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**SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR
POST INCARCERATE STUDENTS
ENROLLED AT LOYALIST COLLEGE**

By

BERNARD LAWRENCE BELANGER

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Adult Education, Community Development,
Counseling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto**

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ABSTRACT

SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR POST INCARCERATE STUDENTS ENROLLED AT LOYALIST COLLEGE

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MASTER OF ARTS 1998

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The aim of this study was to discover the factors that led to the success or failure of post incarcerate students involved in both diploma and adult upgrading programs at Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Science, Belleville, Ontario.

The study employed both objective and subjective criteria to discern what factors would be identified by the student and the author (subjective criteria) and what would correlate to success indicators found in other studies (objective criteria).

Five post incarcerate students were interviewed and asked questions that were designed to examine the relationships between the student's view of his educational success and his relationship with family, peers, or partners. The results found that three of the five students had a commitment to learning, completed assignments within the required time-frames and made a concerted effort to study at home. As they became dedicated learners this further fueled their motivation to succeed. The results also found that as these three students became successful in completing their studies, not only did their self esteem improve, their relationships with others also improved.

The author discovered that by employing both objective and subjective criteria, enhancers and inhibitors were identified that will ensure future post incarcerate students success in their studies.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE THESIS:

The incentive to write on the topic of factors for success for post incarcerated offenders was a culmination of seventeen years that encompassed both educational and employment experiences. These experiences have been influential in attempting to learn about success or not in educational endeavors of individuals who have come to Loyalist College. This thesis is an attempt to understand the factors that relate to student success or failure for the post incarcerated and identify resources or actions that may assist the post incarcerated in attaining their educational aspirations. Finally, the thesis will argue that educational success for post incarcerated students is dependent on an educational philosophy and practice that recognizes and encourages individual motivation and change for the post incarcerated student.

BACKGROUND:

It is necessary to be aware of the context of the author's experiences to fully understand the direction of the thesis, the analysis of the literature review as well as the analysis of the survey technique and answers provided by the respondents. The focus of this thesis encompasses the author's adult education philosophy and practice within the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) and as a teacher at Loyalist College.

To begin, it is important to define this author's interpretation of adult education philosophy and practice, as the term "adult education" has been employed to describe the

teaching of adults, or teaching that is utilized by industries or public agencies to assist adults in meeting corporate objectives. This author's philosophical view of adult education encompasses the belief that adults come with a wealth of learning from prior experiences and that reflection of experiential learning is valued and a critical component of the adult learning process. For the practice of adult education it is important that adult learners' evaluate their learning needs based on their own self identified goals, needs, and objectives, and that they have a part in the evaluation process. Learning should occur in an environment that fosters an atmosphere of trust, support, and emotional response.(Hall et al. 1998) The author had the good fortune to be exposed to this philosophy and practice at an early age.

As a seventeen year old student, this author first became aware of this learning philosophy and practice from a teacher at Loyalist College, Fred Ryan. Mr. Ryan has since been made a Distinguished Educator of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for his work in creating Adult Day Schools in the Toronto area and other regions of Ontario. These schools assisted clients on social assistance not only to upgrade their basic literacy but to attain high school diplomas. Mr. Ryan had the belief that everyone had the ability to learn and could do so, if given effective instruction, motivation and resources to learn. Having created these day schools, he was hired to teach in the Behavioral Science program at Loyalist College. The focus of the program was centered on an adult education orientation to facilitate not only a unique learning environment for students, but for the learning to transcend the college experience so that students would become life long learners in the adult education philosophical sense.(Thomas 1979) Upon reflection, the impact that the Behavioral Science program

had on this writer has been profound. Not only had the program transformed the writer's learning approach to education, it transformed his approach to employment so that he continually looked for ways to increase the potential of individuals that he would come in contact with and to appreciate the value of objective and subjective evaluation. The importance of subjective evaluation is that it assists the evaluator in defining not only objective outcomes, but also identifies other outcomes or criteria that cannot be easily qualified through the objective evaluative process. For example, it is known that many inmates need to receive assistance for substance abuse problems. Objective evaluation criteria may include the completion of a twelve step program, and attending a set number of meetings. Subjective evaluation criteria might encompass how committed the inmate is to her/his sobriety based on his/her knowledge or ability to remember the twelve steps. Subjective and objective evaluation when combined became important tools in this author's academic and career experiences.

After graduating from Loyalist College, Queen's University became the next step toward a learning philosophy that would continue on for the next twenty years.

Originally, hoping to obtain a degree in Psychology, it became readily apparent after a few courses, that Sociology was the field that held the author's interest. Sociology is a study of human interaction that provided a means of framing questions and answers in a manner that attempted to obtain meaning not only from a macro perspective as well as a micro perspective. It was this micro perspective that provided the motivation to continue to study human action from a variety of vantage points. Macrosociological perspectives such as the conflict or structural functionalist point of view can provide insights into social action. These perspectives provide answers from the empirical research completed

by the two paradigms. Yet, the author was fascinated with an adult education paradigm that continued to attempt to understand the individual element in the equation and the microsociological approach appeared to answer many relevant questions. Having been raised in a family that had two parents employed by the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC), discussion about deviant behavior or criminal personalities had been a common occurrence. Questions concerning why people committed criminal acts, never seemed to be answered by macro- paradigms that suggested the owners of production were responsible or that deviants were needed by society to define right from wrong. It was this writer's belief that the individual had to have had some control over his /her own action in either preventing the deviant behavior or stopping it. Academic experiences as well as experiences with prisons through family members led naturally to a career in that field.

Employment in the CSC began as a correctional officer (prison guard) at the Regional Treatment Center (RTC) housed within the confines of Kingston Penitentiary. RTC, in 1980, had between sixty and eighty inmates depending on the admission or release of offenders to other institutions who became "stable," depending on the prognosis of the psychiatrists on staff. The guard corps were always viewed as somewhat hostile to the inmates because they would be the ones to provide security to the institution and other staff from the inmates. When a behavioral or disciplinary problem arose, the guards would be called in to handle the situation if it became a physical confrontation. What this author found interesting was the social dynamic that occurred between the staff and the inmates.

Both guard corps and medical/psychiatric staff could predict who would likely be readmitted to RTC based on the subjective criteria that they have developed. Some guards were particularly adept at being able to “diagnose” an inmate while others were not. It became this writer’s ambition to be able to identify useful signals that might be useful in predicting behavior that would result in an inmate being sent back to RTC for further psychiatric treatment. This analysis of “signals” from inmates became particularly important when the writer became a Case Management Officer, Institution.(CMOI)

The duty of a CMOI was to provide counsel and assist the offender in his / her attempt to successfully:

- transfer to another institution
- make applications for parole or other forms of conditional release
- prepare an individual plan for the inmate to begin to correct criminal behavior that led to incarceration, and
- to counsel the offender on his /her behavior while incarcerated.

These duties provided an opportunity to subjectively test theories regarding indicators or other criteria of the offender’s past and present behavior that would suggest whether the offender would be a good candidate for conditional release or transfer to an institution of less security. The criteria developed not only included an analysis of objective factors such as length of criminal history, psychological profiles, educational attainment, employment history but factors that were subjective and important to note. These subjective criteria placed emphasis on:

1. The behavior of the inmate around other inmates:

- positive attitude, non violent or non threatening;
 - not involved with drug dealing or “muscling” other inmates for favors, drugs or cigarettes.
2. The inmate’s behavior around staff:
- engaged in a relationship with staff that was not threatening or abusive;
 - ceased or decreased actions of machismo or bravado;
 - warranted positive feedback from staff regarding behavior.
3. The inmate’s behavior around the employment or shop supervisor:
- established work habits that assisted him in finding employment when released;
 - worked hours as required in the community.
4. Relationships with family, spouses, and children:
- planned for the return to the family;
 - resolved or made effort to resolve difficulties in relationships with family members;
 - support measures in place to assist family conflict.
5. The dedication level of the offender to educational or employment programs while incarcerated:
- involved in his work or programs to gain the personal benefit from the activities;
 - involved in activities to not only gain favorable support for release.
6. Commitment to personal growth or life skills programs:

- identification of the problems were that led to incarceration and made commitments to resolving the problems.

All these criteria were applied to each offender and were also utilized by other guards, supervisors, prison officials, CMOI's and inmates alike to discern if an offender had made the commitment to change his life. These subjective criteria developed over nine years of working in corrections became the basis later of this attempt to discern factors of post incarcerate success at college.

In addition, an important consideration (and still is), was the offender's ability to convince correction staff of his sincerity in committing to a conditional release program within the CSC. It was this ability of the offender to effectively convey to this writer the commitment to success of a conditional release plan and the utilization of objective and subjective criteria, that led to only two offenders failing in their paroles in six years of recommending inmates for release to the National Parole Board.

SCOPE:

It is important to note that the study of prison education focused on cognitive / learning deficiencies, impulsivity, psychological impairment or social deprivation. This author does not intend to re-examine that extensive body of literature; instead, the aim of this study is to confirm that the incarcerated and thus post incarcerated students have the ability to learn and are motivated to do so. This thesis will discuss:

1. The major factor that must be present for post incarcerate success in post secondary education.

2. Experiences in successfully assessing inmates for parole based on subjective and objective criteria can be transferred to assess post incarceration students chances for success.
3. The philosophy and practice of adult education suggests that it is the recognition of “intra” and interpersonal factors that leads to post incarceration success.

It is this author’s contention based on experiential evidence that the subjective interpretation of established criteria motivated by both the assessor and the assessed can lead to the achievement to which both parties are working toward. For example, inmates were subjected to numerous criteria to assess their potential for successful release from institutional confinement. The criteria for assessment came from the National Parole Board, the institutional management team, psychological or psychiatric recommendations, as well as from the inmate’s CMOI, parole officer, and prison guard and other relevant officials input, called the Case Management Team (CMT). The CMT had to be assured that the inmate would have a high probability for successful release because they were the ultimate authority in knowing the inmate’s institutional behavior, and thus were held accountable to the CSC senior management, the National Parole Board and ultimately to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Justice. The “weighty” decision to release an inmate on parole was such that the CMT and, ultimately, this author, would apply all the noted criteria as well as any subjective criteria that this author could intuit from past experiences with the inmate and his relationship with other staff and inmates in the institution.

The criteria for this subjective assessment were obviously not grounded in scientific practice but nonetheless, the ultimate factor in determining whether the inmate should be released or not depended on the decision maker's assessment of the inmates commitment to fulfilling the conditional release plan. The inmate had to convince the decision makers not only that the objective assessments were valid indicators but also, that the subjective assessments that the decision makers held were positive. The subjective assessment therefore, required the inmates to demonstrate on a number of different personal levels that they were ready to succeed upon release.

The objective and subjective assessment of individuals had been an ingrained part of this author's professional experience so that when hired by Loyalist College to teach, the assessment process used included in more detail the students' assessment of themselves in relation to their own learning. It became apparent to the author that certain students engaged in activities that assisted them to be successful in college. As well, certain students engaged in activities that hindered their ability to succeed. It became a focus of attention for this writer to attempt to discover what those factors were and to promote the identification of these positive factors for the students.

The objective standards to assess student success were the obvious measures: grades, grade point averages, success on practicum experiences, commitment to studies and completing assignments on time, asking for assistance from faculty for clarification of assignments or course content. However these standards were not the only measures to assess students' commitment to their education or learning. It was noticed by faculty colleagues that students who had to work to support themselves while attending college had interesting outcomes. Some students saw the part time (or full time position) as a

means to attaining the ends, graduation from college. Other students however, saw the part time employment as the primary focus of their lives; staying employed and working enough hours to both sustain themselves and pay for college. This difference in the focus of employment became an indicator for faculty that helped to determine why some working students were more successful than others.

Another indicator was the student's insights into the role of the college practicum in assisting them to obtain career direction or employment upon graduation. Students who became fully engaged in the practicum experience by promoting the values and beliefs of the organization where they were gaining experience, indicated a level of commitment not only to their own learning, but also to establishing positive relationships between the student and the placement supervisor, the placement organization and the college program, and the development of further placement opportunities for future students wishing to gain experience with the organization. The completion of a positive practicum experience became a criteria to measure student success in completing a diploma program.

The identification of the importance of academic and experiential learning for this author became the significant factor in applying for an M.A. degree in the department of Adult Education at OISE/UT. Enrolling in various courses in the Adult Education department allowed for the inclusion of the practices and philosophies of adult education that had meaning for the writer in regard to the experiences gleaned from his own learning experiences as a student, as a teacher, and his prison experiences as a guard and case management officer. Adult Education as a practice supported the importance of recognizing the assistance needed by those persons who were trying to change their lives

in ways that required themselves to recognize their deficiencies, be they criminal, lack of academic success or lack of life experiences that hindered their ability to obtain their desired goal.

A genuinely human approach to education can only have one style, which is to treat the student as an end in himself and not as a means to serve institutional or social objectives. (Cosman 1980 45)

The learning gained from the adult education courses led the writer to understand that learning, whether within a formal educational framework or not, required the learner to:

- **Be responsible for his or her own learning.**

Coercion, be it parents pushing children into career paths that the parents believes are viable, or coercion based on not having employment so that college becomes an opportunity to do something meaningful during the day did not appear to be a good motivator for learning. The student has to be responsible for his or her learning and understand why he or she is able to utilize the information obtained.

- **Have some internalized personal motivation to continue learning or moving forward in education.**

The learning activity must be recognized as having both an extrinsic and intrinsic value for the students so that they are encouraged to move forward independently with their learning.

- **Recognize the role of life long learning.**

The importance of reflection on academic and experiential learning will assist the learner in recognizing that learning occurs in many settings throughout his/her life.

- **Recognize strengths when it comes to learning.**

This motivates the learner to complete activities in a manner that best suits the learner.

Two areas of research were particularly influential: The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory And Practice in Adult Learning (Tough 1979) and the study of Participatory Research. Tough's work brought to focus the notion that that this author had been attempting to conceptualize for years in both the penitentiary and in the college: people who are ready to change their lives do so deliberately, with a sense of purpose and often to discover a direction for their lives. Tough noted this "deliberate effort to learn" was usually undertaken by the learner in an attempt to make major personal changes. (1979 1-2) Tough also noted that these learning projects, whether they involved formal educational institutions or completed in an informal setting, resulted in society, as well as the individual, receiving some benefit from this learning. (4) Tough's work began, for the writer, the journey of attempting to discover what factors would assist learners to be successful in formal educational settings and statement solidified the resolve to assist those post incarcerate students, who had ventured into college, to make dramatic changes in their lives. Ultimately, assisting the post incarcerate in education would enhance self esteem, opportunities for employment and to stop engaging in criminal activity, which would benefit both the post incarcerate and all of society. Tough also crystallized for the writer the idea that the learner knows the factors or barriers that needs to be identified to complete educational or learning endeavors.

Participatory Research requires the researcher to view the individuals who are being studied as participants in the process and thus stakeholders in the findings from the researchers.(Selener 1997; Park et al. 1993) This research philosophy is a radical approach to research in that the studied group have input into what is being researched, how it would be researched, and ultimately how the research would affect the studied group. Obviously, this type of research is not “value free” as it requires both the researcher and the studied group to have a say into how the research will provide “transformative actions, with the active participation” ... of the group.(Selener 12)

Approaching this thesis from the theoretical standpoint that the studied group should have some input into the methodology and assessment of the findings proved to be both an enlightening experience into the insights of the post incarcerate, as well as a logistical nightmare in maintaining the confidentiality of the participants in the project. Ultimately, it was not feasible to follow a true participatory research methodology as confidentiality had to be upheld; the students involved were from diploma programs and the adult upgrading program, and this combination created problems. Asking the participants to reveal the outcomes of their educational experiences and re-surveying the respondents to better identify the factors that led to educational success was as “participatory” as the writer could achieve without breaking confidentiality. Ultimately, it was the concern for the post incarcerate students’ welfare that drove this thesis project in the direction and methodology that followed.

