A SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS: A CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPATORY LEARNING

THESIS

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BY

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Abstract

This study provides a starting point for using adult learning principles in developing a substance abuse prevention program. The study was conducted with senior high school students in Nova Scotia. The first part of the study involved youth and adults from the community presenting popular theatre activities within the schools. The second, core part of the study involves the development, implementation and the preliminary evolution of a participatory approach to substance abuse prevention in senior high school. The students were brought into program decision making with two advisory groups, one from the school, and the other from the community. The results indicate that using participatory and student-directed methods are effective approaches to prevention programming at the senior high school level. This thesis serves as a conduit for an improved approach to substance abuse prevention and youth development that goes beyond the traditional information-only approaches.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Substance abuse, which includes alcohol, over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, solvents, and a variety of illicit drugs, is a major social issue in Canada. According to Moskowitz (1986) and many others, the social costs of becoming addicted to any of these substances has been shown to affect people in diverse ways, including highway and work-related accidents and death, lost time at work, loss of potential educational success, relationship difficulties, exacerbation of mental health problems, and family violence. Additionally, it is expensive to treat addictions.

During the past 40 years the prevention of substance abuse has targeted children and young adults. The Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (1998) indicates that substance use by high school students has tripled since 1991. This same survey indicates that 65% of all high school students in Nova Scotia use or have used drug-containing substances during the past year. Addiction Services uses an estimate that 1 in 10 casual substance users will become addicted to their substance of choice. This situation gives rise to question how substance abuse prevention and education is being practised.

The earliest drug abuse prevention and education efforts at the high school level were based upon the assumption that a change in knowledge will lead to a change in behaviour. In the mid-1970s, prevention education entered a period of rapid development. Programs based upon the social influence of peers

knowledge will lead to a change in behaviour. In the mid-1970s, prevention education entered a period of rapid development. Programs based upon the social influence of peers characterised this period. The most recent developments involve recognizing the importance of the social environment in shaping behaviour.

However, high school students are rarely involved in the development of prevention programs. Furthermore, prevention programs that are directed by students are virtually non-existent. This thesis explores the application of several principles of adult education, namely, participation and self-direction, and examines the process I used to implement a new approach to drug abuse prevention in high schools.

Background: Fumbling in the Dark

My interest in substance abuse prevention began in 1987 when I began working for an addiction agency in Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the Addiction Agency, a fictitious name). This interest became more focused when I was promoted to the position of Program Administration Officer in 1995. Concurrent with this promotion, I enrolled in the Master of Adult Education Program at St. Francis Xavier University. The origin and process of the study for this thesis took many twists and turns along the way to completion. I did not start out with a precisely defined purpose; rather, the purpose evolved as the study evolved.

From 1991 through 1993, I represented my organization on a nation-wide research project called the National Link. I was selected to represent the province because of my work on behalf of family violence from 1981-1987. This project was co-ordinated by the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, and funded by Health and Welfare Canada. The research team included two representatives from each province in the

country, and an advisory group from the Addiction Research Foundation. Our job was to examine the link between addiction and violence. Our work culminated in the production of a manual (National Link, 1995) that summarises the research findings and presents detailed workshop modules for community leaders. Essentially, the research findings indicate that although there is no cause and effect between violence and substance abuse, they have a significant coexistence. This co-existence is captured in the adage widely used in addictions work:

> What you live with you learn,
> What you learn, you practice,
> And what you practice, you become.

And so it is with me. I grew up in a violent alcoholic home. I also had many advantages that contributed to my ability to overcome these early life experiences. Nevertheless, I have focused my career and learning on issues that are not only familiar to me, but can have a life and death significance to today's youth.

In 1993, I presented the first of many workshops on the National Link to a family violence committee in the northern region of Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the Interagency Committee, a fictitious name). The Interagency Committee has approximately 30 members who represent service agencies in the community: Children's Aid; School Board; clergy; Addiction Services; and Transition House. From 1993 through to the spring of 1995, we used workshop modules to help improve services for people in three counties. As a result of the work on this project, I developed a clear understanding of the need to consider violence and substance use issues simultaneously. In addition, I was also assisting in the co-ordination, training, and implementation of the Peer Drug Education Program in 19 high schools throughout the region.

The orientation to the Master of Adult Education program left me disoriented. I was reading profusely from the foundation material of the field and finding myself drawn to the work being done in popular education. One of my difficulties during the orientation period had been in articulating what I wanted to study for a project. During a series of conversations with my first advisor, I said things like, "I don't think our prevention programs are delivering what we say they deliver," and we struck upon the notion of transfer of learning. I knew very little about it, but I was delighted to have found the appropriate terms to begin researching in the field of adult education. I would like to say that I had a very clear understanding of what I was doing and where I was going, but in fact I felt like I was standing on the edge of a precipice.

During an Interagency Committee meeting in October 1995, the Co-ordinator of Human Resources from the Regional School Board suggested that I develop a project that would target violence and substance use and could be used in high schools. This appeared to be a simple solution to the project requirements of the masters degree and I met with him to discuss these ideas, which contributed to my decisions for this study. However, thematic concerns were exacerbated by four critical incidents that occurred during this period. These are important to understanding the origin and extent of this study.

In November 1996, the Province released the Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (1996). This survey is conducted every 5 years in each province in Canada. The results indicated that substance abuse had increased significantly since 1991 in high schools across Nova Scotia and, in particular in the Northern Region. One recommendation in the report was: "A demonstration project based on a spectrum of integrated school and community-based interventions should be developed, implemented

and evaluated with meaningful participation and guidance from adolescents themselves" (p. 11). There was a great deal of public outcry to the results of this survey. Concerned citizens, community groups, the school boards, and Addiction Services were struggling to find a solution.

I was beginning to receive negative feedback from the in-school co-ordinators of the Peer Drug Education Program because, since 1985 the program used had taken a "train the trainers" approach. Each year approximately 25 high school students in each participating school received training to deliver drug prevention modules to students in grades 5 through 9. The negative feedback included complaints about the inadequacies of the program in addressing current needs, and about the "cream of the crop" students being the only ones involved in the program. This feedback was consistent with my own experience in delivering the program. The peer training takes an average of 16 hours per school to deliver; the materials are expensive; and the students who are trained only deliver one or two 45-minute presentations. Although peer education has been shown to be effective by Bangert-Drowns (1988), Benard (1990), Black, Tobler, and Sciacca (1998), and others, I believed that the Peer Drug Education program, as was currently packaged, was an ineffective and inefficient method of delivering prevention education within my region.

The complaints arrived concurrently with a provincial decision to devolve health care services to the regions. The Peer Drug Education program and all associated costs were left to the regions. As it was an expensive program to maintain, and in light of the complaints, continuing the program was difficult to justify. I conducted a survey of the schools in the Northern Region and asked them to choose between seeking to maintain

the Peer Drug Education program or exploring a new alternative. Fifteen of the 19 high schools polled chose to explore a new alternative.

I decided to begin this project by trying to find out what senior high school students thought was needed to create an effective prevention program. In January of 1997, I organized a series of discussion groups with grades 10, 11, and 12 students from across the Northern Region. We talked about the problem of violence and substance abuse in high school. What was being done? Why did it or did it not work? What might the alternatives be, and how would they conduct a prevention program if they were put in charge of doing so? Following the discussions, I asked them to complete a five-item questionnaire that asked: (a) how would you improve violence and/or substance abuse prevention programs in your school? (b) Why do you think your suggestion would be effective? (c) Would you be willing to participate in a program that used your suggestion? (d) Name the main substance abuse problem in your school, and (e) Name the main violence problem in your school. Even though they had been prompted by the earlier discussion with me, 99% said they believed programs could be improved by involving them in the process. In answer to why they felt this would be so effective, they gave variations on "because kids listen to kids."

The Central Theme: Out of the Darkness

My main concern at the beginning and the early stages of this study was: How can I improve this program so that prevention is more effective? I felt that the program's traditional approach to prevention was negative prevention in that the goal was total abstinence of substance use. I had heard the jokes that this approach had generated among students in high school. I also knew that I wanted to work with students to find a

more effective method for conducting a prevention program. At this point my academic goal began to move away from transfer of learning. Not only was I reading and learning more about techniques and strategies used in adult education, but I was also putting some of them into action in my day-to-day practice. Being relatively new to adult education made me hesitant to trust my instincts and what I have learned as an adult educator. However, this began to change as I witnessed the students' response to being active participants in helping me shape the design of the program. They were no longer passive recipients of information but animated, enthusiastic participants seeking solutions to problems in their lives. Although I still did not feel that I had clarity, I was no longing fumbling in the dark. My reading, research, consultation with others, and general activity was narrowing in focus. I began to gather individuals and community groups around me who shared my ideas. Although we have contributed in different ways and to varying degrees to the project, we have all learned a great deal along the way.

As the study began to evolve, my main concern was if we could develop an effective method of prevention on our own. Popular opinion at the Addiction Agency and the Regional School Board focused upon proven effectiveness, outcome monitoring, and a variety of formal research jargon. I began to wonder if this was in fact a valid way to develop a program? Could I convince the people involved to take this risk? What data was I going to collect? How would I know if this approach was more effective than ones that we had tried before? Was I exposing students to a paradigm shift mainly to help me grow and learn? The darkness may have been lifting, but there remained a number of plaguing shadows. These questions prompted me to record information about the process of developing the program.

Doubts: Shadows are Merely Reflections

I have kept an anecdotal journal of this process, and it includes observations, what I have learned, what others have said about me, and also information collected during discussions with students. The content of this journal provided not only a large part of my critical analysis about the study, but it also provided a large part of the information on this development stage because it influenced how I would deal with the plaguing shadows. It helped me understand and believe that my organization's attitude toward healing, teaching, and living, up until the past few years, has been based upon a negative orientation. Most of the prevention attempts in my field that have been made are based upon the notion of stopping problematic behaviours instead of modifying them. For example, 80 percent of hospital care is directly related to lifestyle-induced illness; much research money has been spent on developing a better treatment for a cirrhotic liver, but very little on preventing it from occurring in the first place. School-based drug prevention programs provided the facts about various drugs and were based upon abstinence of substance use. The students I work with showed little interest in this information. They only become animated and engaged when I talk about what happens to the physical development of a person who abuses substances.

Through journal keeping, I came to believe that addiction educators are asking the wrong questions and must learn how to approach healing and teaching from a positive orientation. My journal became a reflection of thoughts, feelings, affirmations, and strength. Reflecting upon the journal entries illustrates that everyone I was involved with in this work were benefiting in some way. I could see that I was accomplishing

something. I may not have been sure exactly what that was, but it was positive. And to me, this was a clear indication that I was moving in the right direction.

Purpose of the Study: Out of the Shadows

Shortly after revisions to the program began, I realized that something was working. As it evolved I realized that the 'how' of doing prevention was my focus. Borrowing techniques and strategies from the field of adult education became part of my practice. As the program took shape, I was able to articulate the purpose for this study: to examine how I can make my practice more meaningful through the development of an effective program that will reduce substance abuse in high schools. By "more meaningful," I mean that the students will become active participants in the development and implementation of the program and subsequently, that any ideas and actions are generated by the students.

The criterion for demonstrating that a participatory approach to substance abuse prevention made my practice more meaningful includes, substantiating an increase in participation levels and, an increase in the participants' overall satisfaction with the content of this approach over the previous approach. The project had three phases and each phase had an evaluation component. In phase one, the theatre component, participants completed a questionnaire immediately following each performance. Selected participants completed a second questionnaire in a three-month follow-up evaluation. In phase two, the first year of the student-led component, the students, teachers, and community volunteers completed a questionnaire in regard to various parts of the program. Because this is a work in progress, a further evaluation is scheduled to take place in May 2000.

I learned as each phase developed, and each phase served to inform the next. This point is noted again in chapter 3. This study is therefore a case study of my learning through the development of a participatory approach for the Peer Drug Education program. The target group young adults between the ages of 15 and 24. This project demonstrates that there is a better way to give the message of substance abuse prevention using adult education learning methods. Therefore, as a case study, it may be of interest to other adult educators dealing with substance abuse prevention.

Scope and Limitations

This study is in the area of substance abuse prevention; the focus is on a student-driven approach to the planning process employed to create a student-driven prevention program in senior high schools in the northern region of Nova Scotia, up to and including the preliminary findings. Popular education ideas were used during the planning stage, and were discontinued because I could not maintain the human resources they required. The study is confined to approximately 240 participating students, aged 14 to 18. The adult support included 19 school staff, 34 community volunteers, and approximately 6 school board members. All participants were from the 19 senior high schools and communities located in three counties in Nova Scotia. This study began in January 1996 and is scheduled to end in June 2001. Nevertheless, at the time of writing the thesis, it was clear that there are conclusions that can be drawn.

I employed a participatory method to involve the students in this process. This strategy supports the principles of adult education that include the participatory process, and self-directedness. A limitation of this study is that the planning process was designed for this particular context. It is not intended to represent the only way to conduct

prevention in the addictions field. It is intended to explore a different way to approach prevention programming with young adults, and to serve as a learning experience for myself.

Assumptions

During the development of the student-driven prevention program, I discussed my assumptions with the people involved. I assumed that the program would develop unevenly. Some schools had better access to volunteer community groups and the overall success of the program in each school was dependent on student participation. I assumed that I would be able to elicit the highest degree of participation from the students who had been part of the planning process. And finally, I assumed that most of the data gathered would represent the subjective opinions of the participants. Although I have used some quantitative measures, the core evaluations were qualitative.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used to assist the reader in understanding this study.

Substance use and substance abuse refer to alcohol, over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, solvents, and a variety of illicit drugs. The terms are used interchangeably throughout the literature on prevention in the addictions field. They are also used interchangeably in this thesis and refer to behaviour that could lead to harmful involvement and, subsequently, to addiction.

Study/program is used interchangeably throughout this thesis. This refers to my study and the students' program. They are essentially the same for this thesis.

Student-driven means students helped create the program and were responsible for its development within their respective schools.

Self-directed means learners are expected to assume primary responsibility for their own learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 26).

Participatory refers to a process in which the participants make decisions about program planning, implement activities in schools, participate in the evaluation process, and make decisions based upon the feedback the evaluations provide.

Popular education refers to a form of adult education that begins with the experience of the participant, and moves from action to reflection, and back to action again (Bates, p. 225, 1996). It is generally agreed that popular education is collective problem-solving to produce social change strategy, (e.g., Barndt, 1989; Heaney, 1992; Kerka, 1997).

Youth/young adults are used interchangeably and refer to people who range in age from 15 to 24, and for the purpose of this study are enrolled in grades 10 through 12 of the public school system. Youth is the term traditionally used in prevention literature. They would be considered young adults in the field of adult education. They are also included in the group identified as Generation Y by Beale (2000) and Hill (2000).

