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Transition Planning for

At-Risk Students

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TRANSITION PLANNING FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS

BY

RHONDA MARIE ROKOSH

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The focus of this study centered on establishing the usefulness and appropriateness of a personal futures planning process for six secondary students labelled at-risk. The personal futures planning tool, Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) developed by Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest (1991), typically used with students with special needs, was implemented with students identified by their high school resource teacher and guidance counsellor as being mildly, moderately or severely at-risk of not graduating from high school. The intent of the study was to determine, (a) the appropriateness of the PATH process for this particular group of students, and (b) the value of the various steps in PATH.

The participants in this study were all senior high school students. Four female and two male students participated in the study. Student 1, female, was repeating most of the Senior 1 credits she not obtained the previous semester, had poor overall grades, was frequently truant, and had been suspended from school for disruptive behaviour. She was identified as being severely at-risk of not graduating. Student 2, male, was registered in Senior 2, had poor overall grades, displayed disruptive behaviour and at times was

unable to function in the regular classroom, was generally not accepted by his peers, and had been suspended from school on several occasions for disruptive behaviour. He was identified as being moderately at-risk of not graduating. Student 3, female, was registered in Senior 2, had fair overall grades, and was frequently truant. She was identified as being mildly at-risk of not graduating. Student 4, male, was currently taking Senior 2 and Senior 3 credits, had poor overall grades, was frequently truant, displayed disruptive behaviour, showed a rebellious attitude toward authority, and had been suspended on several occasions for fighting with other students and threatening school staff. He was identified as being severely at-risk of not graduating. Student 5, female, was registered in Senior 2, had dropped out on two other occasions, had fair overall grades, and frequent absences in all classes. She was identified as being moderately at risk of not graduating. Student 6, female, was registered in Senior 3 and Senior 4, had good grades, was frequently truant, was a gifted artist but seemed bored with school, and had dropped out of school on two previous occasions. She was identified as being mildly at-risk of not graduating.

Data were collected using pre-PATH and post-PATH face-to-face interviews with each student, and through observation

of each student's PATH planning meeting.

The findings of this study suggest that PATH is a useful, positive method of personal planning for this group of students. It allowed the students to identify their own goals and the time frames by which their goals be accomplished. It proved to be an appropriate and useful planning tool when used to help at-risk students plan for their futures in a positive way.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The concepts of mainstreaming, normalization, and least restrictive environment have led to changes in education for students with special needs. Educational policies have been developed in each Canadian province to ensure public schools provide an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student with a disability.

Recently, secondary schools were required to provide a plan for students, in addition to their IEP, for their life once they left high school. The planning around this time of transition came to be known as Transition Planning. In 1989, in Manitoba, the Minister of Education and Training outlined the protocol for collaboration between the Departments of Family Services, Health, and Education and Training in the area of transition planning and mandated transition planning for all students with special needs to be initiated beginning at age sixteen.

All students in high school make the transition from school to work and adult life. Students, with the help of their parents, make decisions about their future. Some students require more help than others.

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Presently, only students receiving special education services are required to have an IEP and, once they turn sixteen, an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). The ITP is a formal document, initiated by the school, involving parents and community agencies, stating what goals will be accomplished and by whom. This leads to the concern of this research study. In order for a student to have a formal plan in place to help with this period of transition, he or she must be labelled as a student with a special need. The possibility and appropriateness of implementing a transition planning technique for another group of students who are not labelled as special needs students will be considered in this study. Specifically, this study will consider the usefulness of transition planning for students labelled "at-risk".

One planning tool used frequently in transition planning is Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH). Students with special needs and their families plan for the future following PATH, with the intent that the goals identified will help the student see him or herself more clearly. Could a process such as PATH be of benefit to students who are at risk of not graduating?

PATH is a social process and relies on active involvement of participants. As a process, it has its limitations. It may not always be feasible to conduct a PATH. The process is time consuming and

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requires the input of many people. School staff must be trained in the process and as facilitators. PATH requires follow-up of each student's progress to be effective. There are also benefits to the PATH process. These will be discussed in this paper.

This thesis is organized into chapters. A glossary of key terms (Figure 1) is provided in Chapter I. In Chapter II, a review of the literature will include: (a) a brief history of special education in Canada and the U.S.A., (b) an overview of relevant changes that have occurred over the past twenty years, (c) the introduction of transition planning, (d) issues related to students with special needs, (e) issues related to students at graduation, (f) issues related to students labelled at-risk, and (g) the overlap or common characteristics of both groups.

