exploring. Vocationally, he was adrift in his intentions. The most stable element in his preliminal thinking was volleyball. He wanted university to be interesting, consisting of meaningful discussions. He wanted respect. Michelle was closest to Donna in her views about high school. Like Donna, she had been terribly
bored and hoped to find university a more worthwhile intellectual engagement. On the other hand, she looked for an emotional connectedness at university which she had found missing in high school. She wanted more of a sense of togetherness. For her, pedagogy was a weakened high school state she endured, while andragogy was an interdependent university condition she longed for. Elaine was resentful about some aspects of high school but not pedagogy. She accepted the student's role as hierarchical, but she did have a strongly developed sense of fair treatment. She was quite sensitive to the way she was treated in high school and had developed, before our meeting, a keen sense of where others had wronged her in school, at home, or in relationships anywhere. In that sense she had a focus on the other in a way which Simone de Beauvoir (Schwarzer, 1984) might have grudgingly understood and Gustave Flaubert, who configured Madame Bovary, might have cherished (1957). Before she began her fall term she was already upset with the university because she had lost her opportunity to attend residence. It was a problem of 'her against they', an amorphous all-encompassing 'they.' She wasn't looking for the freedom and independence of andragogy, she was seeking security and a sense of belonging. Her vocational goals were too ill-formed or ill-fitted for either of these two conditions to be present.

As the term progressed, Donna more and more felt that high school was a place to escape because of its pedagogical nature. It had bored, stifled, and demeaned her. It had trifled with her in precisely that way that Knowles (1990), Freire (1994), and Snelgrove (1985) suggest high schools are typically wont to do. She became an active advocate for faster pacing in coursework and increasing the responsibility for students. She did not want total control of her program or even the final say in any academic matters but she did want her voice to be heard. She was happy to memorize, write, and think in whatever fashion implicit in the course designs providing she could do so at her own pace without having to be lectured on things she had already learned. From her point of view university was an ideal learning place during the liminal phase.
Trudy was satisfied to allow teachers to plan, decide, and evaluate without her influence. Whereas Role of the Student tension is clear for other participants, for Trudy it is slight. Her notion of schooling seems to be in accord with views of the school as a formal organization as perceived by some organizational theorists (Barnard, 1938/1968; Hoy & Miskel, 1978; Getzels & Guba, 1957). Herzberg's notions of the concepts motivation/hygiene along with positive and negative KITA (kick in the pants motivation) would likely be quite sensible to her like all those who tend to fix organizational actors by role in a hierarchical model where slots in the organizational chart have more significance than the people in those slots, at least for purposes of explaining such things as motivation or ambition. Trudy was most comfortable with being in a role but she was developing a sharper sense that those in the various roles had to be competent. She had more criticism for students who were ill-motivated than she did for the instructor of a course that she didn't like. For her, the changing was not a developing independence as much as it was a developing competence and its concomitant confidence.

Shane had difficulty in establishing a study routine. His schedule was taken up with volleyball and working out. Moreover his interest wasn't engaged by his coursework, consequently he was in a position to need to cram for tests. He appreciated being allowed to determine his schedule but until November his lack of interest kept him from being actively committed to the academic work. He did enjoy a sense of being able to talk or write about adult things. His self-esteem beckoned him to put away childish things and behave like a man as soon as possible. Precisely like Donna, Michelle became more and more annoyed with high school's pedagogy as the first term proceeded. It is as though she had awakened to a realization that she had been the victim of an indoctrinational, power-based procedure. It is not that she wasn't aware of boredom and resentful of power earlier, it is more of a question of her being more aware, more sensitized, and more incensed. Her reflections on high school were making her angry. In the liminal phase this was another issue she
had to both think and feel her way through. She was stressed and stretched but university did respect her a little while it also ignored her a lot. The andragogical vacuum, while it was a shock to her emotional system, allowed her to grow and develop. Elaine did not seek the independence of andragogy. Her journey into self and career issues, as well as the struggle over the choice of schooling gave her little psychic space to worry about educators' predispositions. She sought security and structure during this time, being really too fragile for anything else. The benevolent despotism of pedagogy, demeaning though it can appear, might have been just as helpful to her as a more rigorous andragogy. Health and welfare issues, the basic needs base of Maslow's theory (Lowry, 1973), were being shaken. Institutional paradigms were external to her locus of concern. As far as school work was concerned, she just wanted to do the right thing.

**Table 7.6**

Role of the Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmission learning unmotivating</td>
<td>Students learned to organize work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No power or choice for students</td>
<td>Some power or choice for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little 'mapping' assignments</td>
<td>Independent studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses selected haphazardly</td>
<td>Courses in program packages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly large classes</td>
<td>Mostly small classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No student input in assignments</td>
<td>Some student input.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Table compares participants' perceptions of the way learning took place in high school and the way they understand it was taking place in post secondary. Learners seemed to be viewed as receptacles in secondary and in
post-secondary institutions although they did have more of a sense of independence as the transition proceeded. This issue seems to have had some impact after the term began, very little before except insofar as students felt a sense of being in a powerless position in high school and in a slightly more potent position after the transition.

Changes in Function of Desire for Change

In this section I attempt to describe the factors which influenced students' desire for change. Was there an element of resistance or confusion in the way the change was perceived? Students who eagerly anticipated the change seemed to have had an easier transition than those who were either ambivalent about the change or had a strong need to escape home or the hometown. A desire to leave high school was expressed by all so that that factor did not distinguish levels of ease of transition. This was perhaps the most mercurial of themes, vastly different at different stages in the transition process. Unlike other themes its focus is on the passion with which participants anticipated, considered, and reviewed. As time and circumstances varied, desire for change ebbed and flowed sluggish or racing for various participants. It was different for different participants and it was quite different from one phase to the next.

In the early part of the study Desire for Change seemed generally strongest for most participants yet it was a mixed indicator in ways. Donna had a strong desire to leave high school and a strong desire to begin her specific Celtic studies but she was not eager to leave her hometown, nor was she convinced about residence living. She had had a wholesome, comfortable relationship with her family so her desire for change was moderated by conflicting thrusts. Trudy too, was ambivalent. Both Donna and Trudy were driven to proceed by a clear specific vision not a generalized desire for change. Shane hemmed and hawed, his vision blurring, his lodestone volleyball, his relationship both an anchor and a challenge. Michelle was not ambivalent. She
wanted a change. In August I had no idea how volatile her spirit was. All I saw was a young person eager for new experience, eager to change home, hometown, school, and living arrangements, in short, everything that could be changed was going to be changed. If anything Elaine had a desire not to change. Vision ill-secured, living arrangements in doubt, financial arrangements incomplete, there was nothing in the prospect which excited her. It became apparent later that at this stage she was not listening to those inner voices which were advising a quite different educational pattern.