Adolescents refers to people who range in age from 11 to 14 and, for the purpose of this study, are enrolled in grades 7 through 9 of the public school system.

Plan of the Presentation

Following this introductory chapter, I examine the literature that influences the case study. The sub-sections of the literature review include: adult learning ideas, popular education approaches, principles of program planning in adult education, dominant theories and models used in substance abuse prevention and education, planning programs for substance abuse prevention, the changing characteristics of young adults,

and a sub-section on common ground for adult learning ideas and planning substance abuse prevention programs for young adults.

Chapter 3 provides a chronological description of the planning, implementation, and evaluation process that I undertook throughout the case study. Some sections in this chapter include the addition of anecdotal information and feedback that is critical to the evaluation process. The fourth and final chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the sum and substance of the study. In this chapter, I discuss the significance of the study related to fields of adult education and drug abuse prevention. This chapter also includes a section that reflects upon my own learning from the case study. In the final section, I make practice recommendations for others working in drug abuse prevention and community partnership situations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I review areas in the literature relevant to this study to provide a theoretical framework for developing a prevention program with young adults using techniques and strategies from the field of adult education. There are three major sections in this literature review. The first section summarizes selected adult learning theories, provides greater detail on popular education approaches, and gives an overview of the principles of program planning in adult education. The second section consists of an overview of the dominant theories and models used in substance abuse education, and a review of program planning for substance abuse prevention. The third section examines young adult learners, with special consideration to the literature on the changing characteristics of youth that has emerged during the past 20 years. The final sub-section considers the similarities between program planning in adult education and program planning for youth.

Adult Learning Research

Adult learning research has been framed in the form of theoretical frameworks, principles of teaching and planning, and a body of literature that guides the practice of adult educators. These have evolved from the practice and research of numerous educators. According to Houle (1992, p. 97), the most significant influence on adult educators is the nature and needs of the learners they serve. The nature and needs of adult learners are central to the adult learning literature discussed in the following three sub-sections.

Some Conceptual Frameworks within Adult Education

A variety of theories have been advanced in the field of adult education that have served as conceptual frameworks that guide adult educator's approaches to their practice. Knowles' (1980, 1985) theory of andragogy is perhaps one of the most cited frameworks in adult education. The andragogic model asserts that five issues should be considered and addressed in adult learning: letting the learner know why something is important to learn; showing learners how to direct themselves through information; relating the topic to the learners' experiences; recognizing that people will not learn until they are ready and motivated; and helping the learner overcome inhibitions, behaviours, and beliefs about learning.

Knowles (1985) concedes that four of these key assumptions apply in varying degrees to both adults and children. The main differences are that children have fewer experiences and pre-established beliefs than adults (and thus have less to relate to), and that children are legislated to learn, whereas adults are typically volunteer learners. Conner (1996, p. 10), argues that the word andragogy, initially defined as the art and science of helping adults learn, has taken on a broader meaning. She asserts that the term defines an alternative to pedagogy and refers to learner-focused education for people of all ages. Nevertheless, Knowles' makes a valuable contribution to adult learning theory in that it helps to differentiate the field of adult education from other fields.

In an overview of adult learning theories, Brookfield (1995) contends that attempting to build an exclusive theory of adult learning that is separated from learning at other stages in the lifespan is a grave error. He believes that culture, ethnicity, personality, and political ethos have a greater significance in explaining how learning

occurs and is experienced, than does the variable of age. The term "adult" may need to be expanded in order to differentiate adult learning from learning that takes place in childhood.

Cross (1981) introduces two conceptual frameworks to describe various aspects of adult learning. The first of these frameworks, the Chain of Response (COR) model, pertains to adult participation in learning. This model includes seven elements (variables) and their interrelationships: (a) self-evaluation, interrelates with (b) attitudes about education; (c) importance of making and meeting goals is affected by (d) life transactions and also is interrelated with (e) opportunities and barriers, which in turn are affected by (f) information about the environment, and impact on (g) participation.

Cross's (1981) second theoretical framework is called Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL) model. It is an attempt to integrate andragogy, experiential learning, and lifespan psychology. It is considered to be one way to describe the differences between adults and children, and it also aids in developing alternative teaching strategies for adults. The CAL model consists of two classes of variables: (a) personal characteristics which include ageing, life phases, and developmental stages; and (b) situational characteristics, which consist of part-time versus full-time learning, and voluntary versus compulsory learning. According to this model, different learning programs may be necessary to accommodate the different personal and situational characteristics of each learner. The main principles of CAL are: adult learning programs should capitalize on the experience of participants; adult learning programs should adapt to the ageing limitations of the participants; adults should be challenged to move to increasingly advanced stages of personal development; and adults should have as much choice as possible in the

availability and organization of learning programs. Cross's (1998) more recent work continues to encourage educators to observe the characteristics of learners in order to facilitate an understanding of how adults learn.

Another frequently cited adult learning theory is Knox's (1980) proficiency theory of adult education. He identifies major areas of proficiency that can be woven into strategies for helping adults learn, such as understanding the field of continuing education, understanding adults as learners, having a positive attitude toward lifelong learning, and obtaining effective interpersonal relationship skills. He also outlines specific area of proficiency for administrators, teachers, counsellors, and policymakers. Hiemstra (1993) says that anytime adult educators use techniques designed to gain knowledge about any one of these components (i.e., promoting self-reflection), they are actually refining Knox's model of proficiency.

Houle (1992) credits Mezirow with having the most developed theory of adult learning. Mezirow and Associates (1990) theory of "perspective transformation" describes a process of becoming critically aware of how and why preconceived thoughts control the way people perceive, understand, and feel about their world. Perspective transformation usually begins with a disorienting dilemma, whereby a person's old patterns of response fail to work, causing a self-examination and assessment of one's assumptions and beliefs. He believes that this ability is unique to the adult population and states:

> What we perceive and fail to perceive and what we think and fail to think are powerfully influenced by habits of expectation that constitute our frame of reference, that is, a set of assumptions that structure the way we interpret our experiences. It is not possible to understand the nature of adult learning or education without taking into account the cardinal role played by these habits in making meaning. (p. 1)

Mezirow's theory forms the basis for transformative learning or learning which he describes as the learning process by which adults come to recognize and reframe their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships. How this differs from other kinds of learning has been described by Clark (1993) as learning that produces more far-reaching change in the learner than does learning in general. The learner is changed in ways that both the learner and others can recognize.

The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire forms one of the main strands in adult learning theory known as popular education. He is, perhaps, best known for his critique of education called Pedagogy of the Oppressed published in 1970. Here, he argues that any curriculum which ignores racism, sexism, the exploitation of workers, and other forms of oppression, is supporting the status quo. He considered all education as either being for liberation or domestication. Consequently, education can inhibit the expansion of consciousness and prevent social action for change from occurring. Freire also believes that dialogue is one of the most powerful tools in the transformative learning process. According to Elias and Merriam (1980), Freire perceives knowledge as the process through which individuals become aware of objective reality and their own knowledge of this reality.

Conscientization is central to Freire's (1990) theory of learning and spans four levels of consciousness: (a) intransitive consciousness, which is the lowest level of consciousness where individuals are preoccupied with meeting their most elementary needs and are not aware of the outside forces that shape their lives; (b) semi-intransitivity or magical consciousness, where individuals have internalized the negative values ascribed to them; (c) naïve-transitiveness, where individuals begin to experience reality

as a problem for them, but can still be manipulated by the dominate culture; and (d) critical consciousness, which leads to a new depth in the interpretation of problems, self-confidence in discussions, receptiveness, and an acceptance of responsibility. Conscientization is seen as a social activity that is brought about through praxis, or the union of action and reflection. This brief discussion leads to one of the more widely used methods for implementing Freire's theories.

Popular Education Approaches

Popular education is a form of adult education that seeks to empower adults through the practice of transformative learning, critical reflection, self-directed learning, and cooperative study and action. The goal of popular education is to develop people's capacity for social change through a collective problem-solving approach –an approach that emphasizes participation, reflection, and critical analysis of social problems (Bates, 1996, pp. 225-226). Because popular education is community based, it takes many forms; however the primary objective is to strive toward a more just and peaceful society. Barndt (1989) describes popular education as a process that develops people's critical thinking, creative expression, and collective action. She sees it as a link between analysis and action, between theory and practice. Baez, (in Barndt, 1989) states: "If the process is participatory, critical, and supports people in organizing to change a situation, it is popular education" (p. 16). Popular education can be differentiated from andragogy because social change is one of the main goals.

Kerka (1997, p. 1) believes that popular education is best understood through the assumptions that underlie the teaching techniques that are employed by its adherents: (a) that learning is most effective if participation is active; (b) that different learning

styles must be addressed; (c) that learners are treated as equals; and (d) that the learning process is enjoyable.

Involving adults in the learning process is a central element of popular education. According to Vedros (1985), when individuals participate in the planning and decision-making, they will have greater responsibility in the learning experience; and if he or she believes that the planning process involves as much learning as direct instruction itself. Vella (1994b) states: "When an adult learner feels excluded, little or no learning is going to take place" (p. 11).

Brookfield (1986) explains that participation is exemplified by using discussion as an educational method. He identifies two central features of discussion as purposeful conversation, wherein the discussion is directed and deliberate, and is concerned with cognitive purpose; and equal participation by all people involved in the process. He believes the value of the discussion can be weighed using these criteria. Vella (1994a) similarly approaches dialogue as a very practical approach to teaching adults. Houle (1972) regards discussion as the best medium through which adults can explore their experience; he also claims that the exploration of experience is the essential purpose of adult education. According to Brookfield (1985), two of the best examples of the power of discussion include the study circles of the Antigonish Movement, and the Living Room Learning scheme in British Columbia.

The relationship between the educator and student and, in particular, the role of the educator, is also emphasized in popular education. According to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1997), and Rosenblum (1985) educators must relinquish their control over the learning situation and the learner, and act as *facilitators* of learning. The ideal facilitator,

as described by Tough (1979, p. 183), has four characteristics: they are warm, loving, caring, and accepting of the learners; they have a high regard for learners' ability to plan their own learning process; they view themselves as equals with the students in the learning process; and they are open to change and new experiences and seek to learn from their helping activities.

Cadena (1991, p. 64) emphasizes the need for flexibility in the popular educator's approach to methodology:

> I do not mean to imply that popular educators are rigid and that we do not try to comprehend and use techniques that mainstream organizations have developed. Indeed, we borrow whatever we believe may be useful.

Popular education programs are also characterized by their unique approach to program planning and delivery. One example is the 19th principle of program planning from Vella (1994b), which states: "humor: no laughing, no learning" (p. 17). According to Vella, humor not only lightens the learning environment, but it also enlightens the learners as they struggle with new concepts and skills.

Popular education is an approach that often draws upon popular culture in the form of drama, song, dance, and discussion. According to Proulx (1993), these are cultural forms that working-class adults recognize in their life and their values. As Houle (1992, p. 228) points out, the idea that adults learn best through imaginative interactions is an old one, and has great potential as a means of achieving a better world. Epskamp (1989) in a book called Theater in Search of Social Change, explores the relative significance of different approaches to theater. Citing numerous theater projects from around the world, he believes that theater has a very strong educational component for transferring required knowledge and skills, and of enhancing attitude change. He states,

"The highest possible yield from this medium manifests itself within the field of adult education" (p. 171). He also points out that the distinction between learning and being entertained is primarily a North Atlantic phenomenon (p. 36).

Bertolt Brecht and Erwin Piscator are credited by Epskamp (1989) and Innis (1972) with reintroducing theatre as a learning tool in the 1920s. Brecht and Piscator created a form of theatre that changes audiences from passive recipients of entertainment into active participants in the outcome of the staged event. According to Epskamp (1989, p. 52), Augusto Boal shared Brecht's view that the audience must be critical of what happens on stage.

Boal is perhaps best known for his book, "Theater of the Oppressed" (1985). Although learning through drama is relatively common, theatre of the oppressed is distinguished as a very specific way to encourage social change and to promote learning. Boal was influenced by Freire's theories as seen in his design of the "joker" system of theatre of the oppressed. He called it, "forum theatre" or "image theatre." Forum theatre is a theatrical play in which a problem is shown in an unsolved form. The audience is invited to suggest and enact solutions. As a type of theater in the round, the audience is seated in a circle around the actors and the joker facilitates the action. The joker allows the audience to see the conflict from many angles, and to contemplate why a conflict occurred and what could conceivably happen next. Boal (1985) brings the technique to a different level by the addition of "spect-actors." Spect-actor is the word Boal uses to describe a member of the audience who takes part in the action of the play.

Theatre troupes that teach and perform theater of the oppressed are available in most major cities in North America. The themes are drawn from daily life and always

involve a social issue, for example, Aids, drug abuse, violence, and political systems. Thus, it is a technique suitable for teaching youth and adults in a variety of settings. Different settings can present challenges. For example, according to Vallins (p. 11, 1980) in secondary schools everyone lives by the bell, and it can be a challenge to deliver forum theatre in a 45-minute time span. In the following section consideration is given to the elements of program planning in adult education.

Principles of Program Planning in Adult Education

The principles of program planning in adult education are often tied into the theoretical literature because many of the dominant theorists also include programming principles in their work. Thus, most literature on program planning for adults is about how programs may be put together and what ingredients are necessary to ensure a successful outcome. This sub-section includes a review of three of the central characteristics of adult learners that guide the program planning process–namely, self-directedness, critical reflection, and experiential learning–and a review of Vella's (1994a) and Caffarella's (1994) program planning models.

A cornerstone of Knowles' (1980, 1985) theory of andragogy is that self-directed learning exists when the learner plans and directs the learning. This establishes the learner as a participant in the program planning process. According to Brookfield (1986), there are several strategies that can enhance self-directed learning. He recommends learning contracts that involve adults in diagnosing needs, planning activities, selecting resources, and evaluating their progress. A second strategy is to specify clearly what is to be learned and what the learner expects. A third strategy is to strengthen the environment for self-directed learning by providing activities and techniques for socialization and

communication. Brookfield (1993) believes that although adults may want to manage their own learning, their prior experience with didactic, classroom-based instruction may not have prepared them well for self-management. Therefore, another strategy is to include coaching techniques that enable adult learners to feel confident in the new learning environment. These strategies are also considered to be part of the program planning process because they help to engage the learner in self-directed learning.

Critical reflection is not only understood as a characteristic of adult learners, but also a central concern in programming for adults. Mezirow and Associates (1990), and Brookfield (1993) are two influential theorists in the area of critical reflection. According to Brookfield (1993), critical reflection focuses on three interrelated processes: the process by which adults question and then replace or reframe an accepted assumption; the process through which adults take alternative perspectives on previously taken-for-granted ideas and other forms of reasoning, and; the process by which adults come to recognize the authority of dominant cultural values, and understand how challenging this authority can empower them. Using critical reflection is an important part of adults' roles and decision making, both personally and professionally. Challenging adult learners to use critical reflection has become recognized as an important part of program planning.