The research methods are described in Chapter III. The results are reported in Chapter IV and discussed in Chapter V.

The goal of this study is to determine if a transition planning process might be beneficial to students in transition, who are not receiving special education support, but who are labelled at-risk by their schools.

Figure 1

Glossary of Key Terms

Accommodation

Adjustments or adaptations to suit a special or different purpose. Accommodations help to promote academic achievement for students with special needs through modifications in curriculum, teaching, behavioural expectations, physical plant, and other school procedures. Accommodations are designed to help students with special needs improve their chances for academic success and social involvement at school.

Adult services

Publicly and privately funded health care, educational, vocational, recreational, and other services provided to students with special needs once they leave the public school system.

At-risk

Refers to students at-risk of dropping out of school. Studies of students who have dropped out of school have identified common factors that may make up an "at-risk" student profile such as poor attendance record, dislike of school, poor academic record, pregnancy, disrupted or chaotic families, failure to acquire the skills needed for employment, rebellious attitude toward authority,

Figure 1 continued

and gifted and/or talented abilities but bored with school.

De-institutionalization

The process of removing people from an institutional setting in favour of a community-based setting such as a family home, group home, or halfway house.

Inclusion

The philosophy that allows for differences and accepts people who had historically been excluded from society because of their differences. In education, inclusion involves accommodations allowing the full physical, social, and academic participation of students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Independent living

Living in one's own community making as many everyday decisions about one's own life as possible. This may involve a living arrangement with a roommate or a group home.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

A management tool to ensure that a student's educational program is appropriate to the student's specific needs. An IEP is a written document that outlines the short-term and long-term goals, the methods, and techniques that will be used to achieve these goals

Figure 1 continued

and the responsibilities of the people who will be involved in implementing the plan.

Individual Transition Plan (ITP)

A management tool used to ensure the continuity of services and provision of opportunities from school to adult life for students with special needs.

Integration

To include and educate students with special needs in the regular classroom. This educational philosophy implies a joint effort by special and general educators.

Job coaching

The assisting, guiding, coaching and on-the-job training of persons with disabilities. Job coaching is usually temporary and is faded as a person needs less support.

Least restrictive environment

Educating students with special needs in the setting that most enables their school learning and socialization.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is the maximum integration of students with disabilities into regular classrooms, combined with assistance for

Figure 1 continued

regular class teachers.

Normalization

The philosophical belief that all exceptional individuals, no matter what the level and type of disability, should be provided with an education and living environment as close to normal as possible.

Regular Education Initiative (REI)

The name given to a movement to promote the restructuring of the special education-regular education relationship. The REI was initiated by special educators to try to shift the responsibility for students with special needs to regular classroom teachers. The REI was based on the philosophy that the education of all students should become individualized and that there be a shared responsibility between regular and special educators.

Residential support

Allows people with disabilities the option of living independently with varying degrees of support such as a non-disabled roommate, an apartment complex designed with the visually impaired person's needs in mind, home care services, or shopping assistance.

Figure 1 continued

Segregation

The placement of students into groups based on the identified disability the student may have.

Sheltered workshops

A sheltered workshop is a work setting or adult day program where a worker with a disability can participate according to his or her ability. The work is supervised and payment is below societal minimums.

Special education

A subsystem of the total educational system for the provision of specialized or adapted programs and services for students with special needs.

Special needs

An educational term used to designate students who require special education support services.

Supported employment

Supported employment allows people with disabilities into the work force. An alternative to sheltered workshops, supported employment matches a person's skills with a job in the community and may provide the assistance of a job coach and work place

Figure 1 continued

accommodations.

Work experience

Work experience provides experience on the job, in various settings, that allows the student to get a feel for the type of work performed and to improve his or her skills.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The Development of Transition Planning

The education of exceptional students in Canada has passed through a number of stages. Since the early sixties, there has been a change in philosophy from segregation to inclusion (Winzer, 1990; Bellamy, 1979; Wheman & McLaughlin, 1981; Kieman & Stark, 1988). Consequently, education has shifted from segregated custodial care to universal access, social integration, and inclusive programming for students with disabilities (Weber, 1994).