Donna's desire for change grew in the liminal phase. Insecurities about coursework and residence living vanished while those security totems she had previously held, she banished. She realized that her high school boyfriend was not a good mate for her. She didn't even want to think about a mate. She wanted new relationships with elastic strings. She wanted more travel, more excitement. She hadn't had a strong desire to leave home but her desire to be home lessened increasingly, replaced by the desire to be in the new place with the new friends establishing new routines. Trudy grew slowly to enjoy the moderate changes, her desire informed by her vision. In the early stage of the term she began to enjoy the new community college. This pleased her but it did not alter her long-term career plans. There was neither turmoil not startling revelation for her, just a growing sense of comfort. Shane's desire was rooted in a drive to mature. It was almost a pathological force. There was little sense of a starry-eyed enthusiasm for change, more of a need than a desire. There were so many transition processes and issues for him that at any given time during my data collection it was fairly obvious that he was wrestling with several dynamic issues simultaneously. True to his avowed personality trait he accepted the challenge to try to control the rate and the nature of change. But there were so many issues which were not really under his control. His sense of self was challenged. He wanted maturity, independence, and athletic accomplishment. He wanted not to want security but he missed the stability of home at times. This was a mixed state for Shane. His partner, Michelle, mirrored
as is commonly thought to be the case, his emotions, but her emotional lows were more dramatic. Perhaps it was simply her nature to react strongly and passionately. Since she appeared to have to unravel a love/hate relationship with her high school teachers and her high school, her desire and eagerness were not properly answered. She expected and desired challenge; she got anxiety. Her desire refocused and retrenched. Security became a bigger issue. Coping was the dominant condition in the liminal state. For Elaine, coping became even more important. She glanced around, terrified. She scurried from class to class, rarely found things to smile about, sardonically convinced that the change was wrong. Her doubts about the values of peers, usefulness of university, and long term plans quelled any realistic hopes of there being anything like a desire. Her doubts turned inward remorselessly. Her journey inward was destructive and gut-wrenching. Desire implies choice and urge, psychologically soft drives; for her it was more desperate. Sheanguished over her place and herself in comparison to others around her. She wanted to be away from grinding emotional vicissitudes. Her desire for stability had become an addiction for security.

During the reflective incorporation phase the rolling sea of Donna's desire for change was calmed by the challenging homework and the realization that she really didn't make as many changes as she thought she had. She was now content to make changes a little more slowly than previously. For the first time in her life she was receiving some average marks. This was sobering for her, not quite devastating but certainly cautioning. Trudy's changes were moderate but good for her. She had volunteered for the study in case she needed support in the transition but she never did. Desire stayed in the moderate though slightly positive range until Christmas. She was pleasantly reacting to her success incrementally, enough so that by the end of the term she had made her decision to complete the community college program since her motivations for attending university deteriorated to the point of virtual indifference. Shane's moderate sense of incorporation did not have much
impact on his desire. His main concern was still coping with the various changes, maintaining psychological progress, and being an asset to the team. Michelle's desires were more moderate now. Incorporation for her was a sadder, wiser affair. There were things such as boring lectures, tightly planned assignments, and instructor predilection about kinds of responses which she thought she could escape but she could not. She, like Shane, was developing coping mechanisms to a degree which she had not anticipated. The change seemed a waste to Elaine. Buffeted by worries she would not see any advantage to her having attended university. There was certainly no emotional or social advantage. She had developed the desire to leave university and go to community college close to home. She had struggled long enough. Finally she was setting out to follow a newly formed plan based on a private wish she had previously held.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.7</th>
<th>Desire for Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIFFICULT</td>
<td>&lt;----Students' view of transition-----&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to escape living arrangements</td>
<td>Interested in trying new arrangements or content with current arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed feared</td>
<td>Change anticipated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section I attempt to describe the factors which influence students' desire for change. Is there an element of resistance or confusion in the way the change is perceived? Students who eagerly anticipated the change seemed to have an easier transition than those who were either ambivalent about the change or had a strong need to escape home or the hometown. A desire to leave high school was expressed by all so that factor did not distinguish levels of ease of transition.
Changes in Influence of Community College Stigma

Community College Stigma was a most interesting problem. It mattered little to some participants while it was dramatic for others. As the study proceeded the pervasive, insidious influence of stigma emerged by degrees. At first only Trudy revealed any awareness. Her reporting of the scorn of her high school classmates alerted me to the power of the opinions of others concerning the choice of post-secondary institutions. In the preliminal stage, in my innocence, I did not question anyone's choice of program or school, thinking that all had simply picked the places they wanted, but before long I was aware that Trudy had to redefine friendship, swallow her pride, and face emotional hurt because of the choice she was obliged to make.

In the liminal phase Donna was not influenced simply because her choices and options were clear and predetermined. She never doubted that she ought to attend university. She was even unable to recall a time of deciding to go to university since in her mind she had always been destined to attend. Trudy no longer expressed a feeling of being stigmatized in the liminal phase. Wisely, she dumped the friends who had ridiculed her earlier and slowly began to make a small number of comforting associations with new found friends. Like Donna, Shane's goals and plans precluded community college so stigma had no impact. For Michelle, its impact was beginning to be visible. She began to wonder if university was right for her but the pressure to finish, based on the opinions of others kept her there. It was not the only factor but it was a factor whose potency she acknowledged. Left to herself, it became obvious that Elaine would not have chosen university. Society, in the form of friends and teachers informed her that community college was beneath her. It would have been embarrassing in August to announce a plan to attend community college, so embarrassing that she would not do it.
Nothing changed for Donna and Shane with regard to this issue in the post-liminal phase except that at one point Shane announced a tentative plan to attend community college after university was completed, this to ensure his entry into the work force. Otherwise, it never had any impact on their planning or thinking. For Trudy it remained a part of her history seeming to affect her less and less. All through the term a growing sense of rectitude grew in her because she found reassurance in the notion that community college was a better place for her than university would have been. She had become convinced that it really was a better place. Michelle had new issues to uncover about herself. She was amazed to peel away the layers of personality to discover a nub of elitism inhabiting her spirit. Recognizing that she was adhering to social norms favoring university she, nevertheless, could not escape. Like Shane, she sensed that high school favors university. Students were encouraged to consider university a best choice. Elaine, naturally, felt most traumatized by stigma. She developed, by December, a sense that students must be free to choose what suits them best. She became a vocal proponent of untrammeled choice. She gained a modicum of peace by wrestling the demon stigma to the ground deciding to ignore public opinion and apply for community college the following year.

Table 7.8
Community College Stigma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>&lt;----Students' view of transition-----&gt;</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University choice dictated by opinions of teachers, parents, peers.</td>
<td>No choice or Clear choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stigma was not anticipated. Perhaps it ought to have been, but it was not. It was not until the interviews began that the idea of there being a stigma associated with attendance at community college arose. The community college student brought this issue to my attention. Later in the study it became clear that other participants had choices curtailed by the stigma.
Changes in Commuting Distance

Pascarella (1993) found that living on campus significantly enhanced first year students' gains in critical thinking while commuting put students at a disadvantage in this important developmental area. Commuting Distance is an odd sounding theme. Somehow it lacks the grand sound of Vision or Sense of Community which seem so much more noble in some linguistic or phonic fashion. Yet, however instrumental and mundane, it can have an impact. Taken together with other factors, or weighed against other factors it can make the difference between an easy or difficult transition. It is not merely a question of miles or minutes but of miles, minutes and the participants' view of those features of distance. It can inform one's sense of belonging or confirm alienation. Long journeys to school can easily become inconvenient but they can also become more than that; they can become a source of continuous frustration administratively and academically. All other things being equal, long commutes were best avoided.