The emphasis on experience as a defining feature of adult learners is a central concept of andragogy. Dewey (1933) provides a good example of some of the foundational literature on experience and learning. He focuses on reflective thinking as a type of thinking that occurs when there are no discernible solutions to a problem. Kolb (1984), Mezirow and Associates (1990), and Freire (1990) each stresses that all learning lies in the way people process experience and, in particular, the way their critical

reflection upon that framework. Freire (1990), and Mezirow and Associates (1990) spoke of learning as a cycle that begins with experience, continues with reflection, and later leads to action. Kolb (1984) refined the concept of reflection by dividing it into two separate learning activities: perceiving and processing. In the perceiving stage one tries to find answers by drawing conclusions from one's experience. In the action phase, one tries the answer out. King and Kitchener (1994) built upon these earlier works by providing a seven-stage framework for developing reflective judgement. They postulated that reflective judgement is the outcome of a developmental progression, beginning in childhood and continuing throughout the lifespan (p. 17). The ideas put forth by King and Kitchener (1994) have implications for developing these abilities for a broad cross-section of adolescents and adults and, thus for program planning. Experiential learning is encouraged in programs by using methods such as games, role-plays, case studies and drama. During the planning process, incorporating such methods into the design can help learners connect the learning to their experiences.

Recent attempts to develop a comprehensive approach to programming for adults have been published by Vella (1994a), and Caffarella (1994). Using the basic assumption that adult learning is best achieved in dialogue between a teacher and learner, Vella provides 12 principles to guide the program planning process including: (a) conduct a needs assessment with the learner to guide the program planning process; (b) provide safety in the environment and process by showing respect for learners; (c) nurture a sound relationship between the teacher and learner by showing respect, affirming, and listening carefully; (d) pay careful attention to the sequence of content and reinforcement–for example in that material is presented from simple to complex, and

repeating the skills and facts in an interesting way; (e) include praxis or action with reflection, and learning by doing; (f) respect the learners as the subject of their own learning by letting them make decisions, and never do what a learner can do for themselves; (g) attend to the cognitive (ideas), affective (feelings), and psychomotor (actions) of adult learners; (h) show the immediacy or usefulness of the new learning by giving the learners practical ways to apply what they have learned; (i) ensure clear roles and role development between the teacher and learner in order for good communication to occur; (j) provide teamwork for learners to make undertaking difficult tasks easier; (k) engage learners in what they are learning; and (l) provide accountability by assuring that what was proposed to be taught was taught. Vella presents these principles within a practice framework using examples from her own experience as a teacher.

In contrast to Vella's dialogical approach to programming, Caffarella's (1994) interactive model is relatively complex. Her model contains 11 components, each containing a list of tasks to be addressed in developing a program. It is a flexible model in that not all of the components and tasks need to be addressed for developing every program. There is a great deal of similarity in the basic principles addressed by Caffarella and Vella. However, Caffarella is more explicit than Vella on a broader range of issues, such as ethical concerns, and presents her model in a highly structured format. Vella is more implicit; she assumes that if the educator follows each of the 12 principles, ethical problems will not occur. These two frameworks are good examples of how program planning for adults are linked with adult learning theories. The next section of the literature review considers the dominant theories and program planning models used in substance abuse education.

Substance Abuse Education

The earliest prevention programs were based on faith in human rationality. They held an assumption that if individuals were given accurate facts about the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs, those individuals would avoid alcohol and other drug use because it was in their own best interest to do so. Research has not supported this idea of rational self-interest, e.g., Bangert-Drowns (1988); Hansen (1992); Johnson (1985), and others. A progression of different assumptions can be detected underpinning strategies developed in the last 30 years to reduce alcohol and other drug use among young people. The first sub-section reviews the health belief model, social learning theory, social norms marketing theory, systems theory, harm reduction theory, environmental theory and data-driven theories and models in substance abuse education. The second sub-section provides an historical overview of program planning in substance abuse education. It includes a review of information-only programs, programs based upon social learning, alternative programs, and social bonding programs.

Dominant Theories and Models in Use

According to Rosenstock (1974), the health belief model is based upon the idea that it is the individual's perception of the world that determines an individual's actions, not one's actual physical environment. According to this model, individuals will change their behaviour to avoid a health problem, but first they must believe they are susceptible to the problem associated with their behaviour. Second, they need to perceive the severity of the risk to their health before they will take action. Third, the probability that an individual will act to improve his or her health is determined by one's perception of the benefits of an alternative behaviour.

The health belief model is widely used to design focused drug education and prevention programs (Albert & Simpson, 1985; Kleinot & Rogers, 1982). Programs that focus on student drinking and driving behaviours have been particularly successful. In a review of health belief model investigations published during 1974-1984, as well as from findings of 17 studies conducted before 1974, Janz and Becker (1984) found that the perceived susceptibility dimension of the model is particularly important for preventive health behaviour. This finding has important implications for using this model to design drug abuse prevention programs. It suggests that prevention efforts should emphasize the personal susceptibility and risks associated with substance abuse. As pointed out by Cvetkovich, Earle, Schinke, Gilchrist and Trimble (1987), these realizations are crucial to information-based programs that are designed to reduce harmful drug use. A small number of epidemiological studies conducted in high schools found that the perception of increased risk was associated with declines in reported drug use (Johnson, 1985). This indicates that the health belief theory needs to be given consideration in planning programs for prevention.

The social learning theory developed by Bandura (1977) also has received a lot of attention in the drug abuse prevention and education field. This theory is based on a self-efficacy paradigm. Here, behaviour change and maintenance are functions of (a) expectations about the outcomes of engaging in a behaviour, and (b) expectations about one's ability to engage in the behaviour. According to Johnson and Solis (1983) alcohol and other drug use is a socially learned, purposeful behaviour based upon a combination of socio-environmental and personal perceptions. Therefore, they see such behaviours as part of social learning theory.

Prevention approaches based on social learning theory emphasize the development of social and personal skills in young people to enable them to resist a pro-drug environment and peer pressure (Botvin, 1983, p. 116). According to Botvin and Botvin (1992), these "psychosocial" approaches to prevention fall into two general categories: programs that focus on social influences, and training approaches designed to enhance personal and social competence. According to Bangert-Drowns (1988), Benard (1990), and Black, Tobler, and Sciacca (1998), the use of peers as a primary source of instruction is associated with statistically significant reductions in substance abuse. Fors and Jarvis (1995) compared and evaluated peer-led, adult-led, and non-intervention groups in a drug abuse prevention program. Their results indicate that peer-led prevention produced the most significant results. Therefore, prevention programs that include a peer component may lead to reductions in substance abuse.

According to Haines and Spear (1996), and Graham, Marks, and Hansen (1991), the social norms model for preventing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use is gaining attention as one of the most promising and effective strategies for the prevention field today. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (1992) describes social norms as people's beliefs about the behaviour expected of them in a particular social context. They also describe social marketing as the design and implementation of programs developed to influence the social acceptability of a social idea. According to Haines and Spear (1996), the theory holds that if a person perceives something to be the norm, they tend to alter their behaviour to fit the norm, even if it is not reality. For example, Perkins and Berkowitz (1986) published the first research focusing specifically on such misperceptions and their effects. Based on data collected in an alcohol use survey of

undergraduate students at a liberal arts college, their study indicates that students perceived their peers' consumption of alcohol and other drugs as much more extreme than it actually was. Subsequent surveys at the same campus over several years consistently found misperceptions of a similar magnitude (Berkowitz and Perkins, 1986). Baer, Stacy and Larimer (1991) have also noted this finding. Berkowitz and Perkins (1986) believe that this misperception may cause students to drink more heavily, or use other drugs to excess, because they imagine the norm to be more permissive than it actually is. Hansen (1993), and Hansen and Graham (1991) conducted research among high school students that indicated that as students became aware that peer norms and drug use were moderate they reduced their own consumption. Therefore, the social norms model has implications for program planning and social marketing in prevention education. Clearly, if misperceptions about normative substance cause students to drink more heavily, or use drug to excess, then programs that aim to correct the misperceptions should cause students to reduce the amount they drink and/or use drugs

Increasingly, community-wide, comprehensive efforts are being supported for the prevention of alcohol and drug problems, particularly in the United States. The theoretical foundations for this approach are drawn from systems theory. According to Benard (1997), the rationale for applying these models to the prevention of substance abuse is that multiple factors contribute to substance abuse, and that prevention efforts focused on a single factor will probably fail. One of the most influential theories in this category is called problem behaviour theory, developed by Jessor and Jessor (1977). Problem behaviour theory focuses on three levels of analysis: the nature of the behaviour, the type of personality, and situations in the environment. This theory is based on

awareness that efforts to change behaviour can be based on any or all levels. Perry and Jessor (1983) advocated problem behaviour theory as the foundation for a comprehensive approach to substance abuse prevention. They believe that weakening or eliminating behaviours that compromise health and strengthening, or introducing behaviours that enhance health, are the best practices in prevention. For weakening negative behaviour, they propose reducing drug availability, media campaigns to resist drug use, and social and policy sanctions for drug-related activity. For strengthening alternative behaviour, they advocate promoting positive peer relations, drug free activities for students, and health and fitness programs. Their theory is the underpinning for a wide variety of community-based approaches for a variety of health related issues, such as the ParticipAction program in Nova Scotia; however, problem behaviour theory has not been widely used for prevention programming in the addictions field in this province.

Harm reduction is a public health approach to dealing with drug-related issues that places priority on reducing the negative consequences of substance use. According to the Canadian Centre of Substance Abuse (2000), and DeJarlais (1995), there is no agreement in the addictions literature or among practitioners as to the definition of harm reduction. DeJarlais (1995), and Riley (1999) view harm reduction as an alternative approach to abstinence-oriented drug policy and programming. In 1998, Nova Scotia's Addiction Services, Department of Health issued an internal policy paper on harm reduction that places it within a continuum of health, with high risk use on one end, and total abstinence on the other. Therefore, harm reduction is seen as an opportunity to move people toward the abstinence end of the continuum, regardless of their level of substance use.

The most frequently cited examples of harm reduction practice include needle-exchange programs (e.g., Bardsley, Turvy & Blatherwick, 1990; Dole, 1989). According to Riley (1999), and the Nova Scotia Addiction Services (1998), the harm reduction approach to education focuses on providing non-judgemental information about different drugs, their properties and effects; and about how to reduce risks, and where to get help if it is needed. According to Dimeff, Baer, Kivlahan, and Marlatt (1999, p. 10), efforts to reduce heavy and hazardous drinking on college campuses have mushroomed over the past decade. However, examples of harm reduction in prevention that targets high school students are not evident at this time in the literature.

Another recent development in prevention theory is the recognition of the critical importance of one's immediate environment in shaping and maintaining an individual's behaviour. As noted by Glanz, Lewis, and Rimer (1990), five distinct sets of environmental factors interact in complementary ways in this perspective: interpersonal characteristics of individuals themselves, such as their knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, self-concept, learning history, and skills; interpersonal processes and primary groups which include formal and informal social network and social support systems, such as families, living group, and friendship networks; institutional factors such as the characteristics of the institutions to which an individual belongs; community factors such as the relationships among organizations and institutions, and; public policy such as local, state and national laws and policies. This broad cultural approach towards prevention and education is also supported by Bruner (1996). However, as a workable theory, it has remained largely untested in prevention programming. According to Moskowitz (1986, p. 78), if prevention educators could create a social environment where positive social

influences regarding alcohol use predominated, then there would be little need to attempt the difficult task of trying to train people to resist social influences as is currently in vogue in many prevention programs. Similar to the sociocultural theory, these environmental theorists are thought to fail to recognize the value of culture—in particular, popular culture (Moskowitz, 1986).

Drawing upon sociological data, some researchers have attempted to develop an empirical science of prevention. For example, Coie et al. (1993) presented a conceptual framework for the science of prevention, which they call data-driven. They point out that the difference between data-driven and theory-driven programs is that empirical evidence dictates the content of a program. Theory is not abandoned, but it is second in priority to empirical findings. According to Hansen (1992), and Coie et al. (1993), program design should only take into account variables that have a demonstrated effect on drug use behaviour. For example, self-reported drug use is more strongly correlated with drug use by peers and siblings than it is with parental drug use. Therefore, parent drug use may not play as significant a role as was once believed, and more emphasis should be placed on peer and sibling drug use behaviour, in this approach.

Although there is no evidence in the literature that any of this work is being done at present, the move toward a science of prevention is promising because it provides measurable outcomes. According to Amatetti (1987), the few applications of theory to prevention that exist in the literature apply mostly to school-based programs and, according to Amatetti, the field suffers from the lack of a comprehensive, practical and testable theory of alcohol and other drug abuse prevention. The current cutbacks in funding for health care research in Nova Scotia are in contrast with increasing pressure to

use evidence-based programming. This creates a conundrum for prevention education that is not being addressed at the time of writing.

Planning Programs for Substance Abuse Prevention

The historical development of alcohol and other drug prevention approaches relied heavily upon the information-only model, social learning models, as well as upon alternative programming. Although positive effects from each of these models have been documented, ironically, these prevention strategies are often found to be most effective with youth that are at the lowest risk for substance abuse (Botvin & Botvin, 1992). Furthermore, according to Price, Cowen, Lorion, and Ramos-McKay (1988), fewer than 20 percent of these focus on youth and adults. The recipients of most prevention intervention programs tend to be children and adolescents. An extensive literature exists concerning the antecedents and correlates of substance abuse. According to Botvin and Botvin (1992), the resulting prevention strategies are based upon the complex interaction of a number of different factors including cognitive, attitudinal, social, personality, pharmacological, and developmental factors. In the following paragraphs these prevention efforts are discussed according to four general strategies: information dissemination approaches; theoretical approaches; alternative approaches; and data-driven approaches.

Various approaches to prevention programming fall into the information dissemination only category. Early efforts often focused on the consequences of drug use; having former addicts describe the horrors of addiction, and teaching what drugs look like and how they are used. The majority of these approaches are poorly documented, and were not presented in a manner that is amenable to evaluation. According to Kim,

Crutchfield, Williams, and Hepler (1998), during the 1960s, prevention efforts were almost exclusively based on information dissemination models. The assumption was that public education would effectively deter drug-using behaviour. During the 1970s and early 1980s, affective-humanistic approaches were introduced with the underlying premise that increased self-esteem and improved interpersonal skills would delay or reduce the onset of drug use (Kim et al., 1998). The existing evaluation literature shows rather conclusively that these are not effective prevention strategies for influencing behaviour, (e.g., Dusenbury, 1997; Tobler, 1986).