Finally, the factor that ultimately influenced the author to engage in this project was meeting the post incarcerate students at the college. Having similar experiences from being inside a prison (albeit from different sides of the barriers as well as the differences

from federal and provincial institutions) had the effect of creating a “bond” of similar experiences for both the post incarcerate student and the author. The experiences that the writer had with inmates and knowing from personal experiences the difficulties that inmates have in obtaining release from prison, as well as following the release program in place by the Ministry of Correctional Service or the Correctional Services of Canada, helped understand how difficult it is to remain “on the street” for this student group. Because this author, as a teacher, freely identified to students his experiences within the Correctional Services of Canada, contact with post incarcerate students had occurred so frequently that it led to the facilitation of questions about what it would take for this group to be successful at the college.

Prior to beginning the study, the author knew five students who were in diploma programs at the college and / or who had graduated from Loyalist College; three of the post incarcerate students did not complete their diploma programs at Loyalist. One of the students who was not successful had informed the writer that he had spent twenty five years in federal prisons. The writer and the student came to share stories of prison experiences as both had been at the same prison at the same time. Because of this “connection,” the writer felt a strong need to help the student be successful in his studies. Unfortunately, this was not to be. The student did not have the academic background or study skills to complete college level curricula or course requirements. Yet, two other students from similar backgrounds and experiences managed to complete their college programs and obtain diplomas. For this author, the question why one post incarcerate offender would be successful and the other not, required answers.

This thesis therefore is the result of a serendipitous journey to discover the answers to why some post incarcerate students are successful at Loyalist College in either diploma programs or adult upgrading programs. Upon reflection, however, this journey of discovering what factors leads to post incarcerate success at college is a journey that has been traveled by many post incarcerate students. This has been an area of study largely ignored. Adult educators have long been studying the nature of learning and education with both adults and with offenders. This thesis therefore, is an alternative view of the factors that are vital to educational success for post incarcerate students. Ultimately, this study will provide some assistance to the Correctional Services of Canada, professors at Loyalist College and the incarcerate or post incarcerate students wishing to come to Loyalist College and be successful in completing educational programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will examine studies of adult education and adult learning principles that identify factors in incarcerated and post incarcerated success in education, as well as, college/university success correlates. The perspective of this paper must be identified as sociological rather than psychological. Sociology identifies not only that learning occurs in the social realm on a macrosociological level, but also helps to explain how the individual's interaction with teachers or other facilitators transmits information and supports learning. Through reflection, the learner can thus incorporate information into her / his own life based on past social experiences. Both functionalism and conflict theory paradigms can explain why education is important from a societal perspective but they fail to fully analyze or answer the reasons for individual learning that a microsociological examination from an interactionist paradigm can. This literature review therefore will examine adult education, adult learning principles, the educational success of incarcerated and post incarcerated students, and college success indices from functionalist, conflict and symbolic interaction perspectives.

To begin, it is necessary to outline the main themes of this thesis which have influenced the direction of this literature review. They are:

- Adult learning principles provide a focus to understand the motivation of post incarcerated students wishing to succeed in community college programs.
- Post incarcerated offenders are not necessarily deficient in their ability to learn or their motivation to learn.

- Successful post incarcerate students understand what it takes for them to be successful in community college programs based on their lived experiences in education prior to enrolling in post secondary education, and
- College success is not necessarily determined by previous educational experiences, especially if the student had been incarcerated.

It is important to understand how adults learn, given the context of their experiences. It must be recognized that formal and informal learning influences the individual's view of the world and this influence based on past experiences can affect present and future learning. (Verduin, Miller, and Greer 12) All experiences can and will influence the adult to view education positively or negatively based on past experience. The totality of this experience affects the individual and that learning for the adult must be viewed in a "whole person" context. A whole person approach, for this author, recognizes the impact that experiential learning has on the adult learner. Adult education practitioners must examine and understand the impact of the learner's educational and life experiences to assist the adult student's ability to learn, given the situation that the student may be in. To fail to do so may result in a misunderstanding of the learner's ability to grasp the material being studied. It is therefore necessary to begin this review with an examination of the sociological theories, followed by the theories and studies regarding how adults learn, are motivated and the success factors for students at college and universities.

A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE:

Functionalist theorists view society as a complex system that requires the coordinated efforts of the institutions and members of society to ensure the continued promotion of a functional community. Social institutions help coordinate the regulatory behaviors of individuals and groups to recognize what is considered right and purposeful for a community's continuation. ((Macionis et. al., 1994) Although societal functions and institutional demands may not benefit all members of a community, these functions do ultimately serve most members of the community and ensure that the members of the community have a purpose in the overall structure of that society. Education as an institution therefore, provides a function in promoting the dominant ideology of the community. (Teevan 299)

Education has several functions in society such as, promoting cultural values, beliefs, and norms, as well as educating members in society to understand their place and roles within the framework of the society. Education is intended to stratify members of a community into employment or positions of status that best serve the interests of the community. (Macionis) Schooling allows for the efficient selection of individuals to be placed in hierarchical structures within the community based on performance criteria deemed essential to the community. These criteria are recognized by most members of society as necessary for the well being of the society and thus the educated elite are most qualified in terms of ability to learn, achievement based on high mark attainment, and continued educational advancement through the educational system.(Hurn 1985) It is evident that the functionalist perspective's review of education recognizes, promotes and

justifies the stratification of individuals in society to positions of status and economic earning ability, based on educational success.

Functional theory is a macrosociological theory and thus examines education based on a social arrangement that benefits society.(Teevan 7) The individual in functionalist theory is recognized as having a limited impact in that, groups of people make up societies, and communities, and to attain positions within these groups success, should be achieved by merit. (Teevan, Macionis) One difficulty that has been identified in the functionalism educational paradigm is that existing educational interests may have other priorities than to ensure the brightest are rewarded. For example, educational attainment does not necessarily guarantee that an individual has the skills to complete the duties of a particular employment position. A degree in business administration does not ensure that the degree holder is a good business administrator. Also, the paradigm does not adequately explain the effects of power and wealth in providing equitable opportunities to learn to all members who participate in education. Education and schools can and are influenced by power, money, and special interests of elite groups. (Hurn 1985)

A CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE:

Conflict theorists recognize that educational policies are influenced by the need to ensure that an educated work force is in place for the continuation of production. (Martindale 1981) Education as an institution in capitalist society serves the interests of those who own production at the expense of those who work to produce wealth for the elite, by ensuring that what is taught to the working classes serves the interests of the

elite. Education and schools maintain the status quo by ensuring that what is taught to students is docility, compliance to authority, and the required knowledge needed to work in a capitalist society. (Macionis) Randall Collins (1979) identified the role of education from a conflict perspective in his book The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education And Stratification. Essentially, education and schooling transmit middle class standards, beliefs and values rather than intellectual skills so that the preservation of the capitalist mode of production continues. Conflict theory provides an interesting assessment of the role of education in capitalist society, but it too has its limitations when explaining what happens to an individual who indeed does learn more than just docility and compliance to authority.

Both functionalism and conflict theories view education as an institutional mechanism for ensuring the continuation of “certain critical functions for society... and meeting the needs of the capitalist elite.” (Teevan 301) These theories have much to offer education theorists from a macro perspective in “training” individuals to work within an industrial society and, can assist in understanding how certain groups, such as the incarcerated, are educated to re-enter society as potential employees or educated not to disrupt society. Unfortunately, these theories offer relatively little help in attempting to understand why the student/learner as an individual is motivated to learn information that does not support the status quo or assist in the production of wealth. The two theories do not adequately explain the role of the adult student, the student who has left formal education for a time and returns to continue her/his studies. If, as these macro theories suggest, education serves the interest of society, a student encouraged in education would have attained the education needed to work at employment assisting in the production of

wealth. Students would not have to leave the work force to return to school to find new employment, as the employer would directly assist the worker through training or further educational opportunity. Also, the adult would have been already “trained” to know his or her “station in life,” if properly educated by the system as a child, and thus would search for new employment suitable for his or her station. To explain why adults return to school for reason other than employment, for example, just to learn, a different perspective must be employed, a perspective that analyzes the individual’s actions, not necessarily the macro societal structure that houses education.

A SYMBOLIC INTERACTION PERSPECTIVE:

The symbolic interactionist perspective examines the motives of the individual at a microsociological level, to understand the actions of that individual. To begin, it is necessary to detail the symbolic interactionist perspective regarding society and then education. Symbolic interaction examines social action from a “theoretical framework based on the assumption that society is continuously recreated as human beings construct reality through interaction.” (Macionis et, al. 22) This paradigm recognizes that humans engage with others on a symbolic level by creating meaning from the actions that they engage in, in relation to the interpretation of actions from others. Society is viewed as being constructed by individuals who, have differing ideas, or world views, and create new interpretations from actions that they encounter. As persons grow older their world views can change given the experiences that they have gained. As conflict and functionalist paradigms recognized that children have their world view shaped by the educational system, so too does the symbolic interaction perspective, but it goes further to

see the world as shaped by individual interpretation of both her or his own actions and the actions of others. (Macionis et. al. 141) The benefit of examining education from a symbolic interaction perspective is apparent when one recognizes that adults have been active participants in the educational process by accepting or rejecting the teachings provided by the education system. Education provides for the integration of the young into a culturally accepted social sphere, through the transmission of norms, values and beliefs, but adults have already been socialized. Adults engage in education from a different perspective, that of a learner centered approach. This approach, as identified by symbolic interaction, may allow adults to examine education as learning and not as a requirement for employment, training, or for other societal needs. Adults have generally been taught how to live and behave as citizens, and they then interpret the material being taught from a personal and introspective point of view; they learn because that is what they want. In adult education the roles of student/teacher, learning/ teaching, are negotiated and so require a perspective that allows for this interpretation. (Jarvis 219) With this understanding of symbolic interaction and its application to education, opposed to the macrosociological theories of functionalism and conflict, a review of adult education principles will be examined.

ADULT EDUCATION:

Adult education as a practice and theory needs to be clearly understood as it relates to this study because the term “adult education” can have many different

applications. Selman and Dampier in their book The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada, (1991) provide valuable insight into the many meanings given to adult education. For example, they identify adult education as being the teaching of adults, recurrent education, continuing education, and worker's education. For this study, the definition attributed by C.O. Houle encompasses this writer's view of the theory and practice of adult education whereby persons:

seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, knowledge or sensitivities; or it is any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways. (in Selman and Dampier 3)

This definition is inclusive of all the practices of adult education such as teaching adults, or helping adults teach themselves, as well as, recognizing the potential for personal improvement through educational activities. This definition has been criticized as not being well defined because it does not include all activities that adults may engage in that require instruction and learning. The definition does recognize that adult education is an intricate process for both the learner and the facilitator and must, therefore, be given the flexibility to encompass all adult education activities. When learning occurs for the adult, what develops is of such delicate tapestry that full examination of the learning process would in fact hinder that process. (Houle 2) It is important that the adult learner is made aware of this intricate learning process and that it cannot be fully clarified by either an

educator or by the learner without a reflection period where the experiences of the adult are examined from a learning perspective. This reflection, examining the learning from all of life experiences as it relates to the adult's needs or interests for learning must occur for the learner and the educator who is assisting the adult. To assist educators and learners to appreciate and recognize the extent of learning, a theoretical paradigm must be employed to comprehend the learning that an adult obtains.

Educators such as Mezirow (1981), Cross, (1981) and Freire (1970) have recognized the power of adult education to transform the adult into a learner who can transcend the information given by understanding the implication of the information in relation to the adult's past and present life experiences. Freire (1970) examined education as a process which allowed the adult to recognize and move past false consciousness provided by the elite to maintain the status quo. Mezirow believed that "perspective transformation" is an emancipatory process by which adults come to recognize that the learning they have acquired can be used by the elite as a means of keeping individuals continuing to support the status quo.(Mezirow 1981 11)

Encouraging adults to become aware of their past experiences and facilitating the learning obtained from critical reflection of these experiences will allow the adult to become more aware of his/her role in society. New learning and experiences will become assimilated with past learning to provide the adult with an ability to recognize his/her place in society and the role expectations acquired. For this author, adult learning acknowledges the importance of critical reflection upon new and past learning in an attempt to foster conditions within the adult learner to recognize the power that he / she have over her / his life vis a vis actions or conditions that affect the individual is response to these actions

and conditions. Adult education must provide the learner the means and ability to engage in education that suits his or her interest in concert with the best interests of the community. If the learner's interests are paramount without accepting that the community has an interest in the adult's learning activities, learning ceases to be a social action. As a social action, learning affects others; these effects should serve a positive purpose. In the case of post incarcerated offenders, the positive outcomes of education are evident: increased ability to find employment, reduction in criminal activity, positive outlook on life, and increased self esteem.

Adult educators then, must allow the adult student to define what it is that they wish to learn, what they will retain for future use, and how they will interact in the world. Adult education recognizes that adult learners interpret what they have learned in relation to their lived experiences that mediate the new learning. This is a radically different from what Functionalism and Conflict theories believe should occur in the education process.

If the learning objective is simply reproducing what the teacher has taught, the result may just as well be measured by the teacher. But if a primary learning objective for the learner is to become increasingly autonomous, to begin to take over direction of his own learning, then it is highly important that he take a large share, if not complete control, of the evaluation. Now that it is better understood how much self-directed learning goes on, a major task of education will be to equip individuals with the attitudes and

skills required for curriculum planning and evaluation of their own programs of study. (Kidd 1973 286)

Kidd's description of adult education views the learner as an integral partner in the learning process, so much so that it is imperative that the learner engage in the practice of self evaluation and curriculum development. It is the adult learner who is fully aware of what needs to be learned, relearned, examined and discussed in relation to his/her own life experiences. If the learner is to become autonomous and given control of his/her own learning, then the learner has to be recognized as having some currency in the education process. This currency is recognized as learning obtained from reflection of life experiences. If the adult is not given this recognition by the teacher then the adult is taught as a traditional student, young and without life experience. When this occurs the student role may in fact hinder the adult from learning as it places the adult learner back into a role that no longer fits the adult's experiences. (Jarvis 217) It is imperative for the educator of adults to recognize the new role that the adult learner brings to the classroom.

Adult education as a practice encourages the adult learner to view / understand learning as a life long process and to reflect on learning obtained in the past. The learner then is required to re-examine his /her learning from a point of view that has not been provided for in the traditional education system. Adult education challenges both the learner and the facilitator to re-examine learning based on a number of vantage points as described earlier as well as, recognizing the evolution of the learner vis a vis the learning community; the adult educator must recognize her/his part in this education paradigm. (Long 1983)

The classroom that the adult educator practices in is “pluralistic” in that there are numerous individuals in the class who have multi- experience backgrounds. The adult educator must therefore be adroit at facilitating learning through a variety of methods and recognize a variety of teaching techniques to assist all adults in their academic and learning endeavors.(Long 7) Adult education, Long contends, must view the adult learner from a “holistic” vantage point; the learner has interpreted life experiences in a manner that will impact on the new learning to be acquired.

The concept implies considering the entire person within the total environment when planning educational programs. The idea is readily admitted to be an “ideal” that will continue to escape attainment; nevertheless, it provides a worthy goal for the purposes of reflecting on the content and structure of the learning experience. *Holistic education* has two characteristics: It is not divorced from the process of daily living, and it provides the means of acting upon the environment. (Long 22)

Long’s definition of “holistic” learning is similar to this author’s identification of “whole learning approach” except that this author does not agree that the “ideal will continue to escape attainment.”(22) It is the belief of this author that the learner and educator can recognize the total environment when planning educational programs. The total environment must include the learner’s gender, social class, ethnicity, past experiences; this environment must be as inclusive for the individual(s) as possible. This

inclusiveness then becomes not a “holistic” approach, but a “wholistic” approach, one that attempts to encompass all the experiences of the past, present and how these experiences may impact on the potential future of the learner. This is the “ideal” setting as the facilitator and learner can, through dialogue, learn as much about each other as permissible within the time frames and comfort zones applicable. To meet this challenge different modes of facilitating learning may be selected as chosen by the learner and not necessarily dictated by the facilitator, such as, distance education, computer mediated learning, or learning methodologies that include other means of facilitating learning other than the traditional teacher / student pedagogy. With the recognition of the “whole” learner, it is necessary to examine the relevance adult learning theory has for a study on post incarcerated college students.