Donna resisted residence at first so she was not aware of all the advantages in the early stages. Trudy was not concerned about distance since she had a car and there was no residence culture or sense of it at her campus. Shane and Michelle were excited about the new apartment and the new adventure of being together in their own space. They didn't think of the 30 minute walk as any kind of distance problem. Later it became a contributing factor to isolation but in the preliminal stage the wonder of nesting outshone the dark nooks and crevices in relationship building. Commuting was a major problem for Elaine before she even began her term. It became the external problem which most commonly bedeviled her. It seems to have been such a hurdle in her thinking that it spoiled her anticipation and her orientation week.
Donna soon became a booster for residence. Even though she had first resisted residence the ease of connecting with new friends and the convenience of her location made the experience a joy for her. She came to believe that one had to go to residence to experience university in a worthwhile way. Shane began to see now that 30 minute walk to their apartment isolated him and Michelle from the life of the university community. It tended to draw them toward each other to the exclusion of developing other friends in the way that students in residence could. Nevertheless, he doesn't regret the decision sensing that living in an apartment unassisted is an important, maturing step, but he recognizes that some worthwhile camaraderie is missing. It was far enough from campus to become depressing for Michelle. She did not have access to a ready made group in the way that Shane did so when he wasn't around she was quite often alone. Visiting campus required planning and arranging. The apartment was near no one that she knew. Elaine's problem with commuting was so severe that she became caught in a dynamic web of resentments morbidly fixing on a daily escape from campus. She resented the university in a generalized way for being too conveniently organized for those who lived there. Wanting to escape and resenting those who didn't need to was another dilemmic wedge in her spirit. Because she couldn't stay she was compelled to go. The idea of being on campus in the evening was anathema to her.

Post-liminally, Donna became an even stronger proponent of living on campus than she had been. She felt so strongly that she believed it was reasonable for her father to force her brother to attend residence for his own good. For her it had been a critical stage in her development. Trudy was never affected by the option of things being closer. The situation was agreeable at home. She was close enough and had the means to come and go as she wished. Shane was content with his decisions. He knew he had some growing to do and learning to live away from home was an important part of his plan. He was not especially affected by the distance from campus. He thought residence
was childish so if he was lonely at times he had the comfort of having deliberately chosen to be. Michelle, on reflection, saw loneliness as a feature of her first term. University was administratively and psychologically distant from her yet she never highlighted commuting distance as a problem. The alienation she felt was more amorphous and generalized. Elaine did not see that she had any choice about commuting. She had begun even to resent institutional efforts to draw students together seeing these efforts as either inefficient or ill-timed. Commuting distance became the locus of her frustration with the university.

**Table 7.9**
Commuting Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIFFICULT</th>
<th>&lt;----Students' view of transition----&gt;</th>
<th>SEAMLESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long commutes</td>
<td>living close to campus</td>
<td>Living on campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this study this issue was simplest of all. Students fared best nearest to campus. There were so many ways participants could become confused, lost or alienated. This was one which seems most easily addressed. For this study participants didn't actually have to live in residence to enjoy comfortable access to university. It was simply a question of whether or not travel was a problem or no problem. If it was a problem, it got to be more and more of a problem as the term progressed, looming larger and larger as the post-liminal stage neared. If it was not problematic then it seemed to become a positive force early in the term and remain so for the duration of the term.
Summary

Students were changing as their role and place and school was changing. The coming of age process was an issue that was ever present. They looked within themselves to try to see how they were coping. For this they had to attempt to adopt the eyes of others. What others thought of them was much more critical than they had previously realized. This was most noticeably the case where transitions were difficult, a particularly strong example being Elaine's early refusal to complete attending community college because of how she would be viewed. But the same issue dogged Shane as he navigated early team parties or refused to speak in his seminar class. Participants changed and they watched themselves change while comparing themselves to others.

The other powerful aspect of the change process is that most of the dramatic changes took place within the first weeks of students' entry to the new institution. Changes did occur throughout the period under study and changes continued to occur, but there were no reversals. There were no cases of growing to like something they hated, no cases of a reversal of opinion on any issue. Those who were confident, became more confident. Those who were anxious became more anxious. There was a deepening or confirmation of previously held notions. All showed signs of stress, but those who started well were less affected by the stress; their periods of stress seeming to be shorter and less exhausting than those who began with some ambivalence. Attitudes did change. Students did gain an understanding of their new environment in a richer sense as the term proceeded but, in general, it seems that the summer and those first few weeks were pivotal in determining the tone of participants' transitions. This tone then formed an attitude which students held firmly thereafter.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

Getting inside the views and motivations of fin de siecle graduates was hardly what Van Gennep had in mind when he was trying to discern the rules concerning the coming of age ceremonies of the young of various societies. He was concerned with the rituals of change while they were concerned with how they would navigate the transition and how this change would impact on their changing lives. The participants went through changes in their transitions. They guessed this but found that. They struggled with previously held notions discovering other than what was anticipated, their unfolding experience teaching new things and new ways of viewing things. Regardless of what they expected they found something different. The greatest discrepancy between the model and the actual is in the scope and intent. Van Gennep wanted to proceed inductively from many, to his credit exhaustively many, examples from a great number of cultures to establish a set of rules about 'rites de passage', whereas I intend only to discover what five young people experienced in a process of transition form one school to the next. Is it possible to make rules for others based on this study? Certainly not. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) indicate, contextualization and interpretation are the purposes. It is not sensible to determine a precise map for any other student's transition but it is possible that their experience, insofar as I have adequately interpreted it, can provide insight for stakeholders in this process. I cannot say to anyone that a certain plan will guarantee success nor can I even guess at all those issues which will impinge on the thinking and working of any individual. Yet the study does indicate broad areas to question, consider, and discuss.
Spring Update

During April and May I asked participants to review my chapters of data analysis. Even though the study boundaries did not stretch beyond the first term, I couldn't resist asking how things had gone during the months we had not met. Donna was a little embarrassed because she was no longer as keen about Celtic studies. Her interests had turned to archaeology. She had lost none of her interest in study, however. This change seemed to underscore the value of having some vision to guide. It doesn't mean that one has to stay with the vision, it simply means that one has to have one --even a temporary one. Trudy found her second term more difficult. She noted that tests were more challenging and that she had failed one course, accounting. This did not depress her. She had worked out a timetable for working and attending summer session part-time so that by fall she would be ready to continue her program. She also told me that her smokeshop boss had offered her a full-time position as store manager. She was pleased and flattered that she had impressed him to the extent that she would be offered such a responsible position at the age of twenty-two. Nevertheless, she wanted to continue with her educational plans so she refused the offer. Shane and Michelle had worked throughout the term in the same fashion as they had in the liminal phase, never quite becoming enmeshed in the campus activity, never quite enjoying the university as much as they thought they might. Shane's team did well but as a young group did not take the championship. Both of them had summer jobs which took them far from home and far from each other. They planned to move back together again at the end of the summer. Elaine had a difficult winter. By the end of the first term she had decided to leave for community college so we thought that she would relax and become less anxious. That did not happen. She felt obliged to finish the year at university but was uncomfortable throughout. Winter aggravated commuting, She was unable to concentrate on her studies because of bouts of illness so her marks did not satisfy her. She did nevertheless complete the year confirmed in her intention to switch to community college.
Stakeholders Addressed

Since the study follows only five people who cannot be said to represent all students, the following findings and recommendations are meant to be taken as those which would have assisted them. Some findings would provide valuable advice for some while other findings would be strong indicators for others. It depends on the beholder to determine the extend of the applicability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this reason I have addressed my conclusions to a variety of stakeholders --not as implications but as considerations. These considerations arise from the data in the study and my sense of that data filtered through three decades as an educator in elementary and secondary schools. I have addressed those whom I feel belong in the stakeholder group as follows:

Preliminal Group (high school)
Students
Parents
Teachers
Counselors
High School Administrators
School Board Administrators
Researchers

Liminal and Post-liminal Group (post-secondary)
Students
Parents
Instructors
Counselors
Residence Advisors
Post-secondary planners and administrators
Researchers
Preliminal Group

In this section preparation for transition is the key issue. What kinds of things might have been done to have facilitated transition. How early must plans be made? Stakeholders in the preliminal phase are focused on the future. Consequently, informing anticipation with real knowledge gained through actual visits or vicarious means can be critically valuable. Too often a great deal is taken for granted.