Information-dissemination programs often are not subjected to rigorous evaluation (Hansen, 1997). One exception to this is the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, used extensively throughout the United States and Canada from the late 1980s to the present time. Ennet, Ringwalt and Flewelling (1994) conducted a meta-analysis of the DARE program by examining 17 published and unpublished evaluation manuscripts. They found no demonstrated evidence of outcome effectiveness. This finding is also noted by Hansen (1997). In spite of the lack of positive outcome measures, the program continues to grow in popularity. In Nova Scotia the DARE program is delivered by a variety of police agencies. The marketing of poorly researched and ineffective prevention programs is rarely mentioned in the literature. My personal experience while working in 92 schools in Nova Scotia is that school administrators are vulnerable to using ineffective prevention programs that are marketed in an aggressive fashion.

Theory-driven programs rely on a body of formalized research which, in the case of prevention, has been mainly based on social learning theory. Evans et al. (1978) are

credited with a revised approach to drug abuse prevention known as the social influence model which was popular during the 1980s. Much of their work utilizes resistance training and information. These developments were followed by school-based and community-based prevention approaches that were popularized by Botvin and Botvin, (1992). According to Botvin and Botvin (1992), and Tobler and Stratton (1997), theory-driven programs are often research-based and depend on financial supporters. As a result, they are evaluated more rigorously. Most of the programs that fall into the theory-driven category are based upon social resistance skills that rely on interactive teaching techniques such as role playing, discussions, peer education, and small group activities that promote active participation of students (Bosworth & Sailes, 1993). There is a general consensus in the literature (e.g., Dusenbury, 1997; Hansen, 1992) that these techniques can achieve at least modest reductions in drug use by students.

Minkler (1997) noted that community educators often identify the issues that they, the self-proclaimed experts, have determined to be important for consideration in program, without input from the target population. Information-dissemination and theory driven prevention programs are often designed by professionals, without participation and input from target populations. Although these programs have made a contribution to understanding the field of prevention, it is important to remember that they have been delivered since the early 1970s. In contrast, the growing problem of substance abuse in high schools indicates that alternative approaches to prevention programming are now required.

Alternative programming has been defined as programs that target specific populations with activities that are free from all forms of substance abuse (Center for

Substance Abuse Prevention, 1998, p. 4). Alternative programs do not include content on substance abuse; rather, they focus on positive alternatives. Alternative programming is a 1970s initiative that grew out of the disappointing research findings of more traditional approaches. Thus, researchers began to speculate that the initiation of substance abuse might be coming from changing social trends and popular culture (Cohen, 1971; Dohner, 1972). They suggested that the causes for substance abuse by youth were found in attitudes that drug use was a harmless diversion that was both enjoyable and satisfying. Consequently, the alternatives approach was conceived to develop attitudes that would diminish the desire to use alcohol or other drugs. Alternative programs are widespread throughout Canada and the United States and include an extremely wide variety of programs. Some of these include "one-shot" events such as Safe Grad, athletic alternatives, programs that teach entrepreneurial skills, programs that promote volunteering at school and in the community, and artistic endeavours such as youth theatre.

As a prevention approach, alternative programs are poorly defined; there are few if any guidelines available, and the evaluation processes are inconsistent. This situation is unfortunate because, as noted by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (1998, p. 21), alternative programs are popular. They are easily supported by most communities and are suitable for application to numerous sources of grant funding. Meta-analysis such as those conducted by Tobler (1986), and Tobler and Stratton (1997) indicate that alternative programs do produce modest outcomes and are, therefore, worthy of continued research and funding. As with other prevention program trends, alternative programming has progressed atheoretically. As noted by Gonzalez (1989), and Glanz,

Lewis and Rimer (1990), this fact has not provided prevention educators with a consistent direction to design effective prevention programs.

School connectedness or social bonding is a promising concept for prevention efforts (Resnick, Harris, & Blum, 1993). Although primarily school psychologists are conducting this work, it is included here because it is relevant to this thesis. Hawkins, Doueck, and Lishner (1988, p. 31) suggest that students who are socially bonded have a stake in society and have good reasons not to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Resnick, Harris, and Blum (1993) conducted a study of over 36,000 students in grades 7 through 12. They utilized a health survey that contained variables that measured the major morbidities of adolescents, e.g., drug use, delinquency, emotional stress, as well as protective factors such as family connectedness, school connectedness, and low family stress. The most salient protective factor was found to be school connectedness. One of the conclusions drawn by Resnick, Harris, and Blum (1993) is that youth who are at high risk for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug problems benefit from prevention efforts that focus on creating conditions to enhance commitment to school and education and regular involvement in school activities; and in particular, activities that promote a sense of belonging. Werner and Smith (1992) and Seifer and Sameroff (1987) have found similar results. The implication is that prevention programs should include variables that enhance school connectedness. The complexity for planning prevention programs is further compounded by the changing characteristics of young adults, which is discussed in the following section of this literature review.

Young Adults as Learners

The field of adult education is based upon the premise that teaching adults needs to be approached differently from the way educators teach children and young adults. The different teaching techniques and strategies are well documented and there is general agreement about their effectiveness. However, questions have begun to arise about the need for a new approach to teaching young adults because of changes in the way they experience their lives. My interest lies in gaining a better understanding of what has been practised in adult education that may be beneficial to teaching young adults. In the following sub-sections I provide an overview of the changing characteristics of young adults as learners, and look at the common ground among adult education approaches, and popular education approaches in particular, that lend themselves to teaching young adults.

The Changing Characteristics of Young Adults

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a historical review of the physiology and stages of childhood, it is important to consider the various phases and changes the concept of childhood has undergone. According to Aries (1962), the modern concept of childhood began during the 16th century with the rise of the middle class, and the need for their children to be formally educated. As the social structure and economy changed, so did the concept of childhood. As late as 1866, every child over the age of nine was seen as a productive part of the labour force (Muller, 1973). Between 1880 and 1930 the idea that childhood was a state of innocence and that children needed to be protected gained in popularity. Children had more contact with their parents and were more dependent on them. According to Muller (1973), from 1930 onwards, children were

more closely supervised and strictly disciplined. This kind of information, while focusing on children, helps to set the context for considering how North Americans view youth today.

Do the youth of today need new approaches to learning and teaching compared to youth prior to the 1970s? According to Brown (1997), who examines the characteristics of what she terms "Generation Xers," the answer is yes. She believes that life experiences shape the way people learn, and that Generation Xers (born between 1961 and 1981) have radically different experiences from the generation before them. She identifies seven characteristics that set them apart: growing up with both parents working, therefore they are used to getting things done on their own and are independent problem solvers and self-starters; because they grew up with computers they are technologically literate; they are responsive, in that they have been conditioned to expect immediate gratification, and therefore need more stimulation and feedback; because they are sceptical of society and its institutions, they are goal-focused and insist that work must be purposeful and meaningful to them; knowing they must keep learning to be marketable, they are life-long learners; they are ambitious in that they crave success on their own terms; and as illustrated by their involvement in extreme sports such as sky surfing, they are fearless.

Based upon these characteristics, Brown (1997) and Caudron (1997) offer the following suggestions for targeting learning to Generation Xers: focus on outcomes rather than techniques, because students need to be able to put information to work; make learning experiential by engaging them in participatory learning experiences; give students control over their own learning; respect their ability to engage in parallel thinking that develops from working with computers; give attention to the format of

instructional materials because they are surfers and scanners rather than readers and viewers; give them a role in establishing learning goals, and; engage them in projects that demand the application of existing skills to new situations.

Generation Y, also known as "millennium kids" or "echo-boomers," are the children of Generation X, and are all under the age of 24 in the year 2000 (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 1999, p. 1). According to Time magazine (1999), the hallmark of Generation Y is their focus on educational and career ambitions and their sense that they will be the most powerful group of people to influence society in the beginning of the 21st century. Beale (2000) has created an internet site to promote a book about Generation Y that he is in the process of writing. He believes that Generation Y is distinct from Generation X, and has different learning needs, e.g., most Generation Xer's use e-mail and the internet, but that is fundamentally different from growing up in a setting where the internet is used for social entertainment and educational reasons.

Hill (2000, pp. 11-12), believes that Generation Y is being raised in a more nurturing and less competitive environment that focuses on effort rather than accomplishments. As a result, the natural connection between ability and performance is not clear, and business managers will need to focus on individual development plans that allow Generation Y to become involved in their own evaluation and measures of performance. Involving Generation Y in their own learning is exemplified by the Generation WWW.Y-Project (Harper, 2000). This project is dedicated to the improvement of student learning through the use of educational technologies. Middle and high school students are the centrepiece of this project. The model provides 18 weeks of training that focuses on teaching students how to act as partners and research assistants to

teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and teacher trainees. The implication of these developments is that Generation Y is more likely than Generation X to be given opportunities to participate in their own learning. Generation Y is the target population who play a central role throughout this thesis.

In the prevention field, some of these characteristics are identified as the foundation for a paradigm shift in prevention. According to Kim, Crutchfield, Williams and Hepler (1998), the relative demise of the two-parent family structure, the social deficit in parenting due to work demands, increasing social fragmentation, and a variety of erosion in institutional structures have resulted in an historically unprecedented separation of youth and adults. They believe that youth need to participate and be involved in the socio-economic and public affairs of the community. Instead of thinking of youth as community problems, they need to be seen as assets and resources. They state: "The organizing concept of this new paradigm is: social, economic, and public opportunity denied to youth is equal to social problems imposed on youth by adults" (p. 6). These kinds of observations about the changing characteristics of youth have implications for how we understand and teach young adults. They also provide a useful framework for examining the principles of adult education that may be useful in teaching youth.

Common Ground for Adult Learning Ideas and Planning Substance Abuse Prevention Programs for Young Adults

Explanations of what happens when learning takes place are called learning theories. Merriam and Caffarella (1991, p. 125) find little consensus on how many learning theories there are, or how the theories should be categorized. They seek to credit

the various learning theories for the influence that they have had on adult learning practice. They consider the theories from four orientations: behaviourist, cognitive, humanistic, and social learning. By comparison, the theoretical foundations of substance abuse prevention have not relied heavily upon learning theories, with the exception of social learning theory. That is not surprising given that the adult education field focuses on learning whereas the prevention field is more focused on behaviour. In adult learning, the value of social learning theory is that it accounts for the social setting in which learning occurs. In contrast, in prevention the value of social learning theory lies in its contribution to practitioners' understanding of alcohol and drug use as a socially learned behaviour.

Locating common ground for adult learning ideas and substance abuse prevention is speculative. However, a common ground becomes more evident by carefully examining some of the underlying themes in both bodies of literature. According to Rosenstock (1974), the health belief model is based upon the idea that it is the individual's perception of the world that determines the action they will take. This is very similar to Mezirow and Associates (1990) emphasis on becoming critically aware of the preconceived thoughts that control the way people perceive their world. If King and Kitchener's (1994) theory that adult learning, and in particular reflective judgement, occurs on a continuum, then it would follow that this would provide some common ground. It would seem that both emphasize the importance of the individual's perception of the world and subsequently, how that individual learns and behaves.

There are also similarities between Glanz, Lewis, and Rimer's (1990) prevention theory and Cross's (1981) CAL theory. They both emphasize knowledge level, personal

attitudes, learning history, and skills as characteristics of the learner that need to be taken into consideration in the learning situation. Another source for common ground is the attention to the active participation of the learner in both bodies of literature. As noted by Tobler and Stratton (1997), participation is a hallmark of alternative programming in prevention.

The one area where similarities between the two fields can be clearly identified lies in the techniques used in popular education in adult learning, and alternative programming in substance abuse prevention. Both programming fields rely upon creative approaches to learning and changing behaviour, such as theatre. The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (1983) is reported to have used theatre widely for prevention purposes from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. Although this program is poorly documented, they produced a booklet to provide educators with ideas for incorporating participatory theatre into school curriculum. Epskamp (1989) also notes poor documentation of the use of popular theatre in adult education as well. Both fields focus upon the importance of popular culture and participation. There is a subtle philosophical difference, however, in that popular education seeks to empower adults through the practice of transformative learning, critical reflection, self-directed learning and cooperative study, and; alternative programming seeks the participation of youth as a means of involving them in decisions that affect their lives. A review of the literature on the theoretical and program practices in prevention reveals no direct reference to adult learning techniques, however.

Summary

In the first section of this chapter, I reviewed the conceptual frameworks within adult education: Knowles' (1980, 1985) theory of andragogy, Cross's (1981) characteristics of adult learners, Knox's (1980) proficiency theory, and the critical pedagogy of Freire's (1990) conscientization. A sub-section that focused on participation, critical reflection, and the role of the educator followed this.

The second sub-section focused on a variety of theories and models used in prevention education, and included the health belief model, social learning systems, harm reduction, environmental theory, and data-driven research. The third sub-section reviewed program trends in prevention. The trends noted included a move toward alternative and harm reduction approaches to programming. In the final section, I drew attention to the gap between theory and practice, and the lack of evaluations and documentation in substance abuse education, and in popular education, and noted some of the common ground that could build a future foundation for a common body of research literature between prevention and adult education.

The next chapter discusses the project that I undertook to engage students in a program to reduce drug and alcohol use. The study provides an opportunity to explore the variables that need to be considered in the design of a student-driven program. It also provides an example of community partnership building in three counties in Nova Scotia.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Peer Drug Education program in Nova Scotia evolved due to a variety of factors during the mid-1980s. In this chapter, I detail the collaborative process undertaken to establish a student-driven, 3-year pilot program designed to reduce substance abuse in senior high schools. The first section describes the popular theatre aspect of the program. Due to the relative complexity of phase two of the project, the next section presents a chronology of the planning process up to the implementation stage. The third section contains a description of the student conference that was part of the first year of the project, and, is followed by an overview of the first year evaluation. The next section contains a description of the student conference that was part of the initiation of year-two of the project, and an overview of the activities and findings to date.

The Evolution from Idea to Program

The evolution from idea to program begins with a conversation that leads to the steps I followed to implement the popular theatre component of this program. The theatre component was designed to engage high school students in a problem-solving process that focused on violence and substance abuse.

Decisions About the Use of Theatre

In Chapter 1, I referred to a series of conversations with the Co-ordinator from one of the district school boards. From these conversations the idea arose for using Boal's (1985) method of popular theatre to raise awareness about violence and substance abuse in high school. As a first step I contacted the Irondale Theatre Ensemble to see if they were willing to teach a group of community volunteers how to perform Boal's method.

They were very enthusiastic and encouraged me to draft a proposal and stay in contact with them. I drafted a proposal to the Interagency Committee called "Partners in Peacemaking." The proposal involved having volunteers trained to deliver theatre pieces in the community and schools about violence and substance abuse. The Interagency, in partnership with the district school board, agreed to support the project as a team, and I was appointed project co-ordinator.