ADULT LEARNING THEORY:

Humanistic theorists have suggested that learning is “a natural tendency” that will occur if given an environment that fosters encouragement and caring of the learner. (Cross 1981 228- 229) It has been accepted that adults continue to learn past adolescence. Learning theorists such as E. L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge have studied and reported on adults’ ability to learn as well as the power of this learning ability. (Long 61-62) What must also be acknowledged is that adults may carry with them a belief that they are inefficient learners. (Kidd 1973 95) This view can be attached to the learner both by the facilitator and by the learner themselves. The learner brings this label with him or her based on past educational endeavors that may have proven unsuccessful. Kidd (1973) recognized that adults may associate learning with unpleasant reminders from childhood

and so recommended that the adult be provided the opportunity to view the learning activity as being designed for her /his current needs or desires, and not based on past learning attempts. It must be understood why the learner has decided to re-engage in learning activities.

What needs to be recognized is that learning occurs for many reasons and thus is subject to different motivations. The continuation of, or return to, learning may vary from individual to individual but Kidd suggests that learning motivation comes from a desire for “need reeducation” or “positive striving, ” that is, the desire for self-fulfillment. (101-2) Adults have different demands placed on them than do children engaged in learning activities. Demands for the learning process may come from age (the person believes that his/her age precludes them from starting or finishing a learning project,) lack of time, financial resources, or ability to find learning activities that recognize the adult’s unique learning perspective. If these demands are not adequately kept in check or dealt with in an appropriate fashion to assist the adult to engage in or complete learning activities, then these obstacles may hinder the ability of the learner to focus on and complete the activity.

Malcolm Knowles coined the term “andragogy” to suggest that adult learners must be engaged in learning from a different perspective than that of the traditional pedagogical standard. (1980) He believed that andragogy allowed the facilitator and learner to engage in learning by assuming that the adult learner has four characteristics:

- (1) his (sic) self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self directed human being;

(2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experiences that become an increasing resource for learning;

(3) his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles; and

(4) his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject centerdness to one of problem centerdness.

(Knowles in Edwards, 84)

Knowles' view of the adult learner is one that suggests that the learner is an active participant in learning opposed to the traditional pedagogical approach. The adult in an andragogical centered curriculum becomes engaged and active in her/his learning to the point where learning is intertwined experientially and pragmatically. The learner, therefore, is recognized as having a stake in the learning process based on the commitment the learner puts into his/her learning to change fundamental aspects of her/his life. These fundamental aspects can include finding new or alternate employment, becoming involved in community development work, or improving self-esteem. What Knowles recognized was the ability of adults to conceptualize learning in a different manner than children, because of the motivation that the adult learner brings with them to the learning environment.

Alan Thomas (1991) advanced Knowles ideas about adult learning by suggesting that "all people learn, and they are capable of doing so throughout their lives." (Thomas

xii) Thomas understood that learning did not just occur within the classroom but could be found outside of educational institutions. With this premise, (based, it would appear on the works of Alan Tough, most notably The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory And Practice in Adult Learning, 1979) Thomas stated that an individual's most important learning occurs outside of the classroom. This is evident when one witnesses the learning that a child acquires within a social setting that provides the impetus for learning language(s), learning cultural expectations, social roles, economic structures and so on. (Thomas xiii) Learning from an adult perspective can thus be seen as being paradigmatically different than from a child's perspective because adults have experiential knowledge that impact on the learning acquired. This experiential knowledge requires that the adult must "filter" his / her learning based on past experience and how it is interpreted with the "new learning" acquired. Adult educators must respond to the needs of all learners, including those who have diminished capabilities due to learning disabilities or problems related to the learners experiential realities. With this paradigm shift, the methodology that facilitates learning must be examined.

Reflection upon past experiences will influence the learning that the adult will engage in. (Brookfield 1986) Adults respond to learning from their experiential history. This history must be acknowledged because the adult cannot escape from it, and will interpret present and future learning based on those past experiences. It is imperative that the facilitator ensure that instruction is given that best suits the adult's learning style, as identified by Brookfield in these six principles:

- Participation in learning is voluntary; adults engage in learning as a result of their own volition.
- Effective practice is characterized by a respect among participants for each other's self worth. An attention to increasing adults' sense of self worth underlies all facilitation efforts.
- Facilitation is collaborative. Facilitators and learners are engaged in a cooperative enterprise...
- Praxis is placed at the heart of facilitation. Learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity, reflection upon activity, collaborative analysis of activity etc.
- Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection.
- The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. (9-10)

(These six principles are reflected in the interviews with the post incarcerate students noted later.)

It is evident from the above listed principles that both the learner and facilitator must have a mutual understanding of the dynamics that both play in adult learning. Both the learner and the facilitator must recognize the value of the experiences that each brings with them to the classroom and that these experiences are recognized as valued and important in the learning of the new material. Each member of the class must have her or

his experiences, learning and learning style recognized and validated by the members of the class. A relationship based on trust, recognition of the other and respect, must be allowed to develop and nurtured for full adult learning to occur. (Mann 1970) By validating the experiences of both the learner and facilitator, the student /teacher relationship shifts from being a name on a class list and an authority figure deliberately moving course material forward for the sake of completion, to one of acknowledging that the learner has needs that she/he wants to fulfill in the educational environment. The understanding of the motivations, values, and learning styles will enhance the opportunity for both parties to better facilitate learning because of the gained insights into the other person's motivations. Essentially, this understanding of the adult student both personally, and academically can create changes within the learner to become a self motivated, self directed learner, especially if past educational pursuits were negatively viewed by the learner.(Verduin, et. al. 1977) The recognition of the adult learner's previous experiences and learning from a "wholistic" viewpoint can direct adult learning principles to a theoretical stance that encompasses a transformational view of adult learning as stated earlier in this chapter.

The premise has been introduced that past experiences can and do have an effect on the individual's learning. If this is the situation, incarceration must have an effect on learners and ultimately, post incarcerates who decide to continue their learning outside of a prison environment, must be affected by these past experiences. The next section will examine the role that education and incarceration play in regard to incarcerated and post incarcerated students.

EDUCATION AND INCARCERATION:

The Ontario Institute For Studies In Education (OISE) completed a review of educational and training programs for the Correctional Services of Canada (known then as the Canadian Penitentiary Service) in 1978. The findings of this review can be succinctly summarized as:

The problem of a correctional education is not merely the correction of illiteracy and the provision of correspondence courses. The problem is fundamentally one of adult education. Prisoners should be regarded as adults in need of education as well as criminals in need of reformation.

(32-33)

This suggests that education programs within the prison system is lacking in a philosophy and practice of an adult education approach. Secondly, within an adult education framework, adults engaged in learning will recognize that criminal activity is an inappropriate response and thus seek means to rectify the situations and behaviors that promote criminality. This indeed appears to be the case.

Education can be a vehicle for decreasing criminal behavior among those incarcerated. The OISE review team found that incarcerated offenders who engaged in prison education programs were less likely to recidivate than those offenders who did not participate or only briefly participated in education programs. (OISE 45) This finding concurs with other studies completed that suggest that prison educational programs were successful in curbing or eliminating criminal behavior upon release of the offender.(Porporino and Robinson 1992; Williamson 1992) It would appear that as

inmates are successful in educational programs they encounter a life change that provides them opportunities to decrease their recidivism rates. Indeed, it was found that inmates who successfully completed any educational program, be it adult basic education or college courses had reduced recidivism rates.(Haser 1995) These studies present support that not only does education and learning have positive effects for incarcerated offenders upon release of their sentence, but that they can learn well, given the research on pre-incarcerated educational attainment. Further studies concluded that educational programs that only aim to make the inmate more employable upon release by providing training, have not had any noticeable reductions in recidivism.(Morin 38) It is important to note this fact. If prison educational programs are promoted in the context to help make the post incarcerate more employable, this is not the case. Therefore, it must be concluded that something else is happening to prison students, which adult educators contend, is the strengthening of a sense of awareness of self worth in individuals who have positive experiences in learning. (Brookfield 1986)

This study will not focus on the pre-incarceration educational attainment of prison students, as much has already been written about this subject.

That a high incidence of illiteracy exists in American prisons can scarcely be doubted...only ten percent of offenders enter state institutions with a high school diploma, while more than eighty percent are dropouts with less than a tenth grade education who function two or three grade levels below that. (Moke and Holloway 18)

In Canadian prisons, it has been found that inmates enter prison with limited success both academically or vocationally. (Shea, 1980 42) What is relevant here is the fact that inmates have similar abilities to learn, and when presented with material that they deem relevant to their life situation during and after incarceration, they can learn effectively. Franklin (1979) found that inmates attending college sponsored courses at Attica prison performed as well or better than non -incarcerated college students. Franklin went on to report that ninety percent of the inmates who began college courses in prison continued in college program after release.(19) There is little literature to examine post incarcerate students' success in college programs as little research has been conducted on this target group.

When examining the success correlates for college students, a number of factors have been studied in an attempt to discover what determines educational success; generally, a number of students do not complete college or university programs that they start. (Tinto 1) If this is the case, then any student who completes college or university programs regardless of incarceration or not, can be considered to be in the minority of students who are successful. It is this author's contention that when the post incarcerate are successful in college or university, it may be that they have the ability to continue on with their studies because of their experiences in facing adversity as a result of their incarceration. An examination of who completes post secondary education or not, will be visited.

It appears that predictors for successful completion of post secondary programs are not always accurate. Students who do not succeed have been categorized as having poor

transitional adjustment from high school to college, regarding peer relationships, social isolation and college educational demands.(Tinto 46) Studies completed on college dropouts indicate that personality traits of dropouts (aloof, self centered, impulsive, and assertive) are similar traits that are exhibited by those who stay and complete college programs.(Astin 1964; Trent and Ruyle 1965) This information, when applied to the incarcerated, appears to contradict the findings of Yochelson and Samenow (1976), “The criminal has no concept of ‘education,’ and it is rare for him (sic) to derive any benefit appropriate to what a school purports to offer.”(143) Yochelson and Samenow found that inmates who become involved in educational endeavors do so to assist themselves in their opportunity to gain early release from their sentences. (155) Campbell (1981) studied the cognitive ability of inmates as a means of understanding the differences in learning ability between incarcerated and non-incarcerated students, given that “there is substantial empirical support for the view that inmates do not differ in general ability from non-inmates.” (5) It is this author’s contention that inmate students have similar experiences in educational endeavors as “normal” students. With this assumption, (that is, incarcerated or post incarcerated students who have succeeded have been within an adult education “environment”) research on inmate and post incarcerate students should be re-examined not from a personality trait paradigm but from an adult education philosophy / practice paradigm. Unfortunately, more studies need to be completed on the academic success of post incarcerate students.

In summation it would appear that there is not a clear personality type that could be used as an indicator to determine which students would successfully complete college programs. Given the fact that personality traits are not good predictors of success, there

have been studies completed that suggest that difficulty in adjustment to college and departure from college may occur within the first six to eight weeks. (Blanc, DeBuhr, and Martin 1983) If this is in fact the case, then it would be prudent to ensure that the college has a transition program to assist students to feel included in the college community and with their chosen program. This transitional assistance program should include the college faculty vis a vis student- faculty relations, as a stronger relationship has been found to have an impact on college retention. (Pascarella and Terenzini 1977). Additional studies surrounding student retention have found that a positive correlation is shown when students identify that the attitudes and concern for the student by the faculty is readily apparent by the student. (Beal and Noel 43)

Another factor that appears to influence student retention and therefore success is the ability of the student to incorporate academic success into other areas of life outside of the classroom, such as experiences that are obtained from college internship programs.

When students find that their needs are being met, when we facilitate their success in the classroom and help them translate that success into their lives beyond the campus, education becomes a clear priority for them and they return to the campus. In short, retention is linked to student learning and the development of basic life competencies. (Noel and Levitz xiv)

It can be assumed therefore, that when students' needs are being met to assist them in remaining in school, the opportunity for academic success increases. Likewise, retention strategies that are successful appear to assist students in life situations off campus as well. It appears that successful post secondary retention strategies recognize the totality of the student's life in assisting in educational success and that faculty play an important role in this dynamic.

Furthermore, studies show that while assisting students to facilitate academic success is important to retention, it is important to understand these factors that assists students in their academic career. Students need to be instructed and recognize the importance of continuing to stay focused and motivated in their studies. It appears that many students who are successful have the ability to "persist" in continuing toward graduation. Anderson (1985) found that student success can be influenced by persistence factors. These factors are identified as:

- Helping students identify and clarify purposes for attending college and the anticipated outcomes of the college experience. Motivation to persist is in large measure a function of the meaning a student ascribes to the college experience and how college relates to future aspirations, careers, and desired areas of personal, social, and intellectual development.
- Affirming students as persons in terms of potential, abilities, skills, gifts, talents, worth, and uniqueness.

- Helping students deal with patterns of self-defeat and sources of anxiety. (56)

These persistence factors when combined with the past educational experiences or incarcerated experiences of post incarcerate students, suggests that a college program that would include these factors to assist the post incarcerate would be useful.

In conclusion, the literature review suggests that adults are successful in education when given the opportunity to reflect on past experience and incorporate these experiences in the learning of new information. This experiential reflective process is a learning paradigm that serves both adults, inmates and post incarcerate students well. Given the opportunity to engage in adult education to assist in the facilitating of learning, adult education is a model that provides opportunity for inmates and post incarcerates to succeed in education programs, so much so, that it has been discovered that offenders who engage in education programs within prison are more successful in their studies than non offender students. (Eggleston and Gehring, 1986:87) With these findings, it has been acknowledged that to be successful in college or university courses, students should be made to feel that they are considered members of both the college community and college programs. This sense of community within colleges and programs increases the opportunity for retention of students; therefore, it is not difficult to deduce that post incarcerate students would likely benefit from a program employing an adult education paradigm. Secondly, if the post incarcerate student were actively assisted in “fitting into” the college or program community this would add to his / her chances to succeed. Finally, including a retention program that would assist the post incarcerate in identifying

persistence factors as noted above, might increase retention and success. It is this author's contention that post incarcerate students may need additional help that may be less necessary for other college students. The post incarcerate college student comes with a distinct and unique background that must be recognized by college faculty. This "negative" experience, this literature review suggests, can be negated if the student is given the opportunity to learn in an environment that promotes an adult education philosophy, promotes student and faculty interaction, and assists the student to identify persistence factors that promotes and ensures that the reasons why the student has enrolled in college remain clearly in focus for the student.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main difficulty in completing research on the post incarcerate enrolled in a community college was finding college students who had “done time.” It is obvious that anyone who had been incarcerated, would in all probability, not want to be recognized as a potential study subject. Therefore, it was imperative that confidentiality be assured to the subjects who came forward to assist in the research. To find potential subjects, this author used a variety of media techniques and personal contacts to locate this unique study group.

Of the five students interviewed all were male; three were in post secondary community college diploma programs. The other two were in the adult upgrading program, to attain high school credits or complete high school diploma criteria. A number of students came forward to volunteer to be interviewed but they did not meet the criteria of having been incarcerated for a period of time in a federal or provincial prison that was at least two months or longer. This eliminated persons who had served sentences of a few days or had been sentenced to open custody young offender facilities. It was important to ensure that those interviewed were post incarcerate students who had served time in a federal penitentiary or provincial gaol, not just weekend or overnight sentences. Defining who met the criteria by the amount of time served, ensured that the respondents had an opportunity while incarcerated, to participate in educational programs in the prison or gaol. Inmates who serve overnight sentences, weekend sentences or sentences of short duration are not likely to engage in educational opportunities.

At the beginning of the research, a few students came forward to identify that they had been incarcerated and they agreed to be in this study. Three of the students willing to be interviewed were students known to the writer through teaching at Loyalist College and in the General Arts and Science program. It took a year to obtain five participants. In an attempt to find potential subjects the writer would mention in the Introduction to Sociology class that he was interested in interviewing students who had been incarcerated either federally or provincially. The three students who were interviewed readily agreed to meet with the writer to discuss their educational and incarceration experience in relation to their current college education. It is this author's contention that the reason for their willingness to agree to this study was his knowledge of prison and incarceration because of his federal penitentiary employment, combined with his present teaching position. By employing an adult education philosophy, it was important for the those post incarcerate students in the Introduction to Sociology class to recognize that although he had been employed in a prison, he was recognized as being open minded enough to convey through dialogue and action, that the post incarcerate students should have the opportunity to move on with their lives. Education, as mentioned earlier in this paper, is a vehicle to assist in this advancement. Having studied with the author, the three students appeared comfortable and were willing to discuss their experiences. .