Students

Vision is critical. Long term plans and goals seem best. Students should attempt to visit post-secondary institutions but even more importantly they should arrange to have some experience at a site typical of the work they might be engaged in. While students often are undecided about career goals there is no reason not to have some experience at some kind of career which interests them. A changing vision seems less damaging than no vision which leads to a desultory aimlessness at best and anxiety at worst. This work exposure can be gained through visits, part time work, volunteer work or cooperative education programs. It seems that the more experience a student has on the periphery of a future career the better informed the vocational plan. The more clearly defined the vocational plan, the more likely an easy transition. Without actually planning to abandon family and friends, students should consider how best to establish themselves in the new social milieu, eagerly embracing the new environment by whatever means are reasonable. They should plan to exploit information handouts, informal, and formal campus visits, visits with post-secondary advisory personnel, and students already at the new institution. Where practical residence seems like a very good idea since it thrusts students into the academic and social environment most thoroughly. Having a clear financial plan is comforting and wise. Having a budget which embodies a year long plan
in place seems to provide a sense of security as well as the obvious financial benefit. Students who are interested in ideas and not dependent on the teacher for inspiration may have an easier transition so it would seem wise to proactively seek interests which are mentally vigorous and engaging. It is all too easy to allow boredom to become a controlling influence. If possible, students ought to focus on developing a long term vision independent of the aspirations of others since that seems to be insufficiently motivating when one is faced with the trials associated with the inward journey of transition. The choice of post-secondary institution should be based on the vision rather than on issues of status.

Parents

Parents are in an awkward position. They would like to help often more than they are able or permitted to help. They have done most of the training and influencing long before their children reach high school so they are in a position of rapidly diminishing power. Is it just a question of watching, hoping, waiting, and sometimes despairing? Not necessarily. Even at this stage there are some things which can help. Helping a student recognize the value of even a temporary vision is worthwhile. This is particularly obvious in Donna’s case where her parents ‘tossed’ her a book from time to time, never novels, always non-fiction, often Celtic history and archaeology. Parents can listen and fan the flames of various interests. Helping a student gain a sense of familiarity with the new school is valuable. Drives to, visits, calls, information sharing all help demystify the process and help students become comfortable in the new place. Assisting with accommodation arrangements is important, bearing in mind that the closer to campus the more acclimatized students are likely to become. In this regard Elaine was left perhaps too much to make arrangements. The more familiar participants were with programs and campus, the less they had to learn when the term began.
Parents have traditionally had less influence on educational policy than recently. Their impact is increasing in geometric fashion currently because of the role of parent councils (Collins & Cooper, 1995). It might be quite possible and welcome to assist the school administrators or counselors in ongoing trips, information sessions, panel presentations, and various forms of enhancing liaison. There was no indication from participants that their parents were aware of any such opportunities to help. By itself the school cannot do an adequate job with any single student simply because it is responsible for all students. Parents' particular interest is likely to be more specific and uniquely valuable than any generalized organizational effort. Parents ought to resist designating the place or the program for their children particularly if that design discourages the student from pursuing a closely held vision. Elaine and Michelle felt that they would be disappointing parents if they had chosen the community college. While it is difficult to watch someone capable and beloved make what appears to be an inappropriate choice, undue influence on those choices can become a slippery slope leading to unsatisfactory or incomplete transitions.

Teachers

Participants were bored by school and repetitious school tasks. Insofar as it is possible, they would have liked high school teachers to wean them from a dependence on single methods of study or learning. It is wise to encourage interest and interests in the hope of fostering an independent vision in students. Connecting assignments to student interests implies that students will be more attentive to the work at hand. This has the immediate benefit of making the learning environment more pleasant for everyone but, more critically, it can facilitate the potential for students to think about and refine choices about present interests and future potentials. This facilitating seems to be the function of the teacher more than anyone else. For most courses it was only the teacher who was involved with the setting of the school assignments and plans.
The issue of the choice of university or community college is one which deserves particular consideration especially if we are teaching stigma of all but the university. Are we guilty of stigmatizing types of institutions? Are we party to a culture of teaching work status or castes? Are we sneering at blue collar work associations which community colleges are heir to? Teachers need to discuss these issues and examine their own thinking and patterns of influence. Participants all felt that teachers encouraged them to choose university over community college. My own prejudice is that we, teachers, are politically and professionally bound to encourage a 'best fit' between vision, inclination, and post-secondary institution, with no particular regard to the status attached to various kinds of schools. At one extreme it is inhumane to make someone feel badly for being unsuccessful in being accepted for university or to even to contribute to the cultural notion that accommodates that tendency. At the other extreme it is inefficient to have students deny a career goal or subvert an interest, as seems to have been the case with three of the five participants. I realize that it is not easy to change a value which is societal but to what extent are teachers part of the production of this knowledge? These matters must be pondered.

Counselors

Counselors, often the least appreciated professionals in the school setting, were maligned or ignored by participants in this study. This finding closely echoes the observations of Townsend and Bedard (1994). Perhaps it is because counselors have a difficult role with an odd tension between organizational and professional responsibility (Schulte & Cochrane, 1995). They are often obliged to handle administrative functions to the detriment of time spent listening and advising. Participants in this study had much more to say about teachers being involved with them in their preparations for the transition. On the other hand, where there is but one counselor for several
hundred students how intimate could relationships be? Counselors have been forced to establish group programs, peer counseling models, information nights, and forums, all to leverage their time, all to reach masses of people. And this will continue as it did in the case of Elaine's having been invited to share her experiences at an information night. It is scarcely conceivable that there would ever be enough political and financial support for schools to have counselors sufficient to provide for regular, individualized student accessibility. Yet Trudy's marks in high school were a signal that university entrance would be a problem. In her case she might have been alerted to university entrance requirements. Programs for large groups will likely continue to be the main thrust of counselors' efforts at assistance with transition issues. Participants were indifferent, at best, about the efforts of counselors. Perhaps they have no idea of how much work counselors did in this regard.

Accepting this staggering limitation, what kinds of programs can counselors reasonably foster? Career fairs, visits from the marketing teams of post-secondary institutions, articulation meetings, all should continue; but where possible, they ought to be routinized and delegated to others. Teams of volunteer parents and students can organize busses, make calls, field messages, type agendas, and manage itinerary. Counselors need to focus on providing programmatic ways to foster vision building and a sense of community in particular. Emphasis on prolonged exposure to specific vocational and post secondary educational institutions should perhaps have priority. This implies a greater need for co-operative education programs (those which allow students to spend some time at a job site as part of their high school curriculum) and mentoring functions as opposed to tours of facilities. There is nothing wrong with tours of possible jobsites and learning facilities as long as they are not the only orientation effort. They would probably be more beneficial to much younger students. The kind of generalized learnings which a tour fosters might best serve the needs of elementary and junior high students. Arranging week long shadowing sessions for students who have tentatively decided on a career
direction would probably be much more fruitful in easing the transition than any number of tours. If, as was the case in three of the five participants in this study, definitive decisions are not made, then perhaps it would be even more important to arrange shadowing sessions at learning institutions.

High School Administrators

Administrators’ main work is probably in removing barriers (Musella, 1995). Often tours might seem preferable to shadowing sessions because they are so much easier to monitor and so much easier to arrange. Since administrators have tended to feel responsible for most aspects of any school sponsored activity there may be a tendency for them to opt for safe, well-managed, well-monitored programs. Yet participants generally had little use for these efforts, claiming that on those occasions students did not get to see the ‘real’ school. These kinds of broadcast approaches to career guidance are not designed to assist anyone in particular so it would be beneficial for administrators to foster a wide variety of types of transition programs for different purposes and different students. In this regard their main work is political. They need to convince stakeholders of the value of more open transition programs, which are more individualized and less easily supervised by staff. Participants did not express any awareness of any such efforts. Working with parents is key since if parents are supportive of the arrangements then other stakeholders might be inclined to give support.