I established an advisory group that was comprised of seven members from the Interagency and members of the "Fear Not" committee (a fictitious name). The Fear Not committee is a Council of Churches organization, whose mandate includes reducing family violence. The advisory group identified and recruited 11 community volunteers to participate as actors in the Partners in Peacemaking project. The volunteers consisted of 2 senior citizens, 3 high school students, and 7 people who worked for community agencies such as Children's Aid and New Leaf (an organization that provides support and counselling for men who have abused their partners). The 7 people who worked for community agencies worked full-time and all of the volunteers had families. The advisory group also solicited donations of food and lodging for volunteers during the training period, contacted each school to set a performance date, co-ordinated the public performances, and administered the evaluations after each performance. The volunteers (12 persons including myself) participated in a very intense 6-day, 5-night training period with staff from the Irondale Theatre Ensemble in February 1996. During this physically and mentally demanding period, we learned how to perform the joker system of theater of the oppressed. Irondale calls this kind of theater "image forum." In image forum theatre, the audience is seated in a circle around the actors. Members of the audience are called

"spect-actors" because they are able to be spectators during the first half of the performance and actors during the second half. The joker is a facilitator who engages the audience in the dilemmas that are an inherent part of the play.

Initial Training of the Volunteer Actors

We were taught how to think and act about violence and substance abuse using examples from our own lives. This is a hallmark of Boal's work. The drama must center on themes that are drawn on human experience so the audience can identify with it. We spent the first 4 days and nights participating in exercises that were designed to expand how we think, feel, and act about violence and substance abuse. On the 5th day, the group had to identify two scenes from the previous 4 days that epitomized situations that everyone in our communities could identify with. Using these two scenes, we developed a theater piece with five acts. There are few props used in this kind of theater; instead, we were taught how to use our body and facial expressions to convey a sense of time and space. Five chairs and one textbook were the main props, although the different characters in the piece wore clothing that was useful for identifying their role.

The first scene opens in a kitchen. A mother and teenage son (or daughter, depending on who played the role) are discussing the new "zero tolerance" for violence policy at the school. The father arrives home from work and is angry and argumentative. The teenager asks if he can get a drive to a concert that is coming up and the father erupts into an abusive tirade about how undeserving the teenager is, and storms out of the room. In scene two, the teenager is outside a school, smoking a marijuana cigarette with a friend. They are talking about the upcoming concert and how they might get a drive to it. In scene three, the teenager has a nasty run-in with the librarian in the school and is given

a detention. In scene four, the teenager is in detention class with a teacher who insults and degrades him. In the final scene, two teachers are whispering about how inept the detention class teacher is and how someone ought to do something about it. Unfortunately, these scenes are perceived as commonplace by the actors and the audience members. The five scenes last approximately 20 minutes.

In image forum theatre, the joker gives the audience instructions. They are told that they will be watching a 20-minute theater piece that has elements of violence and substance use in it. They are asked to pay close attention to how each act might be altered in order to change the outcome, because the piece will be shown a second time. During the second showing, members of the audience have an opportunity to shout, "Stop," if they think they can take the place of the central character (teenager) and change the outcome. In image forum theatre, the central character is called the protagonist and the other characters are called antagonists. The actors have been taught how to play these roles. When the audience member is trying to change the scene, the remaining audience members are told that if they feel that the new person is making the scene unrealistic, they can shout "Magic!" When the joker hears the word magic, he/she stops the action and asks the audience to discuss why this scene will not work. This process is repeated over and over, scene by scene for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. When the piece ends, the audience breaks into smaller discussion groups that are facilitated by the actors. Each group explores how violence and substance use are part of their own lives and what they might do to change it. The entire emphasis of image forum theater is on meaningful discussion.

On the 6th day of training, the volunteer actors invited approximately 50 family members and friends to a practice performance. This performance was videotaped and it gave us an opportunity to use our new skills and gain some confidence in our ability to make this a meaningful exercise. The actors met every other Sunday for the next year to practice each other's parts so that they could play any role in the event that someone could not attend a performance. The videotape was used to guide our work, and to remind us about important elements in this kind of teaching strategy. There were 16 performances delivered between March 1996 and February 1997, to approximately 2000 students and community members.

Evaluations were conducted immediately following the discussion groups that were held at the end of each performance in the schools and community. Each audience was divided into groups that were facilitated by the actors. The actors asked the group they were responsible for 5 questions: (a) Did you think the theatre piece was realistic? (b) Why or why not? (c) Do you think this kind of presentation is an effective way to learn? (d) Why or why not? (e) What did you learn today? The actors compiled a summary of the responses from their group and the summaries were discussed at the weekly meetings. In addition, we (the actors) conducted a. 3-month follow-up evaluation with teachers and students in selected schools. This evaluation consisted of a form that asked 5 questions: (a) Did you discuss the "Partners in Peacemaking" play after the performance? (b) In your opinion, was this discussion longer than would occur after a traditional lecture on oppression? (c) Did you personally think about the play afterwards? (d) Would you like to see "Image Forum" plays utilized more often in educational settings on a variety of topics? If yes, explain why? (e) Please feel free to offer any

comments you might have on theatre as a teaching strategy and/or your reaction to the "Partners in Peacemaking" presentation. These forms were given to the teachers who had attended the performance and, in turn, they distributed them to the students who had attended the performance for completion.

I was most interested in the quality of class discussions following the performances and what students remembered. It was gratifying to learn, from the 3-month follow-up evaluations, that the Partners in Peacemaking performance had left a lasting impression with the students. Volunteers from the Fear Not committee called the teachers in each school where we presented and conducted a short telephone interview. They asked the teachers about the quality of the discussions that took place following the presentations. Most teachers mentioned that they were surprised to hear students still talking about the performance several weeks after the performance. However, the volunteer actors in this project became exhausted. Along with our full-time jobs, school, and families, we found the demand for performances and performing to be overwhelming. Several of the actors were experiencing resistance from their employers, and were hearing complaints about the amount of time it was taking away from their jobs. After much discussion, it was agreed that we would officially disband.

Converging the Program with the Peer Drug Education Program

Converging the program with Peer Drug Education was a complex process. It involved the decisions that were made to involve students, a program planning process, securing approval for the program, and planning the student conference that would launch the program. These are described in the following sub-sections.

Decisions to Involve the Students

Although the first phase of this project was a success, I did not want our efforts to end. We had done a great deal but I believed the project had only just begun. In May 1997, I met with the Co-ordinator from the school board to discuss the successes and limitations of the Partners in Peacemaking project. I explained to him that, because of my experience with the project and the changes that were happening in the Peer Drug Education program, I was convinced that students needed to play a more central role in the prevention of violence and substance abuse in schools. Because of a recent amalgamation of the school board, the Co-ordinator was concerned that any work in the future must be extended into adjacent counties. He suggested that I contact the Assistant Co-ordinator of Special Services for the school board to explore some ideas I had further. She was very receptive and supportive of my ideas and suggested that I develop a concrete proposal. She agreed to help me through the bureaucratic layers that are needed to implement new programs if I could design an appropriate alternative.

I began designing an alternative program by using an inventory of eight factors that I had extracted from what I had learned about adult educational techniques, my personal teaching experiences, and the current social and financial atmosphere with regard to funding prevention programs. These factors were: the program must be led by students; it had to include activities that would increase discussion and participation; it had to involve the community; it had to be implemented with a minimum of financial resources; it could not place further responsibility on teachers; it had to have an evaluation component; it had to be implemented at the beginning of the school year; and it had to be region-wide.

As the coordinator, I had to overcome the challenges presented by the large geographical area that was covered by this project. There are 7 Local Committees on Drug Awareness and 3 Interagency Committees on violence, in each of the three counties in the region. There are 19 high schools, 8 Local Committees on Drug Awareness, and four Interagencies in the region. Furthermore, it is a 3.5 hour drive from my home to the most distant high school; therefore, having one person to co-ordinate a project over this vast geographical area was going to be a challenge. I describe the program planning process in the next sub-section.

Program Planning

I began by sending a letter to the administrative staff and Peer Drug Education advisors in each of the 19 high schools in the region. Peer Drug Education advisors are teachers who have been appointed by the principal to co-ordinate the Peer Drug Education program with the Addiction Agency's staff. In the letter, I addressed the negative feedback that had been received from Peer Education Advisors and high school administrators concerning the Peer Drug Education program. I also introduced the idea that I was working towards an alternative to the current program, and requested that they complete an enclosed form. The form asked them whether they were interested in participating in the Peer Drug Education program during the current academic year and whether they were interested in an alternative approach to violence and substance use in their schools. I explained that if we did pilot a new program, I was willing to run the two programs--theirs and the new one--concurrently. This could give them the benefit of examining the relative merits of the two different approaches. Eighteen schools responded in writing, and the one that did not respond was contacted by telephone. Of the

19 schools, 5 asked to continue the current Peer Drug Education program, and every school was interested in exploring the new approach to violence and substance abuse.

The next step involved meeting with students to explore their ideas about violence and substance abuse prevention. I drafted the following statement; "Our mandate is to provide activities and opportunities that contribute to reducing violence and substance use in our school," and took it to the schools. I met with groups of grades 10 and 11 students (over 800 students) across the region and asked them, "If you had the opportunity to start your own program, and you had complete control over that program—the only thing you could not change is this mandate statement—how and what would you do?" I listened and recorded some of their responses. I also asked them how they felt about receiving some help from people in their community, and if they were interested in participating in a pilot program. The responses were overwhelmingly similar from all across the region. Following are examples of what students said:

> Education can not be improved without the direct involvement of the students. (Grade 12 Male)
>
> We need more discussions on problems we face today, instead of overheads, stats, etc. (Grade 10 Male)
>
> I don't think posters on walls help. It makes our school look like a dump with kids who have drug problems. Paper and glue is not the answer, we are. (Grade 10 Female)
>
> Textbook definitions are useless because you can't relate to them. We can relate to each other because kids listen to kids. (Female Grade 10)
>
> We've been preached at for years, but it doesn't make any difference. We're the only ones who can change things. (Female Grade 11)

One female student who was in grade 11 took the time to write me a very provocative, two-page letter. In the letter she expressed her low opinion of prevention

programs, and said she is a "responsible drug-user" and therefore not suitable to participate in a new program. She also enclosed some medical facts about cannabis for my information. Since she included her name, I contacted her through the school to arrange a meeting to talk about some of the things she had said. She was a remarkable young woman with many leadership qualities and, at the time, was the head of a drama committee. I told her how impressed I was with her letter and in particular the part about responsible drug-use. I asked her what she meant by that, and she said, " I do not mix drugs, nor do I drink and drive and I know my limits." I asked her if she knew people who did mix drugs, drink and drive, or who went beyond their limit, and she said she did. I said, "Could you influence those people to use responsibly, as you do?" She hesitated, then nodded yes, and said, "Probably." I told her that I thought that could be a form of prevention in that it helps to keep people safe from harm. She said she had never thought of it that way before. I invited her to join the team of students who were interested in a new prevention program. She declined, but said that she would "give them a hand from time to time." This is an example of the kind of response that helped me guide the planning process.

It may appear at this point, that I have completely forgotten what I had learned from the theatre component. It is important to understand that the theatre component was delivered to 7 schools in one county, and this current component was being delivered to 19 schools in three counties. Therefore, it was possible to talk with teachers and students in one county about how the theatre component had influenced this current component, but not possible for the others.

Next, I attended meetings of the Interagency groups and the Local Committees on Drug Awareness in each of the three counties to describe what I was doing. I also gave them feedback about what the students were saying, and asked them if they would commit to helping the students achieve their goals. I received enthusiastic approval from every member.

I began to create a model for this project based on the following: what students had said; what I had learned from reviewing literature from adult education and prevention and education in the addictions field; and the inventory that was outlined in the beginning of this section. Working with the Special Services Co-ordinator from the school board, I designed a model that contained all of the elements that we believed would lead to an effective program. Essentially, each school would have a student-driven committee who agreed to fulfil the aforementioned mandate; two representatives from the community groups would meet with the students as required and a teacher advisor would help co-ordinate the in-school needs.

I developed the roles of the community representative, the principal and/or vice-principal and the teacher advisor with the help of the Special Services Co-ordinator from the school board. A community representative's role was to meet with the student committee on a regular basis, and to offer advice and expertise on the ways in which the students could access support from the community. The role of the principal and/or vice-principal was to support the work of the student committee by appointing a teacher advisor to work with the students, and to provide guidance to the committee with regard to their in-school activities. The teacher advisor's role was to meet with the student committee on a regular basis, and provide in-school support such as classroom space for

meetings, and help negotiate with other teachers to arrange for students who may have to miss regular classes.

In terms of accountability, the student committee had to report to the principal, and the community representatives' had to report back to their committees. As part of the monitoring process, I contacted each school representative and each community representative by telephone, on a monthly basis to check on the progress of the committees. The school advisors, who had previously been the Peer Drug Advisors, selected the students in the following way. The advisors were asked to identify a minimum of 12 students who had leadership qualities, whether positive or negative. I asked the advisors to ignore academic standards and concentrate more on students who had significant influence throughout the student body. This was an attempt to include a broad cross-section of students, as opposed to the status quo students normally recruited for Peer Drug Education. The teacher advisors selected the students from grades 8 through 11.

With the help of the advisory group, I began planning a conference that would bring 12 students from each of the participating schools together. In order to accomplish this, I established a school board advisory group. This group was comprised of four persons. The basic features of the program included: a 1-day student conference where the students met with their teacher advisors and community representatives to name the program and to outline their priorities and activities for the coming school year. In addition, the student committee members, the general school student population, the teachers and school administrators, and the community representatives evaluated the

priorities and activities once a year. I included the results of the evaluations in my report to the school board advisory committee.

The official start date was September 1998, at which time the students who were recruited would be in grades 9 through 12. Because I was the only co-ordinator, and considering the number of schools in the region, it was not possible to target more than one school level. But, which level would be chosen? The advisory group had many discussions about the relative merits of introducing this project at the various school levels (e.g., elementary, junior or senior). Ultimately, they agreed that senior level students have the most influence in schools that include grades 7 through 12--a situation that describes 17 of the 19 regional high schools. The community representatives for each school were selected from the Interagency Committees and Local Committees for all but one of the schools. This school, located in a remote area does not have access to these committees. With the help of a teacher who works at the school, I was able to recruit a representative from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, a public health nurse, and a retired schoolteacher.

Securing Approval for the Program

I prepared a detailed presentation of the model for the school board administration. The process for acquiring school board approval to implement a new program can be a harrowing experience. When I was fortunate in getting a space on their agenda, I was given a very specific time frame, and the board chairperson used a clock to time my presentation. I was told that they were generous in allowing me 25 minutes to present the project proposal. I was fortunate in having established a good working relationship with several members in the past and they were able to convey to the

remaining members their belief in my expertise, and also their confidence in the design of the project. The presentation was well received. The complete board process took approximately 2 months and involved school board discussions and a voting process. Ultimately, they unanimously agreed to support the project and my work. The next step involved securing funding for the project. This took approximately 6 months and ran concurrent to other planning work.