The two other interview came as a result of canvassing the college community. An "ad" was placed over the college e-mail network in an attempt to find further participants. In addition, the author was interviewed by a reporter from the Loyalist College Pioneer (the student newspaper) From these two endeavors, contact was made with two college professors who knew of students who were in adult upgrading courses

that fit the study criteria. They approached the writer to discuss what the project was about and to ensure themselves that their students would be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Once confidentiality was assured, I was put into contact with the two additional research subjects.

Finding subjects to interview who met the criteria was important for other reasons. A number of ex- young offenders were quite willing and supportive of the study and wanted to assist in providing interviews. A few students reported over e-mail that they had committed crimes and had been incarcerated but, through the writer's experiences and knowledge of corrections, it was ascertained that their claims of being incarcerated were false. For example, one student claimed to have been incarcerated in 1992 for rape. Rape as a conviction had been renamed sexual assault. This crime is still considered such a negative label that inmates are not willing to readily acknowledge this conviction because of its negative profile both in prison or in the community because of the stigma placed upon this conviction. Anyone convicted of sexual assault would not admit that it was rape, especially over college wide e-mail that had one's name on the letterhead. An attempt to contact the student by e-mail was made, but the student did not make further contact. Therefore, it was assumed that this self referral was a prank.

It was imperative that the students interviewed remained anonymous, especially after this author had been interviewed by the college newspaper and a local community newspaper regarding the study. This raised the possibility that being seen talking with a student in public might be interpreted by others as an interview with a post incarcerate offender. Each respondent was given information by either the writer or for the two students in the adult upgrading program, by the teacher who had asked the students if they

wanted to participate in the study. All respondents were fully informed about why this research project was being undertaken and they agreed to participate voluntarily. In addition, the five respondents signed a release of information form agreeing to their voluntary participation.

To ensure that the five subjects being interviewed felt comfortable discussing the research and their answers, they were interviewed in places of their own choosing and in private. Two students were interviewed in private offices, one in a secluded study area, one in an empty classroom, and one at a restaurant located off campus. All the interviews were tape recorded to ensure that their comments were taken verbatim. This was important to ensure that the comments made were given directly from the students and not altered in interpretation by this author. It was the intention of the author to have as much participation from the subjects as possible. This would assist in discovering the personal changes that the students had subjectively noticed had occurred to them since they had been at Loyalist College. Once taped, the tapes were then transcribed onto paper to ensure that no one would be able to recognize the student's voice and the tape erased. The individual interviews were then titled Student 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

The respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire that provided data from to commence the interview. (see Appendix A) The interview questions were asked to discern the subjective changes that the participants noted about themselves after having been engaged in education at Loyalist College. The questions for each of the respondents differed marginally given their enrollment in a diploma program or college upgrading program. (see Interviews for list of questions asked) The questions developed were based on nine years in the Correctional Services of Canada (CSC), having a spouse who has

worked an additional nine years of working in the CSC, and having taught a number of post incarcerate offenders at Loyalist College. In addition, the courses taken in adult education from OISE/UT as a requirement for the M.A. in Adult Education had an impact regarding the direction of the questions. For example, the Participatory Research course in the Adult Education department had a significant impact on the nature of the questions asked because of the desire to receive subjective, personal identification of the experiences of this unique study group. Also, of great impact to this study was the work of Allen Tough on Adult Learning Projects (1979) who, in his study of formal and non formal learning, initiated the idea that everyone could learn given their own motivation for learning. In addition, given the lack of information or studies completed on the post incarcerate in post secondary education, it was necessary for the author to ask the participants to recount their experiences as they interpreted their success and failures, to assist in establishing an information base upon which to return for analysis.

The questions because of their subjectivity could not remain consistent for each respondent. For example, as their educational backgrounds were different, (three students were enrolled in college diploma programs, and two were in adult upgrading programs) questions about grade point average were not appropriate for the two adult upgrading students. It became a requirement of the study to ask questions that followed the premise of the thesis but not necessarily the exact same question for each student. What resulted were five subjective questions that could be classified into categories:

- Changes in educational commitment/ success,
- Personal transformation as identified by the student,
- Changes in relationships with others,

- Changes because of incarceration, and
- The author's views of level of change/commitment to education.

These five areas are interesting because only one of the question categories examines directly the students interpretation of his educational success or commitment. Yet, the answers given by the students in relation to the other categories resulted details about personal transformation that occurred from their educational activities that could be readily witnessed by the author, the participant, family or other significant persons in the students' lives and other teachers.

Finally, it was both a testament and a test to discover if the post incarcerate participants had indeed changed significantly so that they identified the factors in a manner that could be objectively or subjectively measured. They, without their knowledge, had to persuade an ex-prison employee and current college professor that they had positively changed because of their educational success or the positive changes in their relationships with others. The questionnaire was designed to accomplish this through the numerous questions that asked about subjective changes to relationships and to the participants. In essence, the respondents had to convince the author of their sincerity. Having had post incarcerate students in the college classroom prior to commencing this study, it was apparent to this writer that some factors could be identified as determining success in college or not. Having merely posited what these factors could be, it became evident that those students who had been incarcerated, on the whole were not strong academically, and had to make, in some cases, great effort to increase their academic abilities. Secondly, those students who had identified that their return to college was just to increase their opportunity for employment, did not succeed in

completing their diploma studies because the other important factors such as increase motivation or self esteem were not evident in their answers or manner. Education for the sake of obtaining employment only, did not appear to be a sufficient motivator for academic success; something else was at work with post incarcerate students who were successful. From this writer's own subjective interpretation, the successful post incarcerate student appeared to be successful not only in academics but in other areas as well. These students became successful in their relationships with family, wives or girlfriends or significant others. They could articulate a change in how they saw themselves in relation to others as well as how they saw themselves at college as opposed to their past criminal or educational endeavors. It was these subjective factors that motivated this research project to examine the "whole" person approach to learning opposed to examining only educational success factors.

A "follow up" interview was conducted with two of the respondents which revealed important findings that suggests the students had the opportunity to reflect on their educational experiences to glean further insights regarding their success. For example, they identified the importance of increasing self esteem and motivation as a condition for success in assisting them in completing their programs. They also identified the important role that faculty played in assisting them to stay motivated. It was discouraging however, to discover that after the interviews, two students had left the college without completing their studies. One student who had been in adult upgrading had completed his studies and had enrolled in a diploma program at Loyalist College but was not available for the follow up interview.

The follow up interviews were again completed in confidence. The interviews were designed to discover if the students had indeed been successful in their studies and in other areas of their lives outside of the college.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is obvious that a sample size of five respondents meant limitations on the conclusions that can be drawn from the interview material obtained. A larger sample would have allowed for specific comparisons in relation to the limitations noted below. With a sample size of five participants, the author had to generalize the conclusions made from the interviews. For example, the five students were all incarcerated in provincial not federal institutions. The longest sentence served was two years less one day. Therefore, the findings can not claim that incarceration in a federal prison for a longer period of time would result in the same findings. The Correctional Services of Canada (CSC) has a mandate to increase the educational attainment of every offender to grade twelve as a minimum. This mandate to ensure that offenders complete high school equivalency, if need be, may well have a subsequent impact on post incarcerate federal offenders in the college system.

It would have been beneficial to have interviewed students in either diploma granting programs or adult upgrading programs to compare the outcomes of the two differing educational offerings at Loyalist College.

It had been the wish of this author to have had the students discuss their needs, accomplishments, successes / failures or their concerns about being a post incarcerate offender at Loyalist College, but this could not be accomplished. Time constraints combined with the limited number of students to interview did not lend itself at this time to engage in a participatory evaluation of what the post incarcerate offenders needed to be successful. Also, an examination of adult education teaching strategies would be useful

to discover if an adult education practice is more or less beneficial to post incarcerated students success versus a traditional pedagogical philosophy and practice. A recommendation will be made in the chapter on conclusions to engage in this area of research.

THE INTERVIEWS

The findings and assessments of the survey responses were completed by examining the respondents answers individually. Once this was completed the answers were examined as a comparison between the respondents who were successful in their college endeavors and those who were not. The interviews were recorded in their entire text as closely as possible to the exact words stated. The interviews were taped and transcribed to ensure that the language and the intent of the comments by the students and were quoted as accurate as possible. The questions presented to the five students encompass four foci, that being:

- Changes in relationships with others,
- Personal transformation as identified by the student,
- Changes in educational commitment/success,
- Changes because of prison experiences, and
- Author's observations regarding commitment to education.

The categories provide a means of examining the context of the answers given by the five different individuals from four different programs; advancement in their educational attainment and, their observations about college, education and changes in relationships and self esteem . The answers given were both diverse as well as predictable given the nature of the questions asked as well as, the ability of the respondent to understand the question.

The answers provided will be examined in the categories noted above so that a comparison of answers can be made later in the Conclusions chapter. The question asked

by the author will be presented preceded by the students answers. It must be noted that the questions were phrased differently on occasion for each student. This was due to the fact that two of the students were in the adult upgrading program and are not graded by grade point average as students in diploma programs are. Still, the gist of the questions remained similar for each student given his experiences. It must also be noted that the answers are transcribed as stated exactly to the author; language and grammar have not been altered in order to provide the reader a sense of context and insight into the thought process of the respondents. The questions are typed in italics and the answers are typed in normal font.

STUDENT ONE:

Was there anything that happened in the four years you have been released that might have led you to college?

“I found I was getting older, and it was tougher to get a job because of a criminal record. People would ‘shy’ you off because of your record. They would ask if you had a ‘record’ on applications (for employment) which put you at the back of the (hiring) list. If you didn’t have an education to boot it was hard to get work. I thought that if I came to school to get an education I would have a better chance of succeeding.”

Your grade point average is 2.8 out of 4. Has it stayed at that level for the three semesters?

“It will probably go up this semester because I have been getting higher marks and being on placement, I have been getting A’s and B’s. So it should be going up.

Aside from passing, have there been other factors that you would say are important in terms of your academic success?

“I have a willingness to succeed. It probably had always been there. I want to succeed and I want to be a success. I have one shot left in life in my own mind. I have one shot and I have to make it this time. I want to be good. I want to stay out of trouble, and I want to do the best I can with my life. I’m forty-two years old and time is flying by. I’m not getting any younger that’s for sure. I have a willingness to succeed. It probably had always been there. I want to succeed and I want to be a success. I have one shot left in life in my own mind. I have one shot and I have to make it this time. I want to be good. I want to stay out of trouble, and I want to do the best I can with my life. I’m forty-two years old and time is flying by. I’m not getting any younger that’s for sure.”

Academic success is identifying that you are successful in your courses. Are there other things in your life that are happening as a result of your academic success?

“I think that the course that I’m in and the clients that we support is helping me understand people better, to get more respect back. There is so much love for people we support it is nice to give that love back. It’s nice to be able to give back the feeling they have for you.”

You feel this respect that you are getting now, have you felt this respect in education before?

“Never. I didn’t have the education before. I had a grade eight level. To talk to someone like yourself at a higher level, you could have probably talked circles around me and can probably still talk circles around me. But I understand a little bit more today than I did four years ago, three years ago, two years ago. For sure, it has opened my eyes being at college is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me.”

Is that a motivation for you to do well in class?

“For sure. It is helping me succeed big time because it is helping me see people differently now. Instead of laughing at people, making fun of people, now I understand better. Everybody has got to survive. We have to get along. With this course that I’m in, it has opened my eyes to a different world out there.”

Why is that?

“Because it has opened my eyes. It has made me realize that there are people out there. You don’t just use people all the time. Look at what is going on around you. An education is going to help me succeed and I think that we need an education today to survive. Up until two years ago I didn’t even know how to operate a computer and now I do. My writing skills need to be improved of course and my speaking needs a lot of improvement too because I’m from the old school that whatever comes out comes out. I kind of think more before I say what I have to say. If I don’t understand things I ask people now where before I used to hide it. I would “bull” my way through it or pretend that I knew what they were talking about but I didn’t.”

Has this new respect for yourself, your increase in self esteem, has that carried through to other aspects of your life outside of the classroom or college?

For sure. I respect people more today. I don't look at people being lower class than I am because I am going to college. Forget it! You are still people. The other life that I led, I am (sic) the big money guy. Who cares about the other guy? Today, I look at everybody as an equal."

Education is an important aspect of the individual's total life. Has your success at college impacted on personal relationships? Has it impacted on family relationships? How do you perceive yourself in the world now?

"Yes. I perceive myself as a "class A" citizen. I don't have to be hiding in the corner. I don't have to feel down because this guy is a little smarter than me. Hey, I am going to college, I am doing something. The people I hang around with are smart people. They are not the lower life's who are out to make a quick buck. I get away from that life and it feels good to get away from that life. It feels good to be succeeding in something. I feel good inside."

Do the faculty in your program know of your background?

"No, other than yourself. I had to do a Canadian Police Information Computer check, which is confidential between me and the program coordinator. All he needed to know was what I had done, sold drugs, and he had to know that especially with the field I have chosen. So that I cannot be alone with drugs around. Or if someone comes around and

says “I know that guy and he did time,” our program coordinator knows and is aware of my background.”

Do you think that if the faculty had known you were in prison that they would have looked at you differently?

“I think so because I think none of them have done time even though everybody has done something illegal in their lifetime, like stealing a chocolate bar or a piece of gum. But nothing as bad as I have so I am kind of glad that they don’t really know. It may or may not be a problem. Some may accept it like I know you do Bernie, cause you have accepted it. You have worked around people like myself. It felt good for me to divulge that to you, it was like a relief getting it off your shoulders.”

I was wondering if having somebody know of your past experiences may have been able to circumvent some problems ahead?

“They probably could.”

Would that be something that you would like known anyway?

“It would be a relief on me that whoever employed me would know that much, but if they didn’t like my background and wouldn’t hire me that would be discrimination. So it is a fine line between liking and not liking having people know of my background. It would be nice to know if people would trust you or not. ‘Let’s give this guy a chance. Let’s give him a break. Let’s see what he does?’”

You have identified during this interview that your writing skills are not as good as you would like them to be. What needs do you have to work on?

“I need to work on, after I get this course done, I could see myself going back to a high school and starting grade nine and try to get my grade twelve. That would be a bonus. I could try to get my writing and put essays together. My reading is, like I can read but my understanding of the words is not as well as it should be. I need to know for my own personal need.”

Reading and writing are important needs for you, does the college have something to offer you in this regard?

“They have upgrading courses here which is fantastic. Actually, I started (in Loyalist’s upgrading program) there, but they don’t teach you how to read and write. They teach you math and things. For me, I probably should have started at a grade three level and started from there, because I was out of school for twenty some years. Coming into upgrading I had to take a test and they figured out that I was at a grade six or seven level. That is where they started me but basically I am like a pre-schooler. I probably would learn my ABC’s faster but I should have been started at that level and work your (sic) way up to grade 8 then on to nine, ten or twelve.”

How are your study skills?

“I have to memorize everything. For me, I have to study a whole week and get a tutor because we have tests every week. For me, it is very hard, again because of a lack of

education. But, I am successful, I am doing great! I am passing everything! I have made it to second year!”

What other needs do you feel could have been put in place for you?

“Life skills. Being at my age, of course being an adult student gave me credit for basically, your (sic) grown up. You can do the work and you can understand. But I think the college needs better exams, maybe I got pushed into it, I don’t know?”

I am talking about needs that should be met for people who have been incarcerated?

“We go through moods when you have been incarcerated. You come out of there a tough guy who thinks they can go out and get hammered and the first thing you know you are right back in again. So, I think you should start your education in the system. (prison)

Did you start your education in the system?

“In the system, no. (They need to) have a program in the prison to make you go to school. Make them go to school because down the road you are going to benefit from it. I know it is forcing it (on) people who don’t want to go but they do offer the chance if you want to go.

In terms of other supports that have been offered that have helped you be successful or not, is there a list of things that you could say that, given your special background, there were some things that I needed that were not here that should have been. For example, the college has resources for people with learning or other disabilities?