In my experience one of the nuisances that administrators must wrestle with politically is the tension created by teachers’ desire for students to attend all classes versus students' desire to attend various shadowing or orientation programs. This tension may never be entirely resolved but it can be ameliorated by various administrative strategies which involve working collaboratively to develop transition programs, scheduling blank sections in the timetable to accommodate visitors and visiting, and fostering independent learning motifs
which would be less dependent on the lecture method. Michelle seems to have gained great benefit through her independent courses. She hated lectures and class activities so independent studies was a way of keeping her engaged in school in some way. It also gave her the interest in learning for its own sake and the courage to work alone. Students should not be in a position to have to choose between an important class with its frustrated teacher and an opportunity to explore future learning opportunities or career oriented opportunities.

Administrators can also assist the liaison function between high school and appropriately selected post-secondary schools by encouraging counselor, parent, and student efforts at establishing a variety of transition fostering programs. On a number of occasions participants explained the importance of visits, especially impromptu and less formal visits. Trudy could have saved a year if she had known more about the educational possibilities for her at community college and the difficulty she would have gaining entrance to university.

Beyond these specific suggestions there may be value for administrators to establish a dialogue within schools to move toward assisting transition processes in a multiplicity of ways as suggested by the participants in this study. Borrowing from principles of lifelong learning (Cropley, 1977) and adult education (Knowles, 1990; Selman & Dampier, 1991; Cross, 1982) might help high school professionals see the role of the high school as a transitional stage (Freure, 1991) more than as an ending stage. Strictly defined disciplines, grouping approaches, subject clustering along ability lines, all need to be considered for their long term effects on a student's ability to make the connection between one phase of school and the next. The administrator is key in facilitating these discussions and establishing a school and community culture which fosters success and optimism.
District Administrators

Aside from establishing policies which enhance transition along the lines suggested above, board administrators are uniquely positioned to foster the liaison between institutions. Indeed, the responsibility as well as the opportunity is primarily with them. Yet because they are responsible for the system they administer, not the next one, there may a tendency for them to focus on a clear existent mandate. Even so, establishing windows of opportunity for counselors and principals to devote time to liaison procedures might translate into substantial benefits for students in that transition period of the never-never land when no institution is responsible. They've graduated from high school and they haven't quite arrived elsewhere. Four of the five participants were unclear about what kinds of things they would find when they began their post-secondary term. Even in August, there was obvious miscommunication or incomplete communication which had negative impact on some participants.

Another goal might be the establishment of long term educational programs aimed at developing stakeholders' awareness of the issues and the priority of each of them. Aside from the substantive curriculum of such an initiative there is a critical agenda which requires patient effort and retooling in the area of 'in loco parentis' (Anderson, 1994). Schools and school personnel should be less defensive about issues concerning their responsibility. It is difficult to see how any multi-faceted shadowing or any individualized transition programs could have any support from teachers and principals if they are to held strictly accountable for all activities which take place when they are not present. Educational leadership in a proactive, creative, and courageous sense is needed here. If educational leaders want the variety of approaches that would appear to be desirable then they have to assume responsibility for negotiating changes in the public perception of teachers' supervisory responsibilities. In some cases this might require a lengthy public consultation
program. It is worthy of consideration since at least for participants in this study, the omnibus tour/career fair approach to assisting transitions is the least tailored hence, potentially, the least effective in assisting students gain a sense of direction. These approaches have much in common with broadcast advertising or billboards in that they do not discriminate.

Researchers

The period of this study is the first term of post-secondary education. In order to expand our knowledge of transitions issues affecting high school students it would seem beneficial to commence a study during the high school period. More longitudinal studies would enrich our understanding of the transitional process since perceptions could be gathered as they unfold rather than as they are recollected by participants. There would also be an opportunity to enhance triangulation since on-site data collection could involve perceptions of other stake holders, shadowing sessions, and document analysis.

Liminal and Post-Liminal Group (Post-Secondary Institutions)

In this section I am focusing on students in the first post-secondary term and those engaged with helping them. The first term is a critical time which sets the tone for much of the future (Sheehy 1977; Goodenough 1963). Important patterns can be set and critical choices can be made which will subtend vast angles of behaviors as years pass. It is also a time when critical, helpful orienting assistance can be rendered.

Students

For the one student in residence the adjustments to the new environment were accelerated since acclimatizing information was most readily and ubiquitously available in her physical and psychological vicinity. Where the
vision and courses were clearly set, it is a question of following plans; if plans were loose they needed to be tightened. For non-residence students it was important to spend enough time on campus to be comfortable. Joining interest groups and establishing new connections are vital. Studying the brochures and learning the geography by whatever means available were best done as early as possible. A how-to-study section is not addressed here though we can give some consideration to study. Attitude about study can have an impact on transition. Being interested, being eager, working to enjoy the courses, like Donna and Trudy were, is worthwhile. It builds a sense of comfort for students when they feel they can manage the academic program. This feeling of being able to cope can be enhanced by students making an effort to be interested. Sometimes this is not easy. It is rather analogous to smiling in the face of adversity, but a good mood helps and begets an even better mood.

Parents

Much of what occurs in a student's life is beyond parent influence at this stage. Generally, parents in this study seemed to be in the background of students' thinking but no longer viewed as being thoroughly responsible for their children. Obviously students who lived away from home managed much for themselves but even those who lived at home spent more time away from home. Normally students will develop new friends, and keep strange hours. Parents are wise to allow their offspring to determine the degree and level of connection. This is the 'pulling up roots' stage (Sheehy, 1977). A change in schooling is but one of several critical changes individuals face during this stage. Whatever means parents have to encourage children's independence could be explored. All family cultures evolve differently but a growing apart is common in many cultures (Turner, 1967). Being able to help at critical moments is valuable if the students are instrumental in determining the moments.
Instructors

Instructors may have large classes at this stage so many may find the notion of establishing connections with each student rather a silly one. Yet there are at least two things which instructors of even very large classes can do to ease transitions. Firstly, they can adopt a gracious posture and style in their lectures, encouraging productivity as opposed to demanding production. Where ideas are identified as the key issues, students seem to respond by becoming engaged in the world of ideas. On the other hand, when instructors place emphasis on strict guidelines, procedural issues, and assignment deadlines, students are distanced from the instructor and their enthusiasm for the world of ideas is dampened.

Secondly, instructors can be aware of specific transition programs, personnel, and initiatives, making reference to them early in the term. Instructors of smaller classes can do these things, of course, but they can also provide critical moments of connection, encouraging dialogue, and encouraging problem solving. Instructors of smaller classes can be particularly and critically helpful by providing even a modicum of assistance with understanding assignment approaches in a more personal way than instructors of larger classes. This was the case for Donna who was pleasantly surprised when one instructor was kind to her on an occasion when she was late for class. Showing even slight interest in first term students as persons could do much to relieve some cases of anxiety.

Counselors and Advisors

Personnel of many disciplines and backgrounds are employed in various ways in advising in post-secondary institutions. By and large their efforts are aimed at students within their jurisdiction who are just beginning their new phase or students who are in trouble who have the courage to admit that they
are in need of help. Only Donna had positive comments about counseling efforts. She had received volumes of mail and specific counseling on a number of occasions before the summer was over. This did a great deal to help her gain an understanding of her post-secondary institution. These functions are necessary and need not change.