Immediately after achieving school board approval, I contacted the supervisor for each of the "family of schools." For example, one school board is divided into five families of schools, and the supervisor of each family is a principal who is in charge of organizing monthly meetings for the principals and vice-principals within that family. I contacted the supervisors with a request to be put on their next agenda. This was the most arduous part of the planning process in terms of mental and physical stamina. Over a period of 3 months, I was able to present the proposal to each family of schools and receive their input and feedback. The process of addressing all of these different administrators in so many diverse communities required a high level of public speaking skills, diplomacy, and interpersonal skill on my part.

Of the 19 high schools, 2 posed a problem. One administrator simply did not believe that the issue was significant enough to warrant a new project, and another took personal issue with the field of addictions in general and, in particular, with the harm reduction approach to prevention. Fortunately, the chairman of the school board wrote to these administrators asking them to cooperate with me fully. I asked these problematic administrators if they would be willing to appoint someone on staff whom they thought might be more willing to cooperate with the implementation of the project. I also

provided them with a file folder of documented research on harm reduction as an approach to prevention programming.

Several other administrators had expressed concern that this project would be replacing the Peer Drug Education Program. I allayed their concern by explaining that the province was no longer sponsoring this program, and that I was willing to run the two programs concurrently. I also explained that one of the merits of this current design was that it accommodates and complements existing services and programs. Having obtained the necessary bureaucratic approval, it was time to meet with the students in each school and also the community volunteers to plan the conference.

Planning the Conference

Although 12 students from each school were invited to the conference, the actual number participating in the project at the school level varied. At one remote high school for example, where there are only 100 students from grade primary through 12, I met with 8 students who were keen to participate. In larger schools I met with over 30 students. I presented the 3-year proposal to the students, gave them an overview of the conference, and asked for their commitment. Once I had their commitment I gave them some homework to do for the conference. I asked them to meet with their school advisor and to generate some material that could be vital to the success of the conference. I suggested that this material might include: suggestions for a regional name for the program, identifying priority issues around substance use and violence in their school, and some ideas for activities that they could implement. I encouraged them to make whatever they do as much fun as possible. I asked them to remember that if *they* would not attend, participate, or think an activity was fun, then it probably was not a very good

idea. This process started in September 1997 and continued through March 1998. I now had a core group of committed students and staff from each high school.

Concurrently, I was meeting with the various volunteer community groups to identify appropriate representatives for each school. I had explained to the students that because of our geography and timelines, I was selecting their community representative; however, in the future they would be involved and have more control over this selection process. I told the students that they would be meeting their community representatives at a conference in April. I further explained that because I was not a member of their community, they would be given an opportunity to say whether or not they felt they could work effectively with the representatives I had selected.

The selection of community representatives was a source of concern for the school board as well. They worried about the possibility of an inappropriate or dangerous person having access to the students. The criteria that I used to select the community representative were: they had to have a background in addictions or family violence; they had to be interested in working with youth; they had to have a professional affiliation with a recognized service agency or committee in the community; they had to be willing to accept that the students might not want to work with them; and they had to attend the conference to learn what their role in the project would be. The community representatives for each school were selected from the Interagency groups and the Local Committees for all except two of the schools. In those two communities I recruited the community representatives from the R.C.M.P, clergy, Public Health nurses and retired teachers. This was a somewhat tedious process in that it was time consuming and required a great deal of networking; however, it has proven to be well worth the effort.

I wanted the students in the program to have a source book of ideas for activities that they could draw from that have been used by other students. However, I also knew that I was running out of time, and would not be able to do the necessary research and development work myself. I met with an instructor for the Human Services Core Program at the Nova Scotia Community College. I made a proposal to her for four students in that program in the form of an assignment. The assignment involved producing an "Idea Book" for the high school students participating in the project. She was excited about the proposal and asked me to present it to her class. I told her students about the project and that I wanted a book full of creative and innovative ideas for creating activities that encourage drug-free fun and reduce violence. I also stipulated that the ideas had to have been used by students in schools across Canada and the United States. The instructor asked the students who were interested in using this assignment as their main project in the Human Services program to write a one-page report about why they should be selected to do this work. She received eight applications and, from those, four students were selected. I worked with the students every week for 4 months and helped them establish timelines, research methods, and set up a budget. They needed to research the ideas and buy the needed materials and resources to make 25 copies of the book to be ready by April 18, 1998. They were expected to give a presentation to the students at the conference about their work. The instructor was responsible for evaluating their work. Their completed work is called "The Idea Book" and includes an interactive CD-ROM called Mauve (1999). Mauve is a "virtual reality mental health clinic" created by teens from Ottawa, for teens, and includes interactive sections on violence, substance abuse, nutrition, depression, suicide and a variety of other issues. It also includes a copy

of a videotape produced by the National Film Board entitled "Taking Charge" (1998). It highlights a group of students from Toronto who took charge of violence in their school. The ideas that were selected for the book were collected from schools across Canada and the United States that had been used and found to be successful. Two examples of the ideas selected follow:

The Wall. Students are asked to anonymously submit short stories, poems, or drawings of how violence and/or substance abuse have affected their lives. These are posted on a main corridor wall of the school to stimulate discussion and, possibly influence teachers to organize class-related presentations and assignments.

The Unofficial Guide to High School. This is a document created by students for students who are entering their high school for the first time. The origin of the document is unclear, although it has been used successfully in schools in Alberta and Toronto. It outlines where the various cliques hang out, (e.g., smokers, drug users) and gives information about the clubs and organizations and what is good to eat in the cafeteria, and so forth. It suggests that students participating in the program "buddy-up" with the new student for a day or two to help them adjust to their new environment.

The next step involved getting school board approval to establish an Internet web site that links the 19 high schools. This link was intended to be attached to the school board's site and to provide the student committee members with a place to compare their activities. I received the approval and hired a high school student to develop the site for this project. The plan for this site included having a page that explains the program, with links to each of the 19 schools, and a monthly bulletin board. The design was to accommodate students who wished to "brag" about their accomplishments. It was my

hope that this would become a source of inspiration and motivation for the students. As it turned out, the link to the school board did not work because the board wanted control over the site, and the students wanted control over what kind of information they could post. Setting up our own site was out of the question as that would involve monthly costs and a long-term commitment for financial support, and we had neither. In the late stages of the project, we were provided with a solution by the chairperson for the Local Committee on Drug Awareness. He is also a computer technician. He had expressed an interest in having a web site for Local Committee activity, and I approached him with the idea of allowing the students in the project to link to this site. He not only agreed, but in addition, he produced 1000 mouse pads with the web site address on them for distribution in the schools. The Local Committee site is presently active and the project will be added and linked later in the year 2000.

I had numerous meetings with the school board advisory group in planning the conference details, such as sound systems, refreshments, and so forth. The actual workshop development was left to me. I realized I needed nine facilitators to help me conduct the various workshops that were planned. I contacted eight colleagues who work as health educators in various parts of Nova Scotia, and a child educator who works with children from a location where there is violence. They met with me to learn more about the project, what would happen at the conference, and what their roles would be. They helped me add structure to the workshops, and I prepared the workshop materials and facilitator's kits. The conference could not have succeeded without their help.

The Student Conference, Year 1

The first conference was a one-day event. It was held at a regional educational center on April 18, 1998. Participants included approximately 12 student representatives from each of the 19 high schools, the agency and community representative assigned to each school, school administration and staff, and some school board personnel. In total, 350 people attended the conference. The keynote speaker and guest facilitator for the day was a well-known Canadian authority on peer program development and mentoring for schools and business.

We assembled in the auditorium as a single group to hear the keynote speaker's and my own opening remarks. Following this, in the first morning session, the students were divided into nine groups (one for each facilitator) and they spent the first half-hour learning how to conduct productive meetings. During the final part of the morning, the students worked on identifying priority issues and activities for their respective schools. The adults spent the morning with the keynote speaker, learning how to facilitate a student-directed program. Basically, they learned how to stop "parenting" and directing. It was a session on self-directed learning that emphasized "how to" rather than theoretical perspectives. This was a real challenge for some school staff, who are accustomed to being in a position of authority, and who are familiar with structured programs that are delivered in a top-down manner.

During the lunch hour, students were seated at tables with their community representatives. Earlier in the morning, everyone had completed a registration form which went into a box. These forms were used to establish an electronic mailing and contact list, and also to award prizes throughout the lunch hour. The Local Committees

and Interagencies provided 20 gift certificates, and the keynote speaker had brought sweatshirts for this event. These were used to establish a relaxing atmosphere for the students and community representatives to get to know one another. The community college students who developed the Idea Book also gave a brief presentation during the lunch hour, and circulated the book for everyone to examine.

During the first part of the afternoon, the adults went to a networking room. Members from the various volunteer groups in each community hosted the networking room, and it contained displays, information booths, refreshments, and gave the adults attending an opportunity to meet one another. The students attended two sessions; in the first they had a motivational session with the keynote speaker; and in the second, they were divided into mixed regional groups to discuss names for the program. In addition, each school was asked to select a student spokesperson who addressed the larger group at the end of the day. This student reported the name their school selected for the program, what priority issues were identified for their school, and some of the activities they planned to carry out over the coming year. They were very clear about the identified priority issues and gave examples of how they would promote change in their school. The grand finale and (according to the students) the best part of the day was voting on the name for their program. The 26 names they had generated were posted on the walls of the conference room and all students physically moved to the name each preferred. I used body counts and a process of elimination to reach the final decision. Their final choice was: "Students Taking Over Problems" (S.T.O.P.). The guidance consultant with the Department of Education and Culture videotaped the conference.

In the year leading up to the conference I received many requests to have media coverage for the project. I had refused to have any kind of coverage until the day of the conference, using the rationale that the students needed to own this program. In retrospect, this was not a good strategy. It had the desired effect for the students, but it also meant that we had lost many opportunities to develop public awareness around the program. As I write this in 2000, and 18 months into the program, I am still trying to convince the media representatives that they should be profiling the work of the students in this program at every opportunity. It has been my experience that they are more interested in the negative news, for example, when a student is caught for drug use or accused of racial violence, than they are of positive news, such as the events that students in the S.T.O.P. program are sponsoring.

It is interesting to note that the community college students who developed the Idea Book received some recognition from the provincial department of the Nova Scotia Community College. Their work was featured as the cover story for the convocation bulletins in community colleges across Nova Scotia.

I spent the remainder of 1998 on activities that brought the program closer to being a whole-community model. The relative lack of structure in terms of guidelines for the students to follow is a deliberate part of the design of this program. I wanted to avoid the "cookie-cutter" approach that characterizes the Peer Drug Education program and thereby to increase the probability that student committees and activities would develop in response to the needs of the students in each school. I arranged to meet with the student groups and their community representatives to conduct activities to enhance their relationships. I assessed their financial and human resource needs. I conducted

evaluations and I hosted a series of "town-hall" meetings in six communities throughout the region.

The final task for the first year of the program involved contacting the school advisors to review how the program was progressing in their school. The end result was that several schools had opted to discontinue the program. Total participation dropped from 18 out of 19 high schools, to 16 out of 19 high schools. The reasons given were often ambiguous, but appeared to stem from a lack of administrative support and/or simply not having enough staff to designate a teacher to the role of advisor.

Evaluating the Program

Evaluating a project of this scope is a major consideration. The main quantifiable source of evaluation is the Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (1998). The results of the 1998 survey will be compared to the results of the next survey, scheduled to be completed in 2001. This comparison will be done by the Department of Health, Addiction Services and, made available through the same department. Another source of quantifiable and qualitative data that has already been collected from students, teacher advisors and administrators, and community representatives. These are the sources of data for this project and the results are described in the following sub-sections.

Evaluation Process

The Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey is carried out in each province in Canada every 5 years. The director for the Nova Scotia survey believed that the results of the 1996 survey were significant enough to warrant implementing an interim survey. Rather than wait until the year 2001, which is when the next survey is due, the director decided to run an interim survey in May 1998. I was able to use these data for base-line

statistics in this project. As the project is being piloted over a 3-year period, the end date corresponds to the next official survey in May 2001. One recommendation made in the 1998 survey was the piloting of a demonstration program; the program in this study is a good example of action from that recommendation.

A secondary source of data that I planned to use was the principal's records of disciplinary actions taken for violence and substance use related offences in each school. As the project progressed, it became clear that principals were not using any standardized format for collecting this data, nor was it being maintained at the school board level in a useable manner. Therefore it has not been possible to use this information. In 1998 I made a recommendation to one school board that they take steps to have this kind of information collected in a standardized format for future research. I was told recently that this information would be available in June 2000.

In addition, with the help of the students and community representatives we collected qualitative evaluations in May 1999 and this will be repeated in May 2000. There were four separate evaluation forms for the 1999 project, one each for school staff, one for a random sample of students in each school, the student committee members, and the community representatives. The items for the staff and random sampling of school students included: were they aware of the project? Did they participate in any of the activities sponsored by the project? What did they like about the activities? What impact did they feel the activities were having? Finally, what advice would they give to the committee? The items for the community representatives included: Were the students being co-operative with them? Did the community representatives experience any difficulties? Did the community representatives need resources and if so, what form of

resources; and what practical advice could they offer for strengthening the program? The students in the program and their school advisors were asked very similar questions. Highlights of these results are as follow:

Results from the student sample

Approximately 1200 students completed this part of the evaluation. The main points in the responses were: 88.9% of the students polled in the random sample were aware of the program, and 30% of the students polled had taken part in a S.T.O.P. program activity. Students were asked to rate the S.T.O.P. program activities. Using a rating scale of 1–10, where 1 indicates poor and 10 indicates excellent, 83.7% rated the activities as 7 or better. Students were asked to prioritize the substance abuse issues in their school that need to be addressed. 50.6% named drinking/drug use as the top priority, and 49.4% named tobacco use as the top priority. Some comments from the general student population included: "We need to teach people how to stay safe." "Monitoring during break time needs to be increased." "Drug use is growing and we have to change that."

Results for the Teachers and Administrators

Approximately 38 teachers and administrators completed this part of the evaluation. The main points in their responses were: Teachers and administrators were asked about the activity level of the S.T.O.P. program in their school. Using a rating scale from 1–10, where 1 indicates a low level of activity and 10 indicates a high level of activity, 50% assigned the activity level scores from 8–10, and 50% assigned the activity level scores from 4–7. Teachers and administrators were asked to name the activities that appeared to be the most effective. Some of these included: An information fair sponsored

by the S.T.O.P. students for the junior high students which focused on alternative activities in the community; a Buddy System, which is a mentoring program for new students entering high school; and establishing student lounges and health rooms.

Teachers and administrators were asked to rate the impact of this program on the general school atmosphere. Using a rating scale from 1–10, where 1 indicates low and 10 indicated high, 60% rated the impact with scores from 8–10, and 40% rated the impact with scores from 6–7. Some comments from the teachers and advisors included: "This is a very positive program." " This group makes a valuable contribution to a positive school climate." "This program has a powerful potential and I believe it is experiencing the growing pains of a new program."