“They are cutting that back. They (student resources office) fought me tooth and nail and didn’t want to pay, but because they accepted my need for a tutor they had to pay. That should be available to everyone who needs it. For me, tutoring is fantastic and I needed it. I received one on one tutoring. She helped me study for my weekly exams. She took all my notes for me and then she would type them out so I could understand it.”

In terms of somebody coming from a prison what types of things needs to be in place for that type of student?

“If he is coming for the first time he should check into tutoring which would be a bonus for him. There should be an exam that he writes to find out what his level is at. He should have to write an entry exam to find out where his level is at to see if he will be successful in any course that he chooses. And, to give him a bit of leeway to help him out if he needs that extra hour or two or to get a tutor at no expense. It would also be good for people who have been incarcerated to talk to other guys who can say, ‘I have been there and I am successful today.’ It is always easier to talk to somebody who has been there than to talk to a straight Joe.”

If there had been a support group for ex-offenders would you have attended?

“Definitely. For sure.”

Do you think there should be more coordination between faculty, the parole officer, and the student?

“That would be a good idea. That communication would be great.”

Do you think that a two year college program is constricting to you because you have to come from so much farther because you had only grade eight, and had not been in school for so long? Maybe time frames could have been expanded for you? For example, does it take you longer to do assignments?

“They offered it to me. I could have done a two year diploma over three years but that would have made me different from anybody else, and I didn’t want to be different than others. I either make it or I don’t make it. It is all up to you to make it or break it.”

Do you think ten years ago you would be as successful as today?

Ten years ago I wouldn’t have given you the time of day.”

Is there is something about growing up?

There is something yeah. Being an adult you grow up look, look at things differently. You calm down. Your whole life changes. Coming here has even changed my life even more for the good, because I know if I wouldn’t have come here and gotten into (the) course... you guys opened my eyes. If I hadn’t have come here I probably (would) have been back to dealing drugs again and gone back (to prison). I never had been on welfare. I always had money in my pocket but now I’m broke and I’ve got nothing. But I am getting an education, that is the reward I am getting something back.”

Do you feel like you are more of a “whole” person now?

“I feel like a hundred per cent better! I can walk down the street and hold my head up and not hear ‘Hey, there’s that guy that used to sell drugs’, or did this or did that.

If you could list the things that have made you successful in college, what would they be?

Having good friends. Wanting to succeed is very important to me right now. I really want to succeed. Getting a different out look on life, kind of sitting back and looking back on your past and kind of seeing what is going to happen. It goes through my mind a lot. I know I can go back to the kind of life I had. But if I look to the future, if I look ahead, I know I am going to be successful someday. I know I am going to make it and I won’t have to hide anymore.”

You have mentioned that your writing skills and studying skills are not up to par but, from your own point of view do you think that mentally you are on par with everyone else? Do you have the ability to think like everybody else?

“Oh for sure! Definitely, I can think as well as the next guy. I have been a con all my life. If I can con people, you know what I’m saying...?”

Have you conned your way through (college)?

“Yes, in some ways I might have conned my way through but I think I’ve done it (passed) because I succeeded and I studied and I worked hard. I know my tests. I can’t cheat and I can’t lie and they’re coming out good, so there must be something there.”

What subjects do you do the best in?

“My practical (career placement). When I am working with my clients, the people I support. The one on one, I am good on the one on one. I like what I am doing.”

In terms of your classes, which classes did you do best in?

“I did really well in the ‘Individual Personal Planning’, which is creating and designing a plan for a fictitious person. Psychology. I did well in Psychology.”

Why do you think you did well in these two subjects?

“Well, cause I got A’s, and I enjoyed it more. The faculty we had were fantastic. They made me want to go everyday. They made me feel good and I enjoyed it.”

Are there any other things that you think you should mention in terms of helping other people who are in your situation?

“I think that if you are in my situation, and you want to get out of the situation, give it a shot. Try, at least you’ve tried.”

So motivation helped?

Motivation for sure. Try to get out of there. Try to do what you can or you will end up in the big house. You don’t want to end up there, you want to be on the street. You want to have a job, you want to hold your head up high. That’s important. People think I’ll get in (jail), I’ll get out. I’ll be back on the street and I’ll be doing the same thing and go back in. Just give me a pillow and I’ll go back to bed when I get there, you know what I mean? But no, that is a waste of your life. It is too precious to waste.”

STUDENT TWO:

What factors led you to college?

“I just thought I would continue my education. I didn’t graduate high school. All I need was my fifth English and two other credits.”

What were your marks like in high school?

“They weren’t too great. Not really spectacular.”

Do you think you are successful this semester at the college?

“Yup. I think I am doing pretty good so far.”

Aside from passing, what other factors would you say are important in terms of your success at college?

“The faculty helps me a lot. Also, the fact that I did do so well in the last semester. I didn’t think I could ever do that good. It just boosted my self esteem and encouraged me to keep going.”

Academic success is identifying that you are successful in your courses. Is there other things in your life that is happening as a result of your academic success?

“I have a girlfriend and she helps me out a lot with support and everything. My family. My family life has improved tremendously. They are very happy that I am doing well in school. My brothers too, are surprised.”

Did you have a good family life in the past?

“When I was really young, yes, but then after I became a teenager ... ever since then it wasn't good at all.”

Is there motivation for you to do well in class, and if so what is that motivation?

“The motivation is to succeed. I want to do well and I know I can now do well. So that is my motivation I guess.”

Have you felt respected in education before?

“Not in high school that's for sure.”

Why not?

“It was more... I went to a catholic school and you had to respect them before they would respect you. Anyway, it wasn't mutual.”

Do you feel that you are respected at the college?

“Oh yeah. They treat you more like a person. You don't have to call them Sir or Miss. They treat you like a person.”

Has this new respect for yourself, your increase in self esteem has that carried through to other aspects of your life outside of the classroom or college?

“Yeah, it has I’d say. Like I am more ... I have more self esteem. I can picture myself doing things whereas before if somebody brought an idea to my attention, I would think, no, I wouldn’t be able to do that. But now I give myself that chance.”

Did any of the faculty in your program know that you had served time?

“Actually, I am not sure. I don’t think so.”

If they had known that you were in prison would they have treated you differently or dealt with you differently?

“No, I don’t think so. I think they are more open minded than that. I think they have helped me more than they have hindered me.”

You were in a program for a semester and failed prior to being successful this time.

What do you think caused you to fail?

“I think I was having trouble the first semester. I wasn’t into the school part of it. I was going out all the time, not showing up to class. Whereas, the second time around, I know I got OSAP (Ontario Social Assistance Program) the first time I failed and I wasn’t going to do that again. Fail and get OSAP.”

So there was a monetary weight over your head to do well?

“Yes.”

Do the faculty in both programs know of your background? (The programs will not be named to maintain confidentiality)

“No, not at all. I don’t really talk to the faculty (in the other program) that much. It’s not as social. I don’t know how they would react if they knew, but I think it would be a little different atmosphere if they knew though.”

Why?

“I don’t know, they seem more stiff that’s all.”

Do you think that having someone know your past would have circumvented some problems that you have had?

“I don’t think anyone knew I was in trouble with the law. I told some of the teachers that I was coming from a rehabilitation centre and I remember one teacher was encouraging me to come back after I failed my first semester. Another teacher also encouraged me to come back and give it another try.”

What skills did you need to work on for classroom success?

“Attendance was the main one. Getting assignments in on time. Now, I rarely hand in an assignment late. I try not to. Also, I attend classes regularly.”

Why have you made those changes?

“For me, I was doing good up until the March break because I started my year in January. Once I had that week break, I couldn’t get back into it. And with me, if I don’t go all the time I start to slack and keep pushing it and pushing it away.”

So you had to improve your time management skills?

“Yes.”

How were your writing skills or your math skills, those types of skills?

“Actually, my math has always been good throughout high school. My English, I always thought was my worst subject but last semester I pulled off an A. I told my teacher that English was my worst subject but she said that I wasn’t bad at all. I guess I was just bad at it in high school.”

Reading and writing are important skills for college. Does the college have something to offer you in this regard? Do you find you need extra help with reading and writing?

“I don’t think I need extra help.”

What help do you need? Is there subjects that you need help in?

“Well, I think I need more help in vocabulary. My vocabulary isn’t sophisticated. I can’t use the bigger words. I can’t put the big words into sentences kind of thing.”

Do you read books?

“That’s my problem, I don’t read that much at all.”

Knowing this, have you been reading more?

“No, not lately. I don’t have time to read.”

How are your study skills?

“I think they are pretty good. I have a 3.8 average.”

Did you take educational courses while you were in jail?

“No, I didn’t. Actually, while I was in “Young Offender” (facility) I took a correspondence course, but there is a teacher there while you are doing it. She helps you out with the course.”

How did you make out with that course?

“Actually, I did good. I had nothing else to do so all my concentration was on that and I did really good. I got 95% in my math. In my adult sentences I started one (correspondence course) but I didn’t finish.”

Do you think that people with your background have special needs that are not covered by the college?

“I know there isn’t any support in the college to go to talk to somebody. I am not sure, I haven’t checked it out?”

Do you think that would be beneficial to someone with your background?

“Yeah.”

Do you think about your past very often? What sorts of things go through your head for example, do you wonder if people know about your history?

“Sometimes you wonder if people know? Sometimes when it comes up in class about jail and you have been there, and these other people don’t... haven’t seen that and they talk on the other side about it. They see it as being bad, and it is bad but it’s like “those people” you know what I mean? It’s not them at all.”

Do you ever say “Hey, I was there and you don’t know what you are talking about?”

“No, I don’t say that because I am the only one in the class and besides I don’t really speak out in class anyway.”

Do you think that you will be able to complete your college program in the time allotted within two years? Or do you think you will need more time?

“I think myself, I will be able to because I am going to go through the summer semester and I won’t take a break.”

Do you think you would be as successful as a teenager as you are today at college?

“No, I don’t think so.”

What has changed?

“I think I have grown up a little. I am not as wild. When I was a teenager I didn’t care for school at all.”

Do You think that incarceration had an impact on your success?

“Yeah, yeah it did.”

Has growing up affected your study skills and success at college?

“Growing up? Yeah, my attitude has improved since I was younger. I am more mature now.”

If there had been a support group for ex-offenders would you have attended?

“Yes.”

Do you feel that coming to college makes you a whole person, more well rounded?

“Yeah, I feel that way. In every part of my life everything is going well.”

Do you think your mental abilities are on par with the other students?

“Yup.”

If you could list the things that have made you successful at the college, what would they be?

“Faculty, support from my girlfriend. I am pretty sure that if I didn’t have her I wouldn’t be as far along as I am now. She has helped me out with other things pertaining to school.”

So your girlfriend keeps you on the straight and narrow?

“Yes.”

Have you conned your way through college or some of your classes?

“Not really conned, but you could say so. I don’t know how to explain it.”

Have you “scammed” the system. Have you used what you learned in prison to try and beat the system?

“No, not really.”

What subjects do you do best in?

“Math, science, psychology last semester. Psychology was interesting to talk about certain diseases, mental illness, it was just interesting to learn.”

Are there other things that you think should be mentioned in terms of helping other people in your situation?

“Once a person gets sent back, they (sic) tend not to want to try again. They get discouraged and they say “to hell with it, forget the whole thing.’ And they don’t go back. But if there is something, like faculty or somebody that they could go to talk to...”

A parole officer, do you think that would help?

“I don’t think so.”

So it should be someone removed from the prison system?

“Yeah, exactly. A parole officer is viewed as being totally closed to a parolee, okay?

Because you are not sure what is going on or what they are going to do?”

Do you think that there is a personality situation where somebody has...

“Been in prison and they are on the other side of the fence and they are trying to be like a normal person but it is like... they don’t want people to find out but they know inside of their head where they have been. When they fail at something they automatically think that they are not good enough to be normal. So they, as a student, they just don’t try and they stop trying. They probably just go back to their old lifestyle.”

By getting a good grade point average really gave you the motivation to continue to go on and do well?

“I feel that I am on either side most of the time. Like, I know I didn’t fit in in jail but at times I don’t feel like I fit in like a normal person at school.”

In what way?

“I am just different from the people at school. And that could be just because I came to Belleville from Toronto. I just don’t feel like I can hang out with these people.”

And is that because you have had different experiences?

“Yeah, I think so.”

Do you think that not fitting in with the crowd has helped you at college?

“Yeah, it has.”

Maybe there is some connection with getting rid of the peer pressure that allows you to motivate yourself to do well in college?

“Yes.”

Do you feel that your prison experiences have been beneficial or harmful to you in college?

“Both, because you kind of grow up when you are in jail. You sit and think a lot about what you are doing with your life. But then in college you don’t, it could lead you... Being in jail, having that thought in your head, could be a bad thing too because you don’t feel like you fit in. You are not at home or an everyday Joe. You can’t slick...you know how you don’t have the same interests as these college people. You would always be on edge with them.”

Are there other things that have helped you while you are at college?

“Rehab introduced the idea of going back to school and giving it a try. I knew that if I hadn’t have tried I would have been back in jail in three months.”

STUDENT THREE:

Has there been anything since your release in 1974 that might have led you to prison?

“The simple fact that every time that I go for a job they tell me that my experience is fine but the education is not there. I need grade 12 or whatever.”

So you didn't complete high school?

“I got grade seven. I went to a vocational (school) for two years after, but I got kicked out of there.”

You have been at Loyalist College since December of 1996, it is now February, have there been factors that you would say are important in terms of you still being successful?

“You mean like, is it important for me to get my grade 12?”

So getting your high school education is an important motivator? Have the teachers been helpful?

“Teachers have been excellent. There has been just a bit of trouble sometimes that they have the younger crowd in with us, and they like to play and we are trying to jam it in and get it together and they are playing too much. That's what I find anyway.”

Academic success is identifying that you are successful in your courses. Is there other things in your life that is happening as a result of your academic success? I have been

finding that people are saying 'yeah, I am doing well in school and things are happening outside of school that are also successful.

“Besides meeting friends and stuff, I am getting more tolerable with other people. I can handle other people and take them for who they are and I can tolerate people a lot better. Plus, I am out of the old crowd. I used to hang with some pretty bad people and it is nice to get away from them. It kind of changes everything around, attitude, goals, everything.

Is there motivation to do well in class that maybe you didn't have in the past?

“For sure. Now that I am doing better than I expected to do, I have been out of school for twenty years. Since I have been getting into this I have been doing better than I expected. So that is helping me get rolling too. I like getting involved in it.

Have you felt respected in education before?

“When I was in grade school I wasn't into it. I just wasn't there.”

How about when...

“Here? I wasn't successful in grade school because I feel I have dyslexia and my attention would get pulled away real easy. So the mixing of people here we are quiet and I can keep my mind on it, but when the kids start talking, laughing and joking, it draws me right away. I have a hard time. What I already know is okay, but it is hard to learn something new because of it.

When you were taking courses in prison did you feel you were being respected as a student there?

“For sure. Yeah, it was all right there, I learned quite a bit. I learned things that they didn’t even teach on the street. I guess they were basically what you call vocational, rather than the math and stuff.”

Has this new respect for yourself, your increase in self esteem has that carried through to other aspects of your life outside of the classroom or college?

“I would say in pretty well everything I do now. I have pride in everything I do now.”

Can you give me an example?

“The girls, everything. Self respect. I have a lot more neatness on my side when it comes to writing or looking after my stuff. Organization, respect for other people. I think it improved me at least to some extent in everything that I do.”

Do the faculty in the program know that you did time in jail?

(Student Three was identified as a potential interview by a faculty member.) “No, I haven’t mentioned it to anybody.”

Do you think that if they had known you were in prison that they would have treated you differently?

“Maybe to an extent but the way that I put myself across to people, a lot of people take me for who I am not what I was. I have a lot of respect for people and I talk to them and a lot of them talk to me. I don’t find it to be too much trouble.”

Would having someone know of your past have helped you get around some of the problems you might have encountered so far?

“I don’t think so.”

No, because you have been out a long time, thirteen years?

“A lot of people have attitudes and some don’t. The people that haven’t been there, that haven’t been in trouble, they have the attitude. And a lot of people have had trouble so they kind of understand, right? And it’s not like I go around talking about it anyway. It’s not like I am bragging about it. It’s none of your business, but if you ask me about it, I will tell you.”