There are, however, two other directions which can be explored. Firstly, it would be helpful to expand on outreach programs not just as a marketing strategy but also to assist transitions. Being alert to opportunities to enhance the liaison function would help bridge the dramatic gap. Encouraging shadowing, volunteering, and mentoring programs could all form some part of their work. Secondly, proactivity in guidance for beginning students is key as it was for Donna. Many students may not readily reach for help early enough to avoid crisis, as was the case with the other participants. Many others may not be around campus enough to even be aware of various initiatives. There is a tendency for educational professionals to grow weary of having to explain and sell their services repeatedly. This tendency must be revisited and discussed. People need reminding. Posters need to be everywhere. Aggressive communication plans should be deployed to provide many opportunities to become accustomed to their new place and its people, especially in their shy first stages.

Post-Secondary Administrators

The chief role of this group is to facilitate conversations in these ways indicated above. There are issues and questions which they might consider in formulating policy or implementing action.

- How can personnel be encouraged to facilitate liaison/transition issues?
In what ways can instructors implement or enhance co-operative education, shadowing, mentoring, and other liaison programs where this is feasible physically or electronically?

In what ways can orientation programs and transitions programs be enhanced or augmented to facilitate individuals’ sense of being connected?

How can facilities be arranged or constructed to encourage new students to feel welcomed?

What initiatives can be established which will encourage active support of instructional staff and administrative staff in their efforts to expand orientation and transition efforts?

To what extent can student administrative councils be funded and mandated to engage in mentoring/liaison/shadowing programs?

Researchers

Future research at post-secondary institutions could include following students who have participated in a high school study. There would also be value in broadening the base of inquiry to include stakeholders' perceptions. At post-secondary institutions there are orientation programs of various kinds which could be assessed more closely in the context of student perceptions. Longer studies, more participants, all could help to refine the understanding of the issues students face. Race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status could also be accounted for in future studies. These issues may play a vital part in the transition process, rendering certain themes less valid or even replacing them.
Theoretical Implications

In this section I revisit the theoretical work of Van Gennep and Knowles to reconsider the role their theories have played in this study. I also suggest the ways in which these theories might figure in future research in the area of educational transitions.

Van Gennep's Lens

In retrospect, it appears that this lens is not theoretically compelling. The tri-phasic motif, designed to analyze rather rigid ritual in the phenomena Van Gennep terms "rites de passage" does not translate in a phenomenological sense to the more naturalistic, flexible processes of transition from one educational level to the next. Data in this study reveal that students were driven by issues which preceded the period of transition, whereas the phenomena which are associated with the anthropological rites were formal and ritualistic. All initiates or candidates were required to be ready for the transition experiences at the same time. All were taken through the processes at the same rate regardless of their state of psychological preparedness.

On the surface of it, this rigid rate seems to apply to modern day student transitions because the time lines are uniform. Yet data reveal that incorporation takes place variously at various times. Moreover the goals and purposes of each of the participants were not uniform. In this study it is not enough that students attend the new place of learning since I view incorporation as meaning that the transition has been successful. If students eschew the new place then incorporation can scarcely be said to have taken place.

On the other hand, the Van Gennep lens has a very practical application since it permits researchers to visualize developmental stages in the transition process. It appears that the participants in this study changed in a number of
ways as the study proceeded; hence it was critically important to isolate stages of analyses. The researcher can consider the process at various stages to test the waters of incorporation. In sum, it appears very useful as a research starting point and "rites de passage" will probably continue to pervade research. Yet the notion lacks that precision which can inform theory about modern day transitions. Here researchers may need to concentrate on either a bi-phasic, before/after- motif or --more compelling-- a continuous evaluation process where student readiness and preparation is assessed and self-assessed beginning in adolescent years and continuing until incorporation.

Andragogy

Andragogy is a theory which is both a theory and a practice. As a theory it defines an attitude about the learner which is respectful. As a practice it suggests a set of procedures which enhance the role of the student and foster independence, self-reliance and self-esteem. I had hoped that the practice of andragogy would provide the information that high school teachers could use to enhance transitions. My notion being that if high school students were treated more andragogically that they would be more ready for the andragogical world of post-secondary-education.

My notion is not warranted by the study for two powerful reasons. Firstly, the most successful students were more interested in organized pedagogical practice than they were in andragogical practice. They didn't especially care if they were treated as adults, they were more interested in being treated kindly by educators who had clear objectives. Secondly, there was little evidence of andragogical practice in post-secondary institutions. For the most part, these institutions seemed to continue to envisage the world of the student as different from the world of the teacher/instructor/professor. Consequently, no firm conclusions can be drawn about the efficacy of andragogical practice and its role in enhancing transitions. That is not to say that andragogy is flawed as a
theory; I do not believe it is. It is merely to say that there is no compelling evidence to say that the practice of andragogy will, of itself, enhance student transitions. It may be that andragogy can inform a portion of the theory leading to a more all encompassing theory of student transitions.

Closing the Gap

As I was completing the final chapter of this dissertation I happened to read the following article in the November 13, 1997 edition of the Globe and Mail.

Paul Gervais got decent grades in high school, enjoyed learning about world history and fancied himself quite the athlete. He was no Einstein but had no trouble keeping up with the rest of the kids.

But Mr. Gervais doesn’t go to school any more. The lanky 17-year-old dropped out a little less than a year ago, just stopped going to class, and now typically spends his days hanging out and bumming change near a mall in downtown Ottawa.

“I was just sick of it," he said. “I didn’t really fit in, I guess.” (Feschuk, 1997)

Like Bob, Paul Gervais, is in shock. He didn’t know what hit him. The “I guess” shouts of confusion and shock. Shock. When I was a small boy I remember falling and striking my knee, hard. The shock was remarkable. I remember the pain was so intense that I couldn’t breathe for what seemed a very long time. When I could breathe some other symptoms of shock appeared, headache, nausea, and lethargy. While these boys were, in a sense, shocked by the system they couldn’t fathom, the shock was not as dramatic and obvious as a bang on the knee. Their problem, though, is infinitely more serious. Later, I
was part of a committee whose job it was to select individuals to do government sponsored laboring work. Bob's resume was in the pile. He still hasn't made any firm plans to return to school.

There is a gulf between institutions. This transitions study has indicated that in some cases institutions are insular in their approach to transitions. In some cases there was a need to open dialogue and establish heretofore insufficiently exploited potentials. This study shows a hodge-podge set of divergent efforts which ought to blossom if some coordinating liaison functions were adopted. It ought to be possible to design smoother transitions, metaphorically, like a relay race where the handing off runner passes the baton to the receiving runner who has come back to connect. For an instant in time they are both running together at top speed. It is a concerted, co-ordinated effort, harmoniously orchestrated. Of course the metaphor must fail because students are not sticks of wood. They are sentient beings. There must always be dialogue since all are different, differently situated, differently oriented. The process can aim at smoothness which must always fail in some way or another. The beauty is in the effort.
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Appendix A: ADVERTISEMENT

DO YOU WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING IN YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PART OF A SMALL ACTION RESEARCH TEAM? I AM DOCTORAL CANDIDATE IN EDUCATION ASSEMBLING A GROUP OF FIVE STUDENTS WHO MEET THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. The participant must be enrolled in the first year of a post-secondary educational institution.

2. The participant must agree to be interviewed on at least three separate occasions.

3. The student must be willing to maintain a journal which is accessible to other members of the project. Entries in this journal should be made weekly or oftener. These entries will comprise a source of data for the research.

4. The student must be willing to meet weekly throughout the fall term at a mutually agreed upon place.

5. The student must indicate a desire to be involved with the research project.

If you would like to join us for this project please send or arrange to send an e-mail message to jtucker@OISE.utoronto.ca.