Results of the Community Representatives Evaluation

Approximately 30 community representatives completed this part of the evaluation. Community representatives were asked if they were experiencing any difficulty in working with the student committee and 75% said they were not experiencing any difficulties. The remaining 25% were experiencing difficulties with regard to attending scheduled meetings because of personal time conflicts, or were not being contacted by the student group with regard to meeting times, which made it impossible for them to attend meetings. Community representatives were asked what would make their job easier. Some of their comments included: "I need more structure and guidance." "I'm not sure how to motivate these students." "The students do not notify me of meeting times." Community representatives were also asked what they thought would help the students achieve their objectives. Some of their suggestions included: "Adding structure would help the students be more organized." "Adult direction is a

must; they get lost if they are not kept on track." "They need more input from outside agencies." "I think they need more structure, they have the ability to lead themselves but not the skills." Despite these comments, it was clear that their evaluation was a positive one overall.

Results from the Program Participants

Approximately 250 students who participated in the conference and other student-led activities completed this part of the evaluation in May 1999. The main points in their responses were: Students were asked to rate the program in terms of its value to the well-being of their school. Using a rating scale of 1–10, where 1 indicates of little value and 10 indicates significant value, 68.1% assigned the program scores from 7–10, and 31.9% assigned the program scores from 4–6. They were asked to explain why they gave this program the value they did. Some of their responses included: "The committee sometimes doesn't know what to do." "We need more guidance or something." "This gives us a chance to contribute." "We help improve the environment of our school". "It helps students understand the seriousness of the problems we have." "The activities sponsored by this committee help prevent people from getting bored, and maybe, just maybe they won't feel the need to drink or use drugs."

Students on the committee were asked to rate the usefulness of the Idea Book Using a rating scale of 1–10, where 1 indicates not useful and 10 indicates very useful. A total of 57.4% assigned the book scores from 7–10 while 42.6% assigned the book scores from 4–6. A full 72% said their community representatives were helpful and 28% believed they were not helpful. Their comments included: "They help us with ideas and tell us really useful things." "We never see them." "They help us stay motivated when

we're not." "They get stuff we need and help us stay organized." "They are supportive and keep us in touch with what we are doing." "They are terrific."

Students were asked if they felt supported by staff in their school. Eighty-two percent felt supported by staff, 9% felt somewhat supported by staff, and 9% did not feel supported by staff. Some of their comments included: "We're backed by them 100%.""We had a meeting and they shot down all our ideas." "They only get involved if they are pushed to." "They are willing to do anything we ask." "If they like our ideas they are supportive." "Only a few teachers care." "They seem interested." The students were asked what they needed in order to achieve their goals and objectives. Some of their comments were:" We need to get more organized." "We need a commitment from each and every member." "We need encouragement from the principal and teachers." " We need to become better known." "We need more guidelines."

These evaluations from program participants indicated that the majority of people involved were in favour of adding more structure. I had underestimated how difficult it is for students to break free from their dependency on traditional educational programming (and this point appears again in chapter 4). In a follow-up to the evaluations, I spent a great deal of time consulting with students about how to add structure to the program. This resulted in my producing a handbook for all participants in the program that clearly outlines the mandate of the program, the rights and responsibilities of members, a program planning guide, an additional section of ideas that have been used by students in the various schools during year 1 of the program, and an outline of the evaluation process that is scheduled for May 2000.

The results of the first qualitative and quantitative evaluation formed the basis of the modifications that were made to the program in September 1999, and also shaped the content for a second student conference held in September 1999. These are discussed in the next section.

Student Conference Year-Two

The results from the evaluations conducted during the first year of the project were used to develop the content of the second student conference, and also provided the direction for the second year of the project. The second conference was organized around two main events: a motivational speaker and his assistant and, an orientation to the revised structure using the new student handbooks. The handbooks included a yearly planning guide which student groups completed during the conference. These planning guides provided direction for the activities and goals that took place during the coming year.

The second conference got started with and unplanned d setback. A torrential rainstorm caused major flooding in many parts of the region and, due to road conditions, some students could not be bussed to the conference. Thus, only 11 high schools were represented at this second conference.

The motivational speaker is the founder of a positive prevention program called C.A.L.V.I.N. and H.O.B.B.E.S. (Creating A Lively, Valuable, Ingenious New Habit of Being at Bucknell and Enjoying Sobriety), at a university in Pennsylvania. This program was designed to provide the university's community of students with social and educational activities to promote fun, without the use of drugs or alcohol.

The speaker's assistant is also an active member of C.A.L.V.I.N. and H.O.B.B.E.S. During the first part of the morning, the speakers' enthusiasm and passion for living life naturally high, as expressed during his presentation, inspired a lively question and discussion session with students. During the second half of the morning, accompanied by his assistant, he took the students outside and had them participate in some of the games practiced by C.A.L.V.I.N. and H.O.B.B.E.S. members. The enthusiasm was contagious and the students were laughing and exhibiting a high degree of enjoyment.

Following the lunch break, students were organized into groups by school, given one hour to read and discuss the structure in the student handbooks, and asked to plan their schedule of activities for the coming year. These groups included their school advisors and community representatives. The speaker and his assistant shared in the responsibility of facilitating these groups. During the final hour of the day, student representatives from each school provided the larger group with a summary of what they planned to achieve during the following 9 months.

There are a wide variety of activities sponsored by students in the S.T.O.P. program. For example, high students at one high school held a one-day conference for Grade 7 to 9 called "Doing Stuff." They wanted to expose the junior high students to a variety of activities and options for drug-free fun that are available in their community. There was representation from 14 groups and organizations in the community, from youth clubs to fitness clubs. They also solicited donations for door prizes that included memberships to some of these clubs. At another high school students designed and implemented a program called the "Buddy System." This is a program designed to help

students who are new to the school (this school provides education for students from Grade 9 to 12) by providing them with an orientation to the school, and to provide them with a mentor for the year. Essentially, students in grade 11 become buddies with a student in Grade 9, and take them on a tour of the school, introduce them to the range of activities available, and generally help them to fit in. They also have special buddy activities that are held during Halloween and Christmas. According to teachers in the school, the Grade 9 students who have participated in this program are among the better-adjusted students they have seen entering the school. They also think that it has had a significant impact on influencing the Grade 9 students into making positive choices around cigarette smoking and a variety of other behaviours.

One of the most significant factors currently influencing this program stems from changes at the school board level. A new division of the school board was created that is called "Community Partnerships." Its' role is to oversee all partnerships between schools and outside agencies. This division has been perceived as an avenue to enhance such partnerships and to provide support that will, in turn, ensure the success of various programs. Unfortunately, as of 2000, this division of the school board has not yet established formal working partnerships with organizations such as the Addiction Agency. Protocols are in progress, but unsettled concerns pose a sense of uncertainty about how that division's roles may influence the S.T.O.P. program in the final year. Because of this uncertainty, I recently created a S.T.O.P. Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of eight people, and they include a school board member, a probation officer, a mental health youth worker, a community educator, a community volunteer, two administrators from the Addiction Agency, and myself. This committee

will make suggestions and offer recommendations to the school board, as they are required.

This is an interesting and educational project to be involved in. Looking back, the first project taught me the importance of having students participate in the action of the theatre component. From the second phase, I learned the value of having explicit guidelines for the program. The third phase taught me that having explicit guidelines does not prevent the students from directing the program—as long as they were participants in creating those guidelines. The implications of the process and progress are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter, I described how I used popular education and a participatory and partnership building method to develop a substance abuse prevention program. In an approach where people collaborate, it is important to assess the learning from the process. This includes what has been done, how it was accomplished, and what could have been done better.

In this chapter I interpret the merits of this project, and assess the factors that both enabled and inhibited positive outcomes. A section that examines the usefulness of the evaluation process follows this. The next section focuses on what I have learned. A fifth section considers the implications for practice and the potential for using a participatory and partnership method to develop a substance abuse prevention program. Finally, I offer conclusions and recommendations to other adult educators engaged in similar work. It should be noted that although the term "youth" has been used frequently throughout this thesis, it was defined as being interchangeable with "young adult" in chapter 1. The term "young adult" points to a nebulous developmental stage that is often easier to recognize than define, and thinking about young adults as adults is under-represented in the literature (Brown, 1997). Therefore, some of the findings in this chapter contribute new information about working with, and programming for, young adults.

Factors That Contributed to the Success of the Popular Theatre Component

The factors that contributed to the success of the popular theatre component include identifiable themes, meaningful discussion, and duration of the impact of the performances.

According to Boal (1985), popular theatre succeeds when it draws upon themes from daily life that people can identify with. During the discussion session that took place following each performance of the theatre piece, the students made similar comments. For example, "I had a teacher who treated me just like the one in the play," or "My dad and I argue like that all the time." The students responded to the themes they could identify with. The individuals (spect-actors) who chose to participate in changing the outcomes also selected the same scenes. This lends evidence to the conclusion that every audience was responding to the same themes. This success is also a tribute to the training that the actors received.

Houle (1992, p. 228) believes that adults learn best through imaginative interactions. Based upon the student's enthusiastic participation, lively discussions, and the follow-up evaluations, this combination of entertainment and learning lends support to the idea that young adults also learn through imaginative interaction. As noted by Kidd (1977, p. 22), popular theatre encourages people through discussion to develop a deeper awareness of problems and a commitment to take action. Following each performance, we (the actors) met to reflect upon, and share our experiences in the discussion sessions. I was consistently amazed at the similarities we experienced. For example, the students could not wait to speak. They were passionate in their expression and fully engaged in a

way that I have never witnessed in a classroom setting. I asked students, "Do you think this experience you have had today will affect how you approach these kinds of problems?" The most common response was in response to the scene where the teacher verbally abuses the student. The students talked about taking collective action against teachers who do this kind of thing. Although this is not among the outcomes I expected, it is a good example of discussion leading toward action.

In the 3-month follow-up interviews that were conducted with teachers from selected schools, teachers were asked to compare the quality of the students' discussions following this performance to a typical classroom presentation. Their consistent response referred to the fact that students were overheard talking about the themes portrayed in the performance up to several weeks after it had taken place. I believe this provides support for the usefulness of using popular theatre as a method for developing a deeper awareness of common problems in a high school environment. As stated in chapter 1, I sought to make my practice more meaningful for the learners. Phase one encouraged me to think that the approach we used had been more meaningful to the students than the previous approaches to prevention.

Factors that Inhibited the Success of the Popular Theatre Component

However, there were also factors that inhibited the success of the popular theatre component of this project. These include scheduling, teacher attitudes about forum theatre, and sustainability as discussed in the following.

According to Vallins (1980, p. 11), in secondary schools everyone lives by the bell, and that presents a challenge for delivering forum theatre pieces. My experience

supports this view. It often seemed as though the students and I would be at an interesting or critical point in the discussion session, when the bell would ring. I felt cheated by the bell. There was no opportunity to pick up the discussion at a later time, nor to find out if students felt the same way. The follow-up evaluations indicated that a few teachers chose to include the themes discussed into their regular classroom curriculum. However, there is no way of knowing if this was an effective learning strategy with regard to forum theatre. By this I mean, in the follow-up evaluations, teachers were asked if they believed forum theatre was an effective learning strategy. Although most teachers agreed that it was, they qualified their responses to include comments to indicate that it was "Okay once in a while," or that "It is a pleasant diversion from regular classes." This lends support to Epskamp's (1989, p. 36) assertion that there is a distinction made in North America, between learning and being entertained. In my observation of high school teachers throughout the performance period, I was struck by the number of teachers who chose to observe, rather than participate and take part in the discussions. It appeared as though their attitude toward the performances was that is was a source of entertainment, rather than viable learning opportunities.

As noted earlier, we (the actors) met once each week to discuss our experiences and plan upcoming performances. Since most of us had full-time jobs and families, we found the performance schedule too demanding. I was frustrated by my own physical and mental exhaustion. On the one hand, most of us wanted to see this work continue; on the other hand, we acknowledged our inability to do so. Therefore, sustaining the theatre component became impossible. I believe that if we had been able to gain sufficient

employer support, it may have been possible to conduct more extensive follow-up work with the teachers and students, and learn more about how to use this technique in schools. This final limitation brought an end to the popular theatre component of this project. However, it encouraged me to develop the student-led component of this project.

Factors that Contributed to the Success of the Student-Led Component

"It was a great temptation to get started; to design a plan for training in the familiar modes of the agency's development programs" (Vella, 1994a, p. 43). Vella is referring to the needs assessment phase of program planning. Here is the first step in a dialogue of learning. It is listening. This is also a reflection of how I felt at the beginning of this phase of this study. I was tempted to design a prevention program in a mode familiar to the substance abuse prevention field. According to Minkler (1997) professionals frequently suffer from "terminal hardening of the categories"(p. 43), in that they often seek information in ways that identify community issues that they, the experts, have already determined to be the most important. I was determined to avoid this mistake. I wanted to give the people most affected by the problem as much control over the design, content, and evaluation of the project as possible. According to Vedros (1985), when individuals participate in planning and decision-making, they have greater responsibility in the learning process. This was also important to me. Therefore, I began by meeting with over 800 students from Grades 10 through 12. These meetings enabled me to learn about the needs of the people most affected by the problem. This learning required a collaborative process that considered the students' opinions, thoughts, and feelings about decision making in general, and program planning in particular. This first

step also involved discussions with school administrators, teachers, and community volunteers.

Participation in the process was central to this study. It involved actively soliciting student involvement in problem identification and the design of activities and events to reduce substance abuse. My experience is consistent with Vella's (1994a) and Knowles' (1985) writing that participation in the process positively influences the outcome of a program. Bosworth and Sailes (1993) found that programs that use activities that promote active participation achieve modest reductions in drug use by students. I did not measure changes in drug use, which is to be done in 2001. However, in this study, I noted four factors that influence student participation: responsiveness to young learners' needs, trust in young adults, positive support from older adults, and opportunity for students to experience success. I discuss each of these factors in the next four paragraphs.

The first factor, responsiveness to youth's perceived needs, is based upon my observation that high school students are often asked their opinion, but their opinions are rarely given serious consideration. When students became aware that I was taking their feelings, thoughts, opinions, and advice into serious consideration in the design of the program, I witnessed a dramatic increase in support and enthusiasm. For example, at the beginning of the discussion with a school group, I would outline the idea for the program and ask for a show of hands from anyone interested in participating in this substance abuse prevention program. The usual response was two to three hands. At the end of the discussion, I asked the same question and invariably 12 to 20 hands would be in the air. This same effect is noted by Vella (1994a, p. 12). In her ideas for exhibiting respect for

the learner she says that healthy adults desire to be decision makers and resist being treated as objects, or something that can be used by someone. I contend that healthy young people desire the same thing. When they are offered a share in decision-making, they feel respected; in turn, they feel that their needs are being responded to. I also believe that giving the students decision-making power has the added benefit of providing them with ownership of the program.