You have found that being back in the classroom you have skills that need to be worked on and could you tell me what they are?

“For sure. When you read something and memorize it to keep something inside your head.”

Is reading a problem?

“No, no. I can read real good, but when I am done I couldn’t tell you what I read.”

How is your writing skills?

“Punctuation and everything, grammar? My grammar and everything is good. It is one of my better qualities.”

Is it?

“Yeah. My English in here, I’m supposed to be in English 2 and I’m in 4 already. I have been getting nine out of tens, no problems.”

The reason why I ask is something is starting to come up and what I am finding is that other people will say that their writing isn’t very good, they don’t write well, but they write a lot. Letters, you know, are important to them.

“I have had lots of practice writing, but I always took pride in my writing because it is one of the better things I do. It’s pretty neat and I got punctuation. I pay attention to that.”

So have they set you at a level yet?

“Well I’m at level four so that must be around grade ten or eleven. I think I am doing real good I haven’t failed anything. I have been getting marks in the 90’s.”

Reading and writing are important needs for college, does the college have something to offer you in this regard? Have you used the service that the college has? Have you used the special needs office?

“Not yet. But they have tutors and I am going to go on to that for my math. I must be close to grade ten, but I am really finding that difficult and they have tutors and I am definitely going to get one.”

They have special services for example if you are deaf they have interpreters. Some people have trouble reading so they will have somebody to help them with that. They have special computers.

“They have computers down the hall here that you can get into any time you want. I have been into that because when I started I couldn’t do anything because I just wasn’t interested. I feel funny asking somebody how to do this because I am forty (years old) and not feeling relaxed to ask somebody younger than me, ‘Hey, how do you do this?’ Because some of them laugh it off and makes me feel kind of stupid, but it doesn’t matter to me because I want to learn and I will do what it takes to learn. But the teachers are pretty good. I haven’t had any problems with them yet.”

How are your study skills outside of the college?

“I guess I have to say I don’t have any.”

So when you go home you...

“When I go home yeah, I jam up on it there. I do most of it at home.”

How many hours would you say you do at home?

I would say three to four hours a day everyday when I get home.”

Really?

Yeah, I'm serious and I want to get right in. It bothers me when the other students get off and I don't want to yack at them, but I can't think properly so I try to make up of that at home. I don't want to lose out."

What do you mean lose out?

"Well with them yacking and carrying on it kind of throws me off and I don't get the work done. So, if I can't do it here I make sure I get it done at home. They might not take it serious but with me being forty, I won't get the chance to do this again and now I want to do this."

What needs to be in place to help people like yourself, maybe not somebody who has been in prison but an older student?

"Something that would help us as a group? I would say just that, put us as a group. Separate us from the younger ones. You know they are pretty smart and they know a lot of things and when one of us has to ask questions that they already know then they make us feel kind of stupid? We are just trying to learn."

How beneficial was going to school in prison?

"It helped me a lot. It got me back here now."

Thirteen years later?

“If I hadn’t have done that then... I was thinking of coming back and had gone to Mohawk College in Hamilton, but it wasn’t what I was looking for. It was basically job search course. Getting you up at eight in the morning and getting you on the phone looking for jobs. It didn’t have any math or anything. This is the proper course. I would have taken this a long time ago. Going back to education and doing the courses when I was in Guelph (correctional facility). Yeah, that is what definitely got me back into school now, for sure.”

Were you a good student while you were in Guelph?

“Well I can’t say I was the smartest. I was good but I tried, put it that way.”

When I mean good I mean that you tried.

“Oh yeah I tried. I think that a lot of it, not that it is important to anybody but myself, but when I was growing up I had a lot of things in my head. Families, you know how they don’t work to good and stuff? That might have interfered a lot. I think mostly I was in school to stay away from my parents. They weren’t working good, right?”

So, for people who are coming out of prison and you having been in there, as opposed to teachers who don’t understand what prison is about. What do you think needs to be in place for these people so that we can help them be successful and pass?

“In this school I think it is basically in place. It is just up to the individual that’s all. Anybody who shows me respect they get it back, double fold. It is already here. One teacher who does know about my past treats me real well so I don’t hassle her.”

So respect for the student is an important factor?

“Oh yeah, for sure. Nobody wants to have something thrown back in their face. You can ask something once but I wouldn’t want to hear about it all the time, and then telling somebody else. It is between me and them. They can understand that I have been inside but as long as they don’t have any negative response to it, everything is fine.”

When people leave prison there is such a stigma against them. Do you think in the back of your mind that ‘do I fit in? Will people think that I was in jail? Will being in jail affect how I am going to do? Do these (questions) enter your thoughts?

“Oh yeah.”

Even thirteen years later?

“Yeah. Like I say that is why I don’t even talk about it. Some people you can be their friend and I might say something about it, but I wouldn’t talk about it otherwise.”

If there was a support group here for ex-offenders would you have attended?

“Most definitely.”

You would , why?

“Well, I’ve been there and if I had something to say and be involved in, there is something I could say that could help somebody else. Even with this school here, anything that goes down, I contribute to the class too. I don’t contribute to math but somebody could be saying something and I will give them a bit of advice to turn them away from going the wrong way. Somebody with a real bad attitude I can say, ‘Hey, bro, you shouldn’t be like that.’”

You have life experiences that...

“Yeah, I could kind of curb somebody who is going the wrong way. You know how sometime you pick up a habit, you know how it can stick? Well, sometime they call me ‘Father...’ but I try to help people anyway. You can say something to somebody and they will say ‘I never thought of it that way.’ And that is the beginning of turning them around.”

You want to go into the Millwright course. Do you think a two year college program is constricting to you because you have come from so much farther because of your background? Do people who have been in prison need more time to complete programs do you think?

“Yeah. Maybe not everybody but it gets to the point that everything can get balled up a little too much. And I find with myself that once it gets crammed up like that then it slows down to a pace that is a little slower. I can’t keep up. I can’t get back on the ball. I

have been doing a lot of work at home to get caught up but it seems that when there is a class going on I am thinking in my head how far I am behind. I can't get this or that. So, a little more time would be helpful."

Do you think that thirteen years ago you would have been as good a student as you are today?

"Thirteen years ago, I would imagine. As I said, I went to Mohawk college in 1980 and I went there to get into it but it was the wrong course. I sat there and did what I could but it was Basic Job Readiness Training, but it wasn't upgrading."

What I am getting at is that as you get older you realize that you don't have as much time to get your studies done.

"That is part of it but it is also common sense. I should have done this a long time ago but I didn't for whatever reasons."

Does coming to college make you feel better about yourself?

"For sure. Most Definitely. I support myself better. If I have a choice now, I go for the right choice, pretty well always. Now that I am using my brain and getting into things I have stopped doing drugs. I drink very little. I feel better now than I ever have."

Most of the interviews that I have had, people are saying, 'I am trying.'

“In my case, I didn’t have much support from my family. Every time you (sic) tried something they would say, ‘That’s not good enough.’ After a while you get told something so many times you be what you’re told. Today, my friends love me, I live far away from my family, so I couldn’t ask for anything more.”

Are you getting support from people saying ‘Keep it up?’

“Most definitely.”

What would you list that have helped you be a successful student at college now. If you could list one or two or three things, what would they be?

“I would have to say the way I deal with people. In the past I have always dealt with my friends good, but now I can take a stranger that at first I don’t like and turn it around and say well look at the good side of the guy. I was always the one who looked at the negative and picked the bad out and dwell on it.”

Do you think that is a result of you feeling better about yourself?

“Most definitely. A lot of times if I saw myself in somebody else I would right away hate them. I don’t even know what it is. It was just something that would happen.”

Do you think your mental abilities are on the same level as other students?

No, I don’t think so. I think they are a lot smarter than me. There are other places where my life experiences are such that I am smarter than them. I guess we both have something that mixes somewhere in the middle.

Have you been conning your way through college to date?

“Not at all. My marks have proved that. I started getting higher marks than what I expected so I got a chance to pat myself on the back.”

What subjects do you do the best in?

“ I only have English, math and computers. English is the best, it is second nature. I wasn't always correct but I didn't need to change much to make it good. Math I was never good because I could never remember anything but it is coming good now.”

How about computers?

“I like them too, they are all right.”

Are there other things that you think should be mentioned in terms of helping other people in your situation?

“I think this place could use more one on one and more explanations on the board to help improve my chances. I don't want to feel dumb by asking question so more one on one and more written examples.”

STUDENT FOUR:

Was there anything since your release that might have lead you to come to college?

“Yeah, being stupid and not going to school when I should have, instead of getting into trouble.”

So you came to college to...

“Get my education that I should have got a long time ago.”

We do not know your average yet because this is your first semester in college. Aside from passing or being at college, have there been other factors that you would say are important in terms of getting into college and being successful so far?

“Yeah. Doing a lot better than what I was doing in jail or in other schools where I was doing upgrading school.”

Why is that?

“Why is that? Because all my other schools, say in math for instance, I went to school for the past three years. Every time I went to school they kept putting me into the same thing. Over and over again and here I’m actually doing something a hell of a lot different.”

So there is some new stuff that you are getting?

“Yes.”

What are some of the courses that you are taking?

“Right now just math, English, sentences, computers.”

What type of computers, specific programs?

“I don’t know what it is called. Just learning a computer.”

Is there anything else that you might find more beneficial and help lead to your success?

“Yeah. My parents respect me a little bit more.”

And that has affected your success?

“Yeah.”

Why is that?

“Because I used to do nothing. Sit at home and do nothing really, just be a bum.”

So by you being motivated by coming to school, you can see that your parents are treating you differently?

“Yeah.”

Anybody else treating you differently?

“Friends.”

Academic success is identifying that you are successful in your courses. Are there other things in your life that is happening as a result of your academic success?

“No, not really.”

Do you feel different about yourself?

“Yeah. That I’m happy and that I’m getting my education that I should have gotten a long time ago.”

So you see the importance of education now?

“Yeah. It’s pretty sad when you have to have grade twelve just to push a broom down a hall.”

Is there motivation for you to do well in class and what would those motivations be?

“My girlfriend, my child.”

Your girlfriend is helping you?

“Some what, yeah. She lives in the Sault and I live here, but she is moving here. I told her that I am going to school and she told me ‘Good, stick with it.’ And I’m getting a lot of motivation to stick with school.”

What about your child? What kind of motivation is that for you?

“My child, well that’s a hard one to answer. I don’t know? I have never seen him before so I can’t really answer that question.”

Have you ever felt respected in education before?

“Oh yeah. My teachers respected me and I respect my teachers.”

Before, when you were in high school or prison?

“In high school the teachers hated me and I hated them.”

Why?

Probably because of my attitude with them. They would say something and I would snap back at them. I would have what you would call a 'hissy fit' and I would walk out of the classroom, slamming the door. Telling the teacher where to go."

So it wasn't the best relationship that you had there?

"No, no."

Why is it different here?

"Why is it different here? Because I'm not having very much trouble here. The teachers are nice here. Actually, I'd say this is better than any other school I went to."

So the teachers have really helped you out?

"Yup, they got me more motivated than practically anybody else."

So you feel you are more respected here?

"Yeah."

Has this new respect for yourself, your increase in self esteem, has that carried through to other aspects of your life outside of the classroom?

"Yup."

How so?

“Well, my sister is happy for me going back to school, doing the best I can. And her boyfriend, and my mother is happy. So, if they are happy for what I’m doing, I should be happy.”

Do you feel happy for yourself?

“Oh yeah. I’m happy with my self twenty four hours a day.”

What did you do time for, if you don't mind me asking?

“Break and enters, drugs, possession, thefts, breach of probation, mischief, car hopping, theft auto.”

When you became an adult what did you get caught for?

“The only thing that happened was I was framed and convicted for five armed robberies and two break and enters.”

And that got you time?

“No, this stuff I got off because I was out of town. I got eighteen months for drugs.”

Do the faculty in your program know what you did time for?

“Oh yeah.”

Do you think that having them know what you have done time for that they have treated you differently?

“They treat me the same as everybody else.”

Do they give you extra help?

“Yeah, when I ask for it.”

But it has nothing to do with your incarceration?

“No.”

Do you think that by having a faculty know that you were incarcerated would have given some benefits a little quicker?

“No, not really. I’m just used to working alone. The only time I really need help is when I’m stuck on a question and need help to figure it out.”

Do you have skills that need to be worked on in the classroom?

“Yeah. Mathematics, spelling.”

How is your grammar, your writing?

“My writing is fine except for commas, question marks, exclamation points, the right voices.”

How are your study skills?

“My study skills are pretty good.”

Reading and writing are important needs for college. Does the college offer you something in this regard. Do you make use of some of the college offerings like the special needs office or tutoring?

“No.”

You don't get any help?

“No.”

Do you use other resources in the college?

“No. I do all my work right here.”

When you are outside of the classroom, what are your study skills like?

“Mine? I can't really say I do study skills outside of the classroom. I just sit there. Hang around with friends. Go shoot some pool, that's about it.”

How far did you get in high school?

“I'd say half of a semester of grade nine. I hate to admit it but...”

Do you think that the college could have something in place to help people like yourself, where people who come in with not much high school or have been in jail for a while, that they could have something in place that could help them be successful?

“They should but yeah. Not another little jail but another little classroom for people who just come out of jail to get them on track again.”

Do you think it would be helpful to have discussions with someone else in your position?

“I don’t know. It’s not a hard question it’s just something I can’t answer now.”

I was thinking that if you had someone else to talk to who had shared the same experiences you had, would that help?

“Yeah, that would help largely.”

Do you feel a little intimidated being here in that you don’t want anyone to know your background?

“No. I am not ashamed of my background. I regretted it, got over it. All I do now is just laugh at it.”

How beneficial would starting your education in jail have been to you now?

“It would be different because you would be so used to rules from jail. Then you come to a different place that has a whole new set of rules to learn.”

Is there rules here?

“Yeah, there are rules here. Like any other ordinary high school: don’t run in the halls, don’t loiter or litter, smoke outside. But it is not the same as jail.”

Is there a list of supports that could be offered to someone with your background that you might need but are not in place. What I am trying to get at, if you are native there is a native liaison counselor. If you have a learning disability there is the special needs office. There are all these groups in place but not a group for ex-offenders.

“That doesn’t seem fair, it’s like discrimination. What are they going to do for the ax murderer who wants to come back to school?”

Would you join a group like this?

“Yes I would.”

Coming from a prison background, what things do you think should be in place for these students because you would know better than the president of the college. For people who are coming out of jail what do they need to feel comfortable to help them complete their studies?

“Well, for one thing to make them not feel uncomfortable. Get the bars out of the way.”

What bars are they?

“The bars that are keeping them in.”

Here?

“Here? I don’t know? It would be worth their while to try because you have a whole bunch of convicts that are psychopaths and everything else, that are nuts right out of their mind. I know a whole bunch of them like that they don’t care who you are they are going to slit your throat either way.”

Are they here at the college?

“No.”

Do you think that a person who comes form prison and comes to the college, is going to be different?

“It’s going to be different for them, yeah, because they are used to being in jail and now they are in a different surrounding. I think it would be a little bit different.”

What kind of things would help them out in trying to handle this different environment, this different place?

“People trying to help him out. To try and get their lives back on track instead of going to jail.”

Would they try and go to a counselor, do you think?

“I think probably but it depends on who that person is. Let’s say me for instance. When I got out of jail I didn’t know what to do. I couldn’t go to my parents. My parents hate my guts but I don’t really care about that. But yeah, I went to counseling to see what I could do and they told me to go back to school; do this, do that. I went back to school, I am on welfare. I got a roof over my head and all that, and I’m some what happy to be where I am than where I was.”

What are you going to do when you have completed your upgrading?

“Hopefully, go over to the college (the upgrading building is housed in a separate location from the main campus building) and get a diploma in welding or art work.”

So you are going to continue on then?

“Yeah.”

“Do you think it’s going to take you longer than, let us say, you go into the welding program. Do you think because of your background the welding program is going to take you a little longer to complete it?”

“Yeah.”

Should the college make some adjustment for people who might have to take a little longer?

“Yeah, it should. Because when they want something done it has to be done by that day or that day. But some people won’t be able to handle that. In a way, they could say work at your own pace but they (the faculty) won’t do it. I don’t think they will do it over there.”