There are no other selection criteria. The first five students who agree with the above criteria will be selected.
Appendix B: E-Mail Communication with College

Date: Tue, 27 Aug 1996 12:32:53 -0400 (EDT)
From: John Tucker <jtucker@tortoise>
To: ---The registrar--- (Name omitted)
Subject: Observations

Hi-----------------

I've had a first interview and have a few observations. If these are naive and unhelpful just put it down to my being buried in the books for too long. These observations are from the point of view of my study of transitions. I am concerned about things which affect transitions. It doesn't make any difference to me whether or not a phenomenon is justified, reasonable or uniquely local; if something seems to affect the transition, I am interested.

Orientation Week:

When I interviewed students who were to attend university, I found that they were going to be very busy for the week of orientation. When I met the young lady for (the community college) I assumed that she would be busy during that week but I was wrong. She said that there were two meetings on one day. She wasn't excited about the orientation process while the (University) students were very excited about that week. A fuss was being made to welcome (them). The transition from high school to university is one marked by fanfare. The transition, at least for this young lady, is business-like. Notice that I have no idea what she will actually experience. I am only reporting her anticipation of the experience and comparing her anticipation with that of the (university) students. This anticipation is of itself an experience, one which probably has a significant impact on transition. Perhaps this whole process is not something which college personnel can do anything about. Perhaps it doesn't matter to them. Perhaps they regard the community college experience as a much more
serious business. Nevertheless, I think that if one student looks at post-secondary as a chore while another is excited, the transition experience, and subsequent learning experiences, are bound to be vastly different.

Some discussion of orientation events could be useful. It does not seem to be something which could be quickly adjusted.

Orientation Process:

I am just finishing the transcription of an interview wherein the student explains how wonderfully she was treated by the university residence staff. They have organized small group orientation sessions, how to study sessions, and getting to know the campus sessions. She's been showered with help, advice, information, and support from this source. She has visited and toured and explored the campus facility three times, each time being escorted by employees of the (university). . . . This is another support which for that student generates a sense of safety. It also has given her the feeling that her study will be valuable and worthwhile. She is eager to learn. This is a valuable aspect of the orientation process which the (community college) student does not seem to have available.

The Trades School Stigma:

When I was much younger there was a school where people went to learn trades. In our town this vocational school was a place for those who didn't have the marks to attend university. Over the last thirty years I had thought that the attitudes about community colleges had changed dramatically given that quite sophisticated programs are now offered. The community colleges have changed and grown in so many ways during these decades that I was surprised to hear that the young lady who is bound for the (community college) no longer speaks with certain of her high school classmates because they
denigrated her choice of post-secondary schooling. She speaks with shame of how she was ridiculed by some of those who are universality bound. I was really surprised by this. Do public perceptions of the college experience have any effect on transition? I suspect that they do. For some students the effect might be minimal especially if they had a clear sense of career. Ridicule might be quite damaging to those who were less sure about vocations.

These observations may be of use or not, I hope that they are. Clearly, I've plunged into issues where it seems that little could be done. Even in the last case of public perceptions, it is well to know that some students face these kinds of trials.

Having had but one interview with one student I cannot really make general comments about many students' experiences. So, at best, these notes are opening thoughts. Is this sort of comment of use? I ought to be able to add substance when I get to visit the campus or campuses.

Yours truly,

John Tucker
John. Thanks. The information is very useful in that it is a new perspective on Orientation. The issue of ours being very Business like is interesting. Part of me says good, we are a no nonsense operation, and part of me agrees, College has to be fun. This point alone will provoke a useful discussion at our Orientation Committee's Start up review meeting (this is an annual ritual).

The perception issue is huge for us. This is a long story but the short version is that the mandate of the colleges must change in order for Colleges to address the stigma issue. . . .

---The registrar--- (Name omitted)
Appendix C: Conclusions and Summary of "Pedagogy versus Andragogy: Easing the Transitions from High School to Post-Secondary Educational Institutions"

Data indicate that transition difficulties occurred for all respondents in each of the areas identified by the case study. However, while respondents indicated areas which ought to have been handled differently by the high school, none were in a position to comment on how well they would have made the transition had they attended high schools where andragogical practice had been followed. Nevertheless, in several areas of difficulty, respondents identified high school practices which were distinctly pedagogical, not in the general sense but in Malcolm Knowles's posited paradigm of pedagogy "...stated in their purest and most extreme form..." (1985, p.8). Data indicate that respondents would not consider Knowles's position to be extreme.

When three of the concepts delineated in Table 2.1 are compared with the data, it is clear that respondents had problems in making the transition from high school to post-secondary institutions and that they felt that if andragogical theory had been implemented at that level, they would have had smoother transitions.

**Self-Concept** In high school, students were dependent on the teacher to provide information and planning. In post-secondary, participants were required to handle information from a number of sources, only one of which was the instructor or professor. Additionally, the pressure to study generated the necessity for them to devise regular study plans. They had to develop a sense of responsibility for learning. The locus of control shifted from an external to an internal source.

**Experience** In high school there was a body of material to be taught. There is no evidence in the data which shows that there was any sustained
interest in the students' experience or that it had any impact on the educational goals set by the high school. From the data it would appear that in the sense of the learner as the receiver of information, post-secondary institutions did not value experience much more than did the high school. They appear to be pedagogical and well within the traditionalist meta-orientation (Miller, 1983, p. 181-182). However the means of gathering that information was left to the participant which means that post-secondary institutions followed andragogical practice to some extent.

Readiness. In post-secondary institutions participants felt they were treated more like adults. Consequently, participants had to shift attitudes and practices in a matter of months. They were required to make a transition from being dependent learners to being independent participants. All had to develop the necessary decision-making skills.

This case study of post-secondary participants indicates that respondents see areas where high school instructional practice led them to adopt work and study patterns which were detrimental to their transition to post-secondary educational institutions. Respondents indicate that high schools promote dependency in students by focusing students' attention on passing tests and making efforts to ensure that students are given all the information required to succeed. Because teachers assume this responsibility in this fashion, respondents claim that their development as independent learners was hobbled. They had difficulty with transitions from secondary to post-secondary, in part, because they lacked the andragogically inspired practice. They felt that high school teachers did too much for them. Since the work of the high school teachers was well-intentioned, respondents expressed no resentment for this perceived lack of preparation but rather a slight confusion about the learner requirements in the various settings. Their recommendations point to a need for high schools to consider adopting those andragogical practices which would foster independence, resource-based learning, and collaborative learning.
Data indicate that six students who had attended high school on the Port-au-Port peninsula of Newfoundland and an unknown number of students who were attending high school in central Toronto had a number of difficulties with pedagogical teaching practices as described by Malcolm Knowles (1985, p.8).

Knowles develops several concepts (Cross, 1982, p.224) wherein he compares the differences between pedagogy and andragogy; three of these, self-concept, Experience, and Readiness were used in the previous study and are compared.

Self-Concept

In the Newfoundland study students were dependent on the teacher to handle planning. One of the consequences of this was that they were not ready to organize their own planning and so had difficulty in making the transition to being responsibility for learning decisions. At the Toronto site clients of CTYS experienced the same difficulty except that their self-concepts were fragile and required psychological supports of various kinds. Consequently, the difficulty for the Toronto students in making the transitions was intensified.

Experience

At both sites students were taught the pre-existing curriculum without particular regard to their level or intensity of experience. Insofar as Michael Shaughnessy is aware the system is very 'task driven' and 'task focused.' The clients in Toronto to a large extent had lost faith in the school system in secondary school and opted out before graduation. Those few clients that did
proceed to colleges had great difficulty in being handled in a more adult way. They had no experience with that, and their experience was not particularly called on in high school. While all the participants in the Newfoundland study were those who had graduated from high school and were successfully negotiating, or had negotiated, post-secondary school it is interesting to note that their experience was no more valued than those of the less successful clients of CTYS.