The second factor influencing participation was my trust in the students' ability to do what they believed needed to be done. Initially, the student's faith in me was tentative. They liked what we were doing but they did not trust that I trusted their ability and would do everything I could to ensure their success. I heard numerous variations of, "We appreciate what you are trying to help us do, but 'they' will never let us run a program." I had to prove that the students would be given the support to direct this program on their own. This was not an easy task. Many school administrators and teachers predicted failure from the onset unless they were given the lead role. I explained that I had assured the students that they would be the directors of the program. I was able to win administrative support by reassuring them there would be guidelines. As this hurdle was crossed, not only did I gain the respect and trust of the students, but it also increased their trust in their own ability. This is similar to Vella's (1994a) experience with safety as a principle linked to respect for learners as subjects of their own learning. She believes that trusting in the competence of the design as well as the teacher enables the learner to feel safe. The evaluations completed by students indicated that some school administrators and teachers did not support them. I believed that this support could be achieved with further effort.

The third factor influencing participation was based upon my observation that positive adult support is an essential ingredient to positive outcomes. This is also characteristic of schools where this program has enjoyed the greatest level of success. Positive adult support in this instance means adults who know how to strike a healthy balance between being supportive and maintaining institutional guidelines. When I met with students in schools with positive adult support, the students were animated, enthusiastic, and shared camaraderie with their teacher advisor and community representative. They also had the most active and effective programs. In contrast, I met with a group of students in one school where no activity was taking place, and asked them what they thought the problem was. Their response was "the principal and teachers do not care about us or this program, in fact, they make fun of us" (incidentally, some intervention has taken place since in that school by a school board member and, the situation is improving.) These kinds of experiences support Tough's (1979, p. 183) definition of the ideal facilitator as being warm and accepting of learners; having a high regard for learners' ability to plan their own learning process; viewing themselves as equals with the students in the learning process, and being open to change and learn from their helping experiences.

Both of the previous examples stand in contrast to one school where the activity level is extremely high, but it is completely directed by the teacher advisor. Positive adult support involves clear roles. According to Vella (1994a, p. 12), it takes time for adults to see themselves and the teacher in a new role. Rosenblum (1985) believes that educators must be willing to relinquish control over the learning situation and the learner. Clearly this program was challenging previously accepted and traditional roles and, in turn, it

appeared to affect some adults' ability to provide positive support, and also for the students to see themselves in a managing position.

The fourth factor influencing participation is based upon my observation that the students must experience some success with the activities that they conduct within the school. Successful activities consist of events that are fun—events that are engaging and that stimulate interest and participation. For example, in the school where the Buddy System is taking place, the participation level is high. This is a successful activity. It is fun to participate in, it is effective, and the participants, school administrators, teachers, and community representatives hold it in high regard. The students have witnessed their ability to make a difference and this has been reaffirmed by teachers who have shared their observations about the effectiveness of the Buddy System with them. In contrast, there is one school where, for a variety of reasons, the activities have not been successful. The students on the committee are despondent and reluctant to plan any future endeavours. This is similar to Vella's (1994a, p. 16) contention that adult learners need to see the usefulness in their learning and that if there are no immediate results they are difficult to keep on board.

The student conferences contributed to the successful participation of students in this program in a number of ways. They provided the students with an opportunity to network with students from other schools. They helped increase motivation and enthusiasm for participating in the program for the coming year. They provided an opportunity to share ideas, and they also provided an opportunity for committee members to spend a significant period of time together. I think of the conferences as having a grounding and directing influence upon the program.

Having learned how participation engaged the students in the learning experience during the first conference, the second conference provided me with the opportunity to introduce a variation on Brookfield's (1986) learning contract, to further encourage their participation. Each participant at the conference was provided with a S.T.O.P. Program Handbook. The handbook includes a contract that asks students for the following information: person who will be responsible for planning meetings, and when and where these meetings will take place. For each month in the school year, they are asked to name an activity and specify the resources that will be needed to execute the activity. Once the activity is completed, they are asked to complete a section that asks what worked, what did not work, and how the activity could have been improved. The impact of using these learning contracts will be examined in June 2000.

Factors that Inhibited the Success of the Program

The overriding factor that inhibited success was the sheer size of the program and the geographical challenges presented in the region. My initial proposal to the school board was for a 3-year pilot in one county only. The first two years were a politically sensitive period when the three separate school boards were being amalgamated. They would only approve the project if it were extended to include all 19 high schools in the region. This had an impact upon the frequency of contacts that I could make with administrators, teachers, students, and community representatives. I was often unaware that students in the program were experiencing difficulties until several months after the fact. In turn, this has had an impact on the overall success of the program.

A lack of administrative and teacher advisor support in several schools was also a factor that inhibited the students' ability to implement the program. The reasons for the lack of support varied from school to school, and included insufficient staff resources or the fact that the staff workload was already overwhelming. In two instances, administrators lacked faith in this approach to prevention. In one case, I am attempting to overcome the lack of support by encouraging greater community volunteer involvement. The administrators and teachers who did not believe in this approach have been provided with folders of research articles that do support this work. However, I believe that their fundamental resistance was based upon the perceived threat to the traditional power dynamics in the classroom; and a lack of knowledge and experience with participatory methods. In discussions with resistant administers and teachers, they inevitably focused upon the social hierarchy that places the teacher in the position of decision-maker. According to Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (1997), adult educators also grapple with the power dynamics in the classroom, however, adult educators readily focus on making the educational experience as power-neutral as possible. Some high school educators said they are encouraged to maintain the power imbalance for the primary purpose of discipline and control. Brookfield (1985) believes that didactic classroom experiences do not prepare adults for self-directed learning situations. This held true for the students in the S.T.O.P. program as well. In retrospect, I believe that the students participating in the program would have benefited from the addition of a preparation session. Perhaps a discussion concerning some of the difficulties involved in doing self-directed work would have been helpful for preparing the students. This is taken up again under recommendations.

Usefulness of the Evaluation Process

The evaluation process focused primarily on the dynamics of the method as opposed to measuring a reduction in substance abuse. When the Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey is repeated in May 2001, it may be possible to isolate the schools where this program is in place and examine the data for any significant changes. There is little that can be said at this time, as this is a study-in-progress. The Advisory Board to the S.T.O.P. program is committed to monitoring the program and working with students to modify the program on an ongoing basis.

In spite of the limitations, there are some interesting results from the first-year evaluation. According to Brown et al. (1995), students are more receptive to adults outside of the school system than to teachers. This implies that students respond better to programs that include community members. In the first year evaluation, 72% of the students in the program made positive comments about their community representatives. In addition, in two of the schools where the program is very active, the main facilitators were the community representatives.

As noted by Giesbrecht and Ferris (1993), a project and the students often get separated by issues of ownership and control, community involvement, and the evaluation process. I believe the 1999 evaluations demonstrated that it is possible to prevent that separation from occurring. Based on this project, I further believe that students want and need to be a part of program planning and evaluation.

My Learning from the Program

Critical reflection on my role as the adult/youth educator of this program has resulted in identifying a number of experiences that change and enhance how I perceive education, and how I practice prevention with high school students and adults. I have gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of teaching young adults and of young adults in general. Previous to these experiences, I believed that people needed factual information about substances and substance abuse. In discussing the issue with young adults, I have learned that the social and cultural setting is more important than information. According to Bruner (1996, p. 11), unlike any other species, human beings deliberately teach each other in settings outside the ones in which the knowledge being taught will be used. In my experience, students are often overlooked as a major source of learning. Upon reflection, my previous attempts at working with students were impoverished by not providing them with an opportunity to "show and tell" me about substance abuse in their world. I do not mean to imply that facts do not play a role in prevention education. Rather, the social and cultural context of substance abuse is of greater consideration in students' decision making. A good example of this occurred during one discussion where I asked students to name their greatest social concern. It was not global warming or substance abuse. It was fitting in. They live in a culture of drug use, and using drugs and alcohol are perceived as a normal life experience and a part of fitting in.

According to Mezirow and Associates (1990), critical reflection is a learning process by which adults come to reframe previously held assumptions. I have learned to reframe and appreciate young people on an individual basis, and I no longer think of

them as a homogenous or stereotypical group. Cross (1998) says, "Looking carefully at how even one student learns is often quite revealing." I have learned that each individual young person has a lot to teach me. Upon reflection, I have learned that I was once somewhat afraid of young adults. I believe that I had internalized the common social messages that indicate that young people are rude, violent, and out of control. I was once mildly repelled by their body piercings and seemingly odd methods of self-expression. By employing techniques from adult education, my fears have been dispelled. Through the process of reflection I have gained a deeper understanding of my own learning. I have also learned that there are not enough opportunities to celebrate youth and include them in Canadian communities. For example, true youth participation goes beyond asking one young person to sit on a community committee. It involves actively soliciting youth involvement in problem identification and the design and implementation of programs to reduce problems.

This project has provided me with increased confidence in using adult learning strategies with young adults. In my practice of educating youth and adults on addiction issues, I often use strategies that have their orientation in adult learning. Examples include allowing the learners to teach me what they know about the issue, and providing them with opportunities to participate in the learning situation. In most cases, I have experienced these to be superior to the strategies used in traditional education and prevention. I believe that adult education has much to offer in re-designing how educators work with youth in school settings.

Implications for Practice

Substance abuse prevention is perceived and defined differently by practitioners, researchers, and youth. Some consensus on what substance abuse prevention is must be reached. How it is defined will determine how programmers approach program design, program delivery, and evaluation. In addition, research must both substantiate and inform us as practitioners. We need new information to improve our practice. A major challenge is to develop a mechanism for getting research results back to substance abuse prevention educators.

Prevention must become a part of the political and social agenda. This could help to ensure that prevention becomes funded at a level consistent with positive outcomes. Finally, having good practice techniques does not guarantee schools will use them. Limited resources, resistance to change, and misconceptions about how these techniques can be translated into practice may inhibit their being used.

Conclusions

As a result of this 3-year project I have come to seven conclusions:

1. This project breaks new ground in Nova Scotia in terms of the methodology and partners chosen to participate. As a model of participation it offers students an opportunity to solve substance abuse problems in their own schools.

2. Participants must understand the methodology, as well as the process of participation. In this study the students knew they had a voice and that their perspectives were to be considered in the final outcome.

3. There are many challenges for prevention educators. They must be willing and able to encourage participation and self-directedness. They must also be willing to acquire the skills to support this kind of work, and to share these skills with other community and teacher advisors.

4. It is necessary for prevention educators to use praxis in terms of doing and reflecting, then changing and doing anew, based upon the response of the participants and the most effective outcomes.

5. Self-directedness, participation, and critical reflection make an important contribution to prevention education and youth. We must be willing to challenge age-specific learning techniques and borrow freely from the best practices developed by all educators.

6. Prevention education, and education in general, is often hierarchically structured. It is not historically accustomed to sharing power for decision making with students. We must learn the skills and be willing to challenge the hierarchy of education and the social assumptions that underpin this hierarchy.

7. The variety of activities generated varied from school to school. This indicates that prevention programs must be responsive to local needs.

Recommendations for Research and Practice

I outline 12 recommendations here to assist others in learning from my experience with using adult learning techniques with youth in a substance abuse prevention program.

1. Carefully targeting the teachers and community representatives who can provide the best facilitation skills is very important. I recommend that the teachers and

community representatives be consulted and involved in the development of the program.

2. I recommend expanding this prevention program to include all grade levels in Nova Scotia high schools. This would provide for continuity, increased sustainability, and an increase in the ability of students to become self-directed learners.

3. A responsive and flexible process is important in the development of a substance abuse prevention program. The facilitators and participants must take the time to explore the ideas and opinions of all of the participants. The process cannot be hurried. I recommend focusing on the valuable information that facilitators and students have to offer in order to plan and deliver substance abuse prevention programs.

4. Traditional classroom experiences do not prepare students for self-directed learning situations. Students would benefit from the addition of a preparation session. Therefore, I recommend that prevention educators engage in discussions with students, concerning some of the difficulties involved in doing self-directed work.

5. I recommend that prevention educators continually reflect upon the methodology and desired outcomes for prevention programs. I further recommend they make changes as they become necessary. As educators we must critically challenge how we do prevention education.

6. In view of the literature that indicates the most widely utilized prevention programs continue to be those that have already been found to be ineffective, I recommend further research into the most promising prevention approaches.

7. The processes that agency staff use to collaborate in providing services are not well documented. The procedures used to set boundaries and to establish formal and informal agreements, and the mechanisms for communication such as advisory board, would be useful. Therefore I recommend that provincial governments establish guidelines for cross-agency service delivery.

8. Cross-agency collaboration, while not an end in itself, is a variable that plays a part in effective outcomes. Therefore, the nature of the collaboration should be documented so it can be examined for its effect on the overall objectives. As an example, Caffarella's (1994) program planning guide does not provide for this kind of information. I recommend, therefore, that provincial and regional governments develop a procedure for documenting and examining the effect of cross-agency collaboration.

9. Given the urgency and importance of dealing with the problem of substance abuse, I encourage other prevention educators to commit to making prevention a part of the political agenda. To accomplish this, I recommend that provincial prevention educators develop a procedure that will inform political decision-makers about the problem of substance abuse.

10. I recommend that school educators seek ways to enable youth to direct and participate in program planning for substance abuse prevention. Even though the

barriers created by traditional educational methods can inhibit youth directed programming, participatory methods are effective learning strategies for involving and teaching youth.

11. I recommend that school educators seek ways to participate and incorporate alternative learning opportunities such as image forum theatre into the day to day curriculum of their schools.

12. Youth are gaining access to new technology at an accelerated rate. The basic family structure has undergone dramatic changes during the past 20 years. The educational structure, the work force, and environmental change are in a state of transition. What effect does this have on a young person's motivation to learn? How and where are they learning? These are some of the questions that I believe need to be addressed and I recommend they be addressed through future research.

As a result of this study, one of my priorities now includes introducing the students in the S.T.O.P. program to social norms marketing strategies. I am interested in experimenting with different ways of incorporating social norms messages about substance abuse into a variety of prevention strategies. I am also interested in examining whether or not social norms marketing strategies can be effective in a high school setting.

On a more personal note, I began this thesis by describing my desire to improve the way that I practice prevention and education, and my hope to contribute to effective prevention programming. The focus of my study program has not only helped me improve the way I practice, it has taught me how to reflect on what I do on a day-to-day basis. This has carried over into my personal life, enabling me to understand better how

all of my actions--particularly the small ones--affect the people around me. In this respect it has also been a spiritual journey. Making a contribution to the creation of more effective prevention programs is, in the vernacular of high school students "awesome."

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