Do you think that getting older has been beneficial to you in terms of education and not being criminal?

“Yeah.”

Five years ago you would have been fifteen.

“And I was in juvenile jail.”

But now that you are twenty, you can see in the future that at twenty three, you might be...

“Doing something that I want to do. And that is what I plan on doing. Before I came to Trenton, I was seventeen years old; just gotten out of jail and moved up here. I did this to get a different lifestyle. I like the lifestyle I got now. I never been in trouble. Never been in trouble with the law, and everything is going “hunky dory” for me.”

Does coming to college make you feel like a different person now?

“Yeah. It makes me feel like I am not just a lazy bum sitting on my butt, doing nothing. Get my education and get on with my life.”

Do you feel some pride saying, “I go to Loyalist College.”

“Oh yeah. I tell everybody ‘Hey I’m in school.’ Even my friends that are not in school, I say ‘ Ha ha, I’m in school and you’re not.’ And they get mad about it...”

If you could list the things that have made you successful at college and success means you are still here. When did you start?

“I started in January, 1997. (The interview occurred on Feb. 21, 1997)

Many people are not around by this time in the semester so you are doing all right. What are some of the things that have helped you stay because it sounds that you are going to stay longer?

“Yeah. They said the same thing that my sister said ‘stick with school, you have just started, no sense in moving.’ I was thinking about moving up to Sudbury but I just got on

welfare. I did school and there is no sense in me quitting and doing that, and moving again and doing it all over again.”

Do you think you have the 'smarts' compared to everybody else in your class to do well?

“No.”

You don't think so?

“I can't say that I'm smarter than everybody else in the class but...”

When you look around are you above the class below the class or in the middle?

“I would say I am in the middle.”

You have been here since January and it is now February, 21. have you been 'conning' your way through your studies?

“Uh, my math yeah.”

How do you con your way through math?

“I just tell my teacher that I am sick and tired of doing it. Every time she puts me into multiplying or dividing I tell her I won't do it, she asks 'why?' I tell her that every time I started school I am doing it, multiplying and dividing. I've been doing it for the past five years, multiplying and dividing and it gets kind of sick after a while. So, she says to do a couple of lines of dividing and get them right and we will move on to something different. So, when I get something done that is different, I do it more and more.”

So it gets you away from math?

“Yeah.”

What subjects do you do the best in?

“My best subjects are my computers and I don’t know?”

Why computers?

“Why computers? Because I love computers because I have owned a computer since I was sixteen.”

So you have a background in computers?

“Yeah.”

Are there other things that you think you would like to mention that you could say ‘this is what happened to me, or this is unique to me, or this is what you forgot to mention.’

Should there be better communications with the parole officer?

“The only problem I have with the police is that they beat me and I’m kicking the car and making an ass out of myself. It’s my way of saying ‘up yours.’”

Now that you are here at the college is there some way for you to say ‘I’m here and I want to stay here,’ or is there something that is in place or could be put in place to help you get into the welding course?

“No, not really exactly. You see I work at my own pace and get things done when I get them done. And it takes along time to get it done. Then I can say ‘Hey, you done something.’ My whole life I haven’t done nothing. I don’t even know the words to describe it but I feel great! I feel better about it.”

STUDENT FIVE:

Were you involved in education or vocational training while you were incarcerated?

Since about 1994, about three years.

Were there any factors since your release that might have lead you to college?

“I just wanted to get away from hanging around with that crowd that got me in trouble all the time. I wanted to get my life in order to try to get a good education so that I could try to get a job.”

So you see a college education is going to help you get your life in order and getting a decent job?

“Yeah, sort of an escape and get away from the life I had before.”

What is your grade point average?

“I have a 2.5 GPA after last semester. I don’t know how I am doing now.”

How do you think you are doing?

“Fine.”

Aside from passing last semester, have there been other factors that you would identify are important in terms of helping you be successful at college?

“I think the program I took before (this one) really helped me out. It was ‘Pre-technology.’ I did really good in it which was surprising because I really sucked at math. Now I am pretty strong in those subjects because of that course.”

Were there any other skills that you built up from that course?

“Oh yeah, English. Physics gave me a new way of looking at things that I never really saw before. Things made a lot of sense after that.”

Have other things happened in your life since you became successful at college? Have you noticed that being successful at college has helped other things in your life to start falling into place?

“Yeah, I would say so. The friends I hang around with are totally different. I am not involved with all these crimes anymore. I have an apartment, a girlfriend and a daughter. Having a daughter has really made me try and get things in order because I want her to have a good life.”

Were You involved in this relationship prior to coming to college?

“Yeah. We were just starting our relationship.”

The motivation for you to do well in class then is that you have a daughter that you want to look after?

“Yeah, because dental bills and all these things is going to be a lot of money when she gets older so I want to be able to afford that.”

So your motivation then is to get a job, to leave the lifestyle that you had and to build a family with your girlfriend and your daughter?

“Yes.”

Is this a good set of motivators for you?

“It has helped, yeah.”

Do you feel that you are being respected in college now?

Yeah, sort of. I am feeling more like a person, an equal member of society. Because I am doing something not just hanging around the streets. I sort of felt like a lower class citizen before, I wasn't really a member of society. I was hanging out with street people and that.”

When you were in high school did you feel that you were respected there?

“Maybe by my peers, by other students.”

“Do you feel that you are respected by faculty at the college?”

“Yeah.”

How do you think the faculty see you?

“I don’t know? I think they see me as another mature student trying to go through the program. They don’t know my background so they don’t make any judgments.”

Is that beneficial for you?

“Yeah.”

So this respect or identification of you being another mature college student, has that helped your self esteem both in the classroom and outside of the classroom? If so how?

“I don’t know how exactly. Before when I was in high school I saw the teacher as an authority figure. Now the attitude of faculty is more equal, on the same level. Yeah, more self esteem, more confident to speak in front of a crowd.”

You mentioned that you feel like you are a member of a society that sort of thing? What has been the impact on you been knowing that you have been in prison and coming to college?

“I have a life experience that not too many people have had, so it has helped me mature. I see the world a little differently from people who have not been incarcerated. I tried to get past what I had done before, hopefully people would just forget about that.”

But nobody knew, so if they didn't know how would they forget?

“O.K. I confided in a couple of people. They knew.”

Did you think that people knew? Maybe you looked like an ex-offender?

“I thought I did. I had long hair and I cut it all short. I started to change my style of clothing from rock tee shirts.”

So you tried to blend in?

“Yeah, I guess so.”

What did you do time for?

“Well, the first time was for possession of stolen property. I got sixty days. The next time I got charged for possession of stolen property and got thirty days. Then I got a possession for the purpose of trafficking and got fifteen days for that. Currently, I have an outstanding charge of possession for the purpose of trafficking again, but I am hoping to get it plea bargained to fifteen days for that.”

So all together you have completed a bout four months. How much time was there between charges?

“After the first sixty days there was a couple of years in between each one. It has been four years since the last charge until now. I have received another charge in May, 1997.”
This (current) charge is bringing me down because it was so stupid. I got stopped by the police for speeding and they discovered that I had ‘pot’ in the glove compartment.

Because it was in a bunch of different packages, I got charged with possession for trafficking. I am hoping to get fifteen days.”

Do you think you are being treated differently or being looked at differently by faculty?

“No.”

If somebody had known about your background or past experience do you think that maybe you would have been able to circumvent some future problems like you have now?

Would a support group or faculty been able to say stay away from that stuff?

“I don’t think so because I tend not to really listen to anybody. I just do what I am going to do.”

Is this still the situation or was that the situation in May?

“Yeah, that was the situation in May but I am still like that, I just do my own thing.”

What are your writing skills like?

“I write okay. I can spell good and stuff.”

You also said your math skills are good?

“Yeah.”

Do you have any educational needs that you need to work on to improve your college career?

“Well, other than motivation, I don’t really like to do writing assignments.”

How are your study skills?

“Pretty bad. I don’t study.”

How are you getting by then?

“Well, I guess I do study. I do work outside of the classroom to get by about one hour a week, just to catch up in case I get behind. If I did more homework, I would probably have a better grade point average.”

Is there any other things that could be in place to help you out in college to improve your grades or motivation?

“Maybe. If I get in groups with other students I may be able to accomplish things by doing that.”

So you said that going to college was important for you to get a better job and to support your family but then you picked up this charge in May while you were in college. What happened?

“It happened during the summer break. I got a job at an arcade and started hanging around and that put me right back in the middle of things.”

For someone coming out of prison what types of supports do you think they need to have in place for them to be successful?

“I think there has to be some preparation before going into a college program. For someone who has only gone to grade ten or eleven, and have been out of school for a while, you don’t really know what to expect when you come here. It can be overwhelming for someone right away.”

So it isn’t so much the prison experience but the lack of educational skills?

“Yeah, because most people in prison tend not to have completed high school.”

If there had been a support group for ex-offenders would you have attended?

“If that would have been required I would have otherwise, I would not have wanted to.”

Do you find that you need more time to complete college assignments? Do you think you will need more time to complete a college diploma over the normal two year time frame?

“Yeah. I will probably need another year because I didn’t get all my credits before.”

Do you think you would have been as successful at college before you had entered prison? Is prison a factor in making you successful?

“Yes it is. The last time I went in I was thinking that I can’t be coming back here every one or two years.”

Do you think it is prison or just growing up that has helped you?

“Growing up, but prison sort of helped me grow up.”

How do you see yourself now in terms of seeing yourself as a whole person? In trying to get your relationships together with your girlfriend and parents, your daughter? It looks

like you are trying to put the pieces together. Are there still pieces to the puzzle that you need to put together?

“No, I pretty well figured myself out.”

Are you heading in the right direction. Is it going to take some time to get there?

“Yeah, I’m getting there slowly. I’m still unsure of the future and where I am going to be or what I am going to do. I am kind of limited because of my criminal background.”

What are the factors that have helped you be successful in college than before when you were in high school?

“Before, I didn’t really care. I didn’t want to be in school. I just wanted to be out having fun with my friends. Now I want to be here. I get up and come to school everyday. Before, I would skip days for no reason.”

Have the faculty helped you?

“Yeah. The atmosphere is different than the people I was around before. Totally different. These people have a whole different outlook on life. They see a future. They see that they will finish school and have a career. Whereas, the people I hung around with before, the only future they had was selling dope for a living.”

No sense of future?

“No.”

How about your girlfriend. Has she been helping you?

“Yeah, she has been on my case forever to stay out of trouble, to get a job.”

Do you think you are as smart as your fellow students?

“As smart as? Yeah, I think so.”

Do you have the same ability as your fellow students?

“Yeah, I think I’m wiser on some subjects because of my life experiences.”

Have you conned your way through college so far?

“No, I have pulled my own weight.”

What subjects do you do best in?

“Math, law, computers, that sort of thing.”

Something that has a definite answer?

“You know there are rules and logic behind it.”

Interesting isn’t it, that a fellow who breaks rules would find his best subjects is in following rules?

“Yeah. You are bound by strict rules, it makes sense.”

Is there anything that we haven't covered that you believe could help others be successful at college if they came from prison?

“That is really hard because most people who come back tend to stay in the same rut and never get out. I know some people who come to college and flip around from program to program and never really complete anything. After two years of being here, having done nothing and after two years go back to doing the same old thing. It is hard to get away from what you have done.”

Why is that?

I don't know. There is an appeal to it (engaging in criminal activity). You feel you are rebelling against “the man” For me, I just decided I wanted to change.”

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ANSWERS

Wanting to succeed is very important to me right now. I really want to succeed. Getting a different outlook on life, kind of sitting back and looking back on your past and kind of seeing what is going to happen. It goes through my mind a lot. I know I can go back to the kind of life I had. But if I look to the future, if I look ahead, I know I am going to be successful someday. (Student One)

STUDENT ONE:

Student One was able to understand and articulate the relevance of education to his life. His self esteem grew as he developed his skills and abilities which moved him forward in completing his studies. His college placement provided experiences and contacts to assist him in starting a career working with the developmentally challenged. When interviewed he was in his third semester of a four semester program. Student One realized his success in education was re-inventing his persona from a “convict,” “drug dealer” to an “upstanding”, self supporting member of the community. He was excited to describe his new achievements and his new opportunities for “going straight.” It was evident that Student One was on his way to obtaining his diploma and succeeding in finding his place in the world. His answers were animated, he was moving about in his chair while being interviewed. His eyes “danced” with the possibilities of being able to “hold my head up while I walk down the street.” His answers were in-depth, insightful,

and from his heart. He stated his main goal several times, that is, to obtain employment and be able to support himself like everyone else.

Student One began his college education in the adult upgrading program at Loyalist College. The upgrading that he received helped him to recognize his educational limitations in regard to study habits, writing and reading abilities, and his understanding of what he needed to succeed in obtaining his college diploma.

Student One stated repeatedly in the interview that he wanted to succeed at college. He felt a strong desire to obtain his diploma so that he could have the possibility of obtaining full-time employment. Employment meant that he would be able to provide for himself financially in the future. Time thus, was a strong motivator in his completion of the curricula. This long term goal was also supported by his short term goals:

- completing assignments on time,
- studying for tests, and
- completing the semester.

To assist him in meeting these short term goals he obtained the services of a tutor. The student had to be assertive with the college and demanded that a tutor be provided based on the college's identification of the need for the student to have a tutor. However, the college did not foresee the student demanding that the tutor be available for the entire semester. This assertiveness suggests that the student was well aware of his limitations, as well as, his needs for succeeding in college and his desire to complete his goal of obtaining a diploma.

His relationships with others can also be considered a valuable asset to his completion of his diploma. Student One noted that as his relationships with others

changed, he saw himself dealing with others differently. He noted that he had empathy for his clients that he came into contact with through college placement. He stated that he could relate better to both clients and other people such as his fellow students and teachers. He noted that he enjoyed his teachers and thus was encouraged and motivated to attend classes on a regular basis. He realized that his change in attitude regarding others, as well as his attitude toward education created a change in his relationships with his peers. Indeed, he found that his peer group changed from ex-offenders to college students.

It was readily evident that this man was proud of his achievement. It should be noted that in a follow up interview, this student has reported that he has since obtained employment, has been in a relationship that has led to the birth of his daughter and that he is living the life he had hoped to attain from his education from Loyalist College. This is quite an accomplishment from a self confessed “drug dealer!”

STUDENT TWO:

Student Two confirmed that he did not graduate from high school, he needed an English and two other credits to receive his high school diploma. He came to college by referral from a rehabilitation counselor who recommended that he try to upgrade his education. His initial attempt at college ended with his failing his first semester. This failure became a motivator because he recognized that he now had an Ontario Student Assistance Program debt with nothing to show for it. Concern over the debt load and the fact that a faculty member that recommended he re-enroll in the program again, had an impact on his future success.

In his second semester, Student Two became aware that the reasons for his first semester failure were his lack of motivation to attend classes and his failure to hand in assignments on time. By correcting these two problems, Student Two completed the semester with a grade point average of 3.8 / 4 and has maintained this average over three semesters. As a result of this change in attitude he will complete two diplomas from two different programs in a three year period.

Student Two has achieved educational success and because of this, he now envisions himself being able to “do things” that he did not believe he could attain. It is this sense of accomplishment that has led to an increase in his self esteem, and thus has led to further changes.

Of note, is the identification of the changes in relationships that he now has with his parents and siblings. His relationships with faculty, his rehabilitation counselor, and his girlfriend have enabled him to change his outlook on himself so that he now envisions a future that is different than his past, based on his maturation and the identification of the need to complete college, in terms of finding gainful employment. It is interesting to note that although his relationships with his family and girlfriend have changed, Student Two still does not have a similar connection with his fellow students. He focused on his studies opposed to trying to build friendships with his classmates, which could be a result of completing two diploma programs at the same time.