Readiness

In all cases, it appears that participants and clients were treated more like adults when they arrived at their post-secondary institutions. It also appears that none were ready for this. In the Newfoundland study certain attitude shifts were required; from the Toronto data it appears that these shifts were required but not made. The Toronto clients were more dependent than the participants in the Newfoundland study but no one at either site seems to have been prepared for the abrupt change from pedagogical, child-like student to andragogical, adult-like student.

Implications for schools in the Postmodern era

One gets a sense that little has changed in the way teachers think about education. There are echoes of unhappy teaching culture in the most modern of cities. In 1862, on looking back at an age, time, and place which was unashamedly pedagogical an unhappy seminarian, Nickolay Gerasimovich Pomyalovsky, writes of his experiences:

The principal pedagogical method in the seminary was rote-learning, a terrifying, deadening rote-learning. It became part of a student's flesh and blood. . . . Sitting before their books, students would endlessly and
senselessly repeat “shame and disgrace, shame and disgrace”... (1973, p. 46)

This foreshadows Michael Shaughnessy’s tyranny. Transmission is still a strong strand of education’s purpose and it still must be understood as implicit in our attitudes about such things as standards and accountability, although our attitudes about authority as a source of knowledge are changing. In this postmodern world the notion of irrefutable knowledge is being challenged by researchers, philosophers, educators, and academics of every stamp and hue. Our once sacred notion of science as absolute and objective as a source of knowledge has been altered and is being altered continuously (Greenfield, 1986)(Usher & Edwards, 1994).

We must consider the notion that the more rigorous and directed and planned our educational goals are the more inefficient they can be, if we want our students to become independent learners. Andragogy, with its implication that learners must each independently construct reality in that sense which Derrida leads us (Usher & Edwards, 1994) is much more fitting as an educational theory than is that pedagogy which has the learner as ‘vessel’ or ‘victim’ regardless how gilded the educational cage happens to be.

Pedagogy is a power play (Foucault, 1977). Pedagogy teaches at its inception that the teacher is above the student. In this sense, deliberately delimited by Knowles, pedagogy resonates of Levi-Strauss’ ‘structural thought’ with its predetermined forms. Andragogy is somewhat akin to ‘serial thought’ as Umberto Eco describes it (Eco, 1989). Pedagogy, the paint-by-numbers following of pre-determined forms, is classical and still present and still adored by many is challenged by the vigorous and dangerous andragogy. My bosses would never support any posture, philosophy, or notion which did not have control as a first principal and principle. Many of the accountability howls accompany that ancient pedagogical drumbeat which is not the music of the
spheres but rather the pressure of paranoia. It is not an accident that in some schools the teacher's desk was placed on a dais which allowed a greater field of vision but also reinforced the notion that the teacher was greater and the student was lesser.

The data reveal that learners of varying degrees of success and different backgrounds have consistent complaints about how well high school is preparing them for post-secondary learning. Postmodernism informs us that there is a power in discourse (Layder, 1994, pp. 97-98), I suggest that this discourse embodies a sociological phenomenon which includes all those snippets in the culture which cause us to place school systems, principals, teachers, and school buildings in a position of power. Educational systems should perhaps do quite a number of things but for our purposes they must absolutely encourage independent learning, independent thinking, and mature self-reliance in the day-to-day working of the school. The Toronto case study informs us that waiting until after high school graduation is too late for too many.
Appendix E: Consent Form

Easing Transitions: The First Post-Secondary Term

This form is to provide you with information about the study and formally invite you to participate in a research project which will be submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education /University of Toronto. This project will be conducted within the Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, and supervised by Dr. James Ryan.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As we have previously discussed, the overall purpose of this study is to learn about student experiences during the first post-secondary term.

In my thesis proposal I have identified three central questions:

1. What differences do students sense in the way learning is to take place in high school and in the post-secondary level?

2. In what ways do students feel that the high school experience prepared them for post-secondary education?

3. What adjustments do students feel are necessary in the way study is pursued in moving from secondary to post-secondary educational institutions?

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students have been chosen in one of two ways. Either names were randomly elected by computer or high school teachers have recommended that
certain students be invited to volunteer. In the latter case teachers chose people who they thought would enjoy being involved with the study.

WHAT WILL BE INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATION?

There will be four ways which I will gather information:

1. There will be several interviews; one before the term begins, some during the term, and one at the end of the term. These will be tape recorded and transcribed. Complete copies of these interview transcriptions will be made available to you as they are produced. You may change these transcriptions as you wish. I will base my conclusions on your revised comments.

2. During the period I would like to spent two or three days with you at your college or university. At that time I will take notes which you will be able to read over and comment on.

3. There will be twice monthly Transition Research Team Meetings during which you will meet other participants. At these meetings, which will be taped, we will brainstorm about various problems with members of the team present. Any problem or issue which has any effect on how well a student is making the transition may be discussed. The meetings will take place at a mutually convenient location and ought to last an hour or less.

4. I ask that you keep a brief journal of any items which occur to you throughout the term. These journal entries can be quite short. I ask only that you have at least two entries per month. Your journal observations will become part of my bank of information and may be used to form interpretations which will appear in the final thesis.
YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The following steps will be taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the research.

All proper names will be deleted in all records and replaced by pseudonyms known only to the researcher after the review and commentary has been completed by each participant. Thus each participant will remain anonymous.

Field notes and interview transcripts prepared during the research will remain confidential. With the exception of members of my thesis committee, the data will not be shared with any other third party without your explicit permission.

YOUR RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

You have the right to change your mind about the study at any time. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Since we will be discussing ways and means of dealing with problems associated with student transitions you will have an opportunity to get advice from other students as well as the principal researcher. This advice could help you moderately or dramatically in making the adjustment to post-secondary education.

We will be brainstorming issues related to how one can adjust to college or university. In that process the team might decide to engage in short learning projects which cover some research or learning need. This kind of project will
be facilitated by the team. While there can be no guarantee of academic success, your chances of academic success ought to be enhanced by your being involved in this research process.

This research process will add a dimension of interest and excitement to your first term. You will enjoy the process of being part of a study which could benefit others.

WRITTEN CONSENT

The completed form will remain only in the possession of the researcher. If you are willing to participate in the research project please sign the following declaration.

I am willing to participate in the research project
Easing Transitions: The First Post-Secondary Term

Signed_________________________________

Date__________________________________
## Appendix: F Comparison of Assumptions and Designs of Pedagogy and Andragogy

### Assumptions

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Andragogy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Concept</td>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td>Increasing self-directiveness</td>
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<td>Experience</td>
<td>Of little worth</td>
<td>Learners are a rich resource for</td>
</tr>
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<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>Biological development</td>
<td>Developmental tasks of social roles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>social pressure</td>
<td>[learner perceived]</td>
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<td>Time perspective</td>
<td>Postponed application</td>
<td>Immediacy of application</td>
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<td>Orientation to learning</td>
<td>Subject centred</td>
<td>Problem centred</td>
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</table>

### Design Elements

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<th>Andragogy</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Mutuality, respectful collaborative, informal</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
<td>By teacher</td>
<td>Mutual planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis of need</td>
<td>By teacher</td>
<td>Mutual self-diagnosis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Logic of the subject matter, content units</td>
<td>Sequenced in terms of readiness; problem units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Transmittal techniques</td>
<td>Experiential techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>By teacher</td>
<td>Mutual rediagnosis of needs; measurement of program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cross, 1982, p. 224)