Student Two attributes his success to the faculty who encouraged him to try again after his first semester. The relationship that was established with the faculty made him feel like he was treated as a “person.” This was important for him because he noted in the interview that “people from prison think that when they fail it is because they are not

good enough to be 'normal'." This suggests then that post incarcerate students may need extra assistance in their first semester so that they can understand what is expected of other students to reinforce the fact that they are "normal" and that expectations of them are the same as other students. Once they identify that they can do the work and are "normal" it appears that the motivation to succeed is nourished and develops on its own, moving the student forward to complete the work. For Student Two, once he understood that he could do the work and that the faculty would assist him when he had difficulties, his grades and successful completion of courses increased his commitment to learning and motivation to graduate. Student Two upon graduation will not only have completed one diploma course but two diploma programs. It is evident that this student has moved forward in his recognition of his abilities to learn and to find his place in education at the post secondary level.

STUDENT THREE:

Student Three was not enrolled in a diploma course but had come to Loyalist College to upgrade his high school education to gain his General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Returning to school at the age of forty has provided insights for this student into the necessity of obtaining education in relation to finding employment. Student Three had not been successful in primary or high school endeavors but had enjoyed taking vocational courses in prison. It was the positive experiences from his prison vocational courses that gave him the impetus to enroll at Loyalist College.

Being a mature student has had positive benefits for this student. He stated in the interview that he is more tolerant toward people now, has changed his peer group from

“the old crowd” to one that he has met in college. He stated that his change in outlook toward making a future for himself is directly related to education so that his attitude, goals and other facets of his life have been positively changed since returning to school. By being focused on obtaining an education, Student Three has discovered that he can be successful in his studies and since the interview has graduated with his GED. He attributed his success to taking pride in his work; this led to positive reinforcements from his teachers and thus increased his own sense of self respect. This increase in self respect became a motivation to continue to succeed, resulting in Student Three obtaining grades in the 90’s.

Student Three’s motivation to learn enabled him to recognize his academic strengths and weaknesses; he personally sought and received the assistance from a tutor for his math course. It was evident to this writer that Student Three was able to overcome the stigma of incarceration. Even though he stated that he recognized the role that prison has played in his life even thirteen years after his last incarceration, he has recognized education as a vehicle that changed his life. Education has assisted this student in making choices that have impacted on many areas of his life, such as no longer abusing illicit drugs and alcohol and overcoming his anger problems. By feeling better about himself he is able to relate to others on a more positive level.

Student Three, much like the first two students, identified motivation to learn as important to success. He completed homework assignments, he studied at home, he attended classes, all corollary factors to continue to succeed. In essence his success led to further success; for a student who acknowledged that he only finished grade seven, this is a dramatic outcome. When interviewing Student Three, it was evident that he was

determined to complete his studies and possibly enroll in a diploma course at Loyalist to continue his education.

STUDENT FOUR:

Student Four was a student also enrolled in the adult upgrading program at Loyalist College. He had not been successful in the public high school system, dropping out in his grade nine year. Student Four has since dropped out of the upgrading course and, with hindsight, it can be easily seen from his answers why he dropped out of the program.

Based on his answers it was evident that Student Four lacked the maturity of the first three students. His answers to the questions posed were superficial, short, and lacked insight into his own motivation for being in school. For example, he readily admitted that after school hours he did not engage in homework, instead he “hungout” with friends. He also identified that his teachers in high school respected him and he respected his teachers, in the next question he stated that his teachers hated him. When asked why it was different at here (Loyalist College), he stated “because I’m not having very much trouble here. The teachers are nice here. Students four’s answers were not as analytical as the first three students that this chapter has examined. Indeed, it is apparent from Student Four’s answers that he was “mimicking” what he thought the writer wanted to hear.

Unlike the first three students he did not view education as affecting other areas in his life. He saw the importance of education as only helping him get employment; “It’s pretty sad when you have to have grade twelve just to get a job.” When discussing his

motivators for doing well in college he notes that the teachers have motivated him, but he did not identify his own internal motivators. He stated that his sister was happy that he returned to college, his sister's boyfriend, and his mother were happy for him, but then he stated "So if they are happy for what I'm doing, I should be happy." This lack of insight and commitment to education were indicators that Student Four would not complete his studies.

Also, it was evident that Student Four had a lack of maturity based on his statement that he had "started adult upgrading in January, 1997 and was ready to leave the program by February, 1997." He did not appear to have any commitment to his education as he was ready to move to Sudbury in the middle of his studies. Secondly, he advised the writer that his motivation to do well in school was influenced by his girlfriend's encouragement and to find a job to support his new child. Later, during the interview, he stated that he had never seen his child. He was willing to move to Sudbury, yet his girlfriend and child lived in Sault Ste. Marie. He stated that he disliked his upgrading courses because his math skills were not up to the grade level he should be at, and the teachers insisted on pressing him to work on his math courses. His response to this insistence was to completely stop working on his math studies.

Finally, it was evident that Student Four was not going to succeed in his studies because he did not have:

- long range educational or employment goals,
- commitment to his own educational success by doing homework, or trying to upgrade his academic skills, and
- connection with faculty and his fellow students.

It appeared that Student Four was enrolled in adult upgrading not to attain an education or his GED, but more likely because Loyalist College was a place to put in time during the cold winter months without having to look for work.

STUDENT FIVE:

Student Five had failed in his first program attempt, and was in a second program when interviewed. He has since dropped out of the second program prior to completion. He had come to college to get his life in order by getting a good education and to try to get a job. Student Five wanted to obtain a job so that his new born daughter would have better life opportunities, such as having “dental care”, that could be obtained from stable employment. Student Five identified the need to provide for his family as a motivator. Although a noble cause, it did not motivate him enough for this student to succeed.

Student Five appeared to provide answers that he thought this writer wanted to hear. For example, he stated that he was motivated to obtain employment to support his family. However, an outstanding charge of possession for the purpose of trafficking during his final semester was poor evidence of this motivation. (Subsequently, this student served fifteen days in jail for the conviction and never really got back into his studies after serving this sentence.) When arrested by the police for this charge, he forgot that he had illicit drugs in his possession. He claimed the drugs were his friends. However, eager to provide acceptable answers, he had informed the writer that he had changed his friends that he associated with prior to coming to college.

He also stated that he was motivated to complete his college education, yet he did not study outside of college and found that working with other students was not a

motivator for him. He did not believe a support group of ex offenders would assist him educationally, (as confirmed by the three successful students) because he stated that he doesn't tend to "listen to anybody."

It was evident from the interview with Student Five, that he lacked long and short term goals. He did not know what he wanted to do with his life in terms of employment goals, and had little motivation to study outside of school hours. He enjoyed his time at college because he liked the atmosphere and enjoyed the "different outlooks of the other college students," yet this was not sufficient to encourage Student Five to continue his studies. Based on his answers, this writer believed that the student would not finish his studies, and this turned out to be the case.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will detail the conclusions obtained from the students responses, followed by the an analysis of the conclusions obtained from the Literature Review with special emphasis from the Adult Education literature.

The five students interviewed for this study provided answers that enabled the writer to come to several conclusions. It was evident from the answers given by the two unsuccessful students that they were not going to complete their program studies based on the lack of motivation factors they revealed. They were involved in education to assist them to find employment, but neither of the two related that they were involved in education for the intrinsic values of learning, for the sake of learning; learning because of the rewards that were gained from improved self-esteem. They stated answers that appeared to be what they thought this writer wanted to hear. Indeed, on several occasions they made statements that were contradictory to prior statements concerning their involvement in education. It was evident that they viewed education as a vehicle for changing the factors that lead to their incarceration, but at the time of the interviews, it would appear that they had not internalized the motivators that they needed to be successful at college. They both denied their responsibilities for their criminal activities (Student Four believed he was framed by the police on one conviction; Student Five claimed that the drugs in his possession belonged to his friends and that he forgot the drugs were in his car.) Both displayed a lack of maturity and ability to recognize personal reasons for being at college. Both students engaged in behaviors and answers that led the writer to believe they would not finish. For example:

- Student Four's answers concerning his relationships with others were immature. "I hate my parents and they hate me;"
- both students appeared to give answers that they thought would impress this writer; they described their study skills as "good" but did not study at home;
- they did not answer the questions as it related to them but what they thought the writer wanted to hear, as indicated above;
- answers to questions from both students were brief and without much detail;
- they did not display or describe the same motivation or persistence factors that the three successful students described (getting the assistance of a tutor, completing school work at home, developing stronger relationships with family members and friends).

Finally, these two students answered questions with a sense of bravado and machismo, which could only be ascertained from sitting in the same room as the students and seeing how they answered the questions. Some insight regarding this bravado can be gleaned from the answers given. They were attempting to impress the writer about their lives and how they have handled situations on their own, independent of others. When the three successful students were interviewed, their responses included their changes in relationships with other people as a result in the changes that they recognized in themselves' and these changes they felt were due to their increased self awareness from their educational experiences. The three successful students were proud of their accomplishments without being boastful, bragging or conceited.

CONCLUSIONS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW:

To begin, one must recognize the power that adult education has in transforming adults into learners who can transcend their past history and present situations in which they may find themselves. They may transcend their present situation by recognizing their ability to interact within an environment new to them, and with others, on a level that is empowering because of their new found self esteem and learning abilities. The work of Friere (1970) identified the learner's ability to understand the factors that are utilized to maintain the status quo and how these factors are employed in relation to the individual. This transformative process of reflection to minimize the techniques employed to maintain the status quo can be employed by the adult once given the tools to learn for themselves, and the encouragement to do so. Reflection as an action to understand past experiences, is an important factor in adult education because of the learning that adults obtain from experiences. This reflection is important for post incarcerate offenders because of their unique experiences within an oppressive paramilitary "correctional" institution. Indeed, information noted in the literature review suggests that the power of incarceration can turn a "delinquent student" from the public education system, into a dedicated learner in prison who may perform better in post secondary programs than the non incarcerated post secondary student.(Eggleston and Gehring 1986:87) It can be concluded that education provided for offenders and subsequently post incarcerate offenders, promotes a macro structural functionalist perspective that education serves the interests of the community by ensuring all members know what is expected. The three successful students would appear to support this theory. From a micro perspective, the

education obtained by the students in this study, suggests that they are involved in education for their own purposes, to obtain education for their own needs. The three successful students became successful in college and not in primary or secondary grades. Indeed, of the five students surveyed, not one had graduated with a secondary school diploma. Yet, two of the students did not complete their studies at college, which followed their educational history. For this writer, the reasons why three of the students were successful in college can best be answered from a micro perspective.

Adult education as a practice has the important function of assisting adult students recognize their abilities to learn, either within prisons and in colleges. This is evident, given the statistically high number of inmates who enter prison with low educational levels, but when given the opportunity to learn because of their own motivation to do so, do well.

The work of Yokelson and Samenow in regard to education was consistent with the two students who failed. It could be argued that the two students had no concept of 'education,' ... and did not "derive any benefits" from what education could offer. The two students who did not complete their programs gave this writer answers that they thought he wanted to hear. Their answers were abrupt, without much depth and insight, and they did not obviously comprehend some of the questions. Yet, when the three successful students answers are analyzed, the findings of Yokelson and Samenow (1976, 1977) appear to be refuted. The difference between the successful and the unsuccessful students appears to be:

- the commitment to succeed,
- the motivation to do well,

- the limited time they have to starting a career and,
- the realization that education is important to their self esteem and their future.

These observations were not made or discussed by Yochelson and Samenow in either of their studies. (1976, 1977) Indeed, it is this writer's assertion that the three successful students were aware of the benefits that education could provide and thus were intrinsically motivated to do well.

CONCLUSIONS FROM ADULT EDUCATION LITERATURE:

It is important to reiterate this writer's definition of adult education as a practice and philosophy. Adults have a variety of experiences from which to draw from and that reflection of these experiences is a valued and critical component of the adult learning process. Adults must be involved in the identification of their goals, needs, and objectives and must be involved in the evaluation process. Finally, trust, support and emotional response is vital to a learning atmosphere.

The three post incarcerate students who were successful at Loyalist College noted that their success was directly related to their motivation to succeed. This motivation was nurtured in part by faculty who taught these students from an adult education perspective. Of the three successful students, the one student who completed the adult upgrading program benefited from a faculty who are proponents of adult education philosophy and practice and thus are believers in the power of adult education. The two other successful students enrolled in diploma programs that also had strong links to adult education as a practice and philosophy. The three successful students in this study had similar

motivations in that they were involved in their learning through their own self evaluation of their educational needs, for example:

- the identification of the need for a tutor;
- the identification of their lack of skills in reading, writings, and study habits;
- attending classes regularly and
- handing in assignments on time.

Indeed, the evidence presented in the literature review suggests that when incarcerated students engage in education for their own reasons, these students can learn effectively. Secondly, inmates who began college courses in prison continued their studies in college programs after release. (Franklin 1979)

It is imperative that these students are given the attention and assistance they need when first entering the college, until they begin to feel comfortable and see the results from the success in their studies. Once the three successful students felt that they had control over their learning, they continued to be successful in their studies.

The information gathered in this study suggests that when the post incarcerate students are motivated to study and to learn, that they can be successful in their educational pursuits even if they had not been successful in their past. The two students who were not successful have similar circumstances, in that they both had a lack of maturity and did not have a well developed sense of future goals, either in being successful in education or finding work that would be self sustaining. It would appear also that along with the factors of maturation and a well developed desire for success, the three successful students identified improvement in relationships with others. These

“others” included faculty, girlfriends, parents and siblings, and peer groups. All three successful students stated that their relationships with others improved as did their self esteem when they started to get good grades at college and when they recognized that they had the ability to not only complete the courses, but to do well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations resulting from this study are directed toward the Ministry of the Solicitor General, Ontario, the Correctional Services of Canada, and to Loyalist College and other community colleges in Ontario.

1. The Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Correctional Services of Canada should continue to provide academic upgrading to inmates who do not have grade twelve education.
2. The Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Correctional Services of Canada should have an educational practice and philosophy that encompasses the principles of Adult Education.
3. Inmates who have as part of their release plan, the continuation of their education outside of the prison or gaol, should ensure they have developed study, reading and writings skills, that will allow for an easy transition to college.
4. Prison classification officers (CMOI's) and educational staff, should assist and encourage inmates who want to continue their education outside of the prison / gaol, to enroll in programs who employ an Adult Education philosophy and practice.
5. Post incarcerate students should investigate the availability of tutoring programs at the college.

6. Post incarcerate students should be encouraged to develop long and short term goals that they wish to achieve from their educational experiences.
7. Post incarcerate students should be encouraged to discuss their short and long range goals with their faculty advisor or academic counselor to assist the student in completing these goals.
8. Post incarcerate students should enroll in college programs that they are interested in as well as programs that may assist them in finding careers.
9. The college should have tutoring resources available for this post incarcerate offenders.
10. The college should have a coordinator that has experience with incarcerate and post incarcerate offenders, to liaise with prisons and gaols counselors in providing maximum opportunity for the students to be successful in educational programs.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

These questions were provided to the respondents on paper at the beginning of the interview.

1. Are you a full-time or part-time student of Loyalist College? Full-time___ Part-time___
2. What program and school are you enrolled in? _____
3. What semester are you presently in? 1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ 6___
4. Are you a high school graduate? Yes___ No___
5. Were you involved in educational programming while incarcerated? Please describe:
6. Were you incarcerated in a federal or provincial institution? Federal___ Provincial___
Both___
7. Your longest sentence was served in? Federal___ Provincial___ institution
8. How long had you been released from prison before enrolling at Loyalist College?
9. If you completed a semester or more at Loyalist, what is your grade point average?
10. Would you consider your college academic experience as successful to date? Yes___
No___ Don't Know___

Explain:_____

APPENDIX B

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

This project will identify the factors that may lead to successful completion of college level curricula for students who have been incarcerated in federal or provincial institutions. Participants will be surveyed and asked for further comments regarding the program, teaching, environmental conditions needed to be in place for post-incarcerate students to be successful in completing college courses.

Information regarding the respondent's name, college program, or other identifiable information will be kept confidential, and not be released to the college, program administrators or faculty. Information collected and utilized for this study will be written for the requirements for the M. A. thesis for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education / Faculty of Education, University of Toronto.

I, _____ (print name) understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time during the course of the study. I understand that I will not be identified in any manner and that any personal information that may identify me will be destroyed by the author of the report. I recognize that my answers will be analyzed and may be written into the report and that the report will be published as a requirement for the M. A. thesis or other journal publications.

I understand the conditions of voluntary participation and agree to participate in this study.

_____ (signature) Date _____