Since the 1970s, the principles of normalization, de-institutionalization, integration, and mainstreaming have emerged as guiding principles in the evolution of special education (Csapo, 1989). The normalization principle, initiated by Wolfensberger (1972) in the early seventies, began to gain wider acceptance during the decade. Wolfensberger argued that persons with disabilities should no longer be segregated and seen as different from others, but should be integrated socially and educationally as much as possible. His focus was on the

similarities, rather than the differences, among students.

Mainstreaming represents one facet of the principle of normalization. Mainstreaming evolved from the idea that segregating students with special needs was ineffective (Weber, 1994; Sailor, Anderson, Halvorsen, & Doering, 1989; Biklen, 1985). The idea of mainstreaming requires exceptional students, to the greatest degree that is reasonable and consistent with their needs, to be educated with their non-exceptional peers (Winzer, 1989). However, mainstreaming did not mean that all students, with all degrees of disability, should be returned to the regular classroom (Winzer, 1990; Gearheart, Weishahn, & Gearheart, 1992; Andrews & Lupart, 1993). It was believed that learning in the "least restrictive environment" was in the best interest of the child. This could require the child, at times, to be out of the regular classroom for a portion of the school day.

Special education in Canada, following a pattern already established in the United States, has had a history of progressive inclusion (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). In early Canadian history, special education was based on the principle of exclusion and handicapped individuals were excluded from society in general. In the 1800s, special education was based on the principle of institutionalization. As a result, separate schools provided

education for deaf, blind, and visibly disabled students.

From 1900 to 1950, special education was based on the principle of segregation. Consequently, special schools and residential institutions increased in number. In the 1950s and 1960s, special education was based on categorization through testing and labelling. The introduction of special education classes in regular schools was initiated, but most special education was still taught in special schools in most school divisions. In the 1970s, special education was based on integration. This was a major shift in philosophy culminating in policies to place students in the least restrictive environment. In the 1980s, integration evolved into mainstreaming with an emphasis on educating exceptional students in the regular classroom. In the 1990s, special education has become still more inclusive, with many special educators advocating a merger of special and regular education into a more student-centered, unified education system.

Period of Change

A great period of change in special education took place between 1965 and 1995. The changes allowed for a greater acceptance of students with disabilities, a more positive attitude toward them by teachers, and an increased involvement of government in legislating more appropriate programs and services

for students with special needs (Gearheart & Weishahn, 1992).

Setting

The classrooms of the 1990s look much different than the classrooms of the 1960s. With the passing of legislation to ensure education for all students, most classrooms have become heterogeneous (Winzer, 1990).

The focus on the exceptional student in the classroom is no longer primarily medical. There has been a shift to what the student can do, rather than what he or she cannot do. Schools are increasingly being required to tailor instruction to the individual, not the group (Winzer, 1990).

Social ability and the need to teach social skills within the curriculum are recognized as important. Even though each child may have an instructional plan based on individual needs, the classroom should be seen as a community where all children have the right to belong, share, and work together (Andrews & Lupart, 1993).

Classroom Teachers

As the integration trend extends to secondary education, more and more regular classroom teachers will be giving instruction to exceptional students. More and more, the classroom teacher will play a crucial role in providing stimulating and appropriate experiences for students with special needs (Winzer, 1989).

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According to Winzer (1984), teachers' attitudes are a critical component of inclusive education. Classroom teachers' attitudes toward children with special needs affect instruction, and implementation of programs, as well as the attitudes of other children in the classroom. The variables influencing teacher success include: (a) professional preparation, (b) previous experience with students who have disabilities, (c) a willingness to work cooperatively with parents, resource personnel, and others, (d) a willingness to accept variations in scheduling, (e) an ability to assess individual learning needs, and (f) acceptance of the idea that all students have a right to an appropriate education (Gearheart et al., 1992). After many years apart, regular and special education teachers increasingly are working together (Andrews & Lupart, 1993).

According to Gearheart (1992), more classroom teachers now have the training and expertise to accommodate a student with special needs in their classroom than in earlier decades. Often, the methods used with special needs students prove useful when working with other students.

Parents

Until the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) was passed in 1975 in the U.S.A, parental involvement and

support of students with special needs in school settings was infrequent. The role of the parent was that of unempowered consumer of a program initiated by professionals (Andrews and Lupart, 1993).

As a result of individual advocates as well as parent groups lobbying provincial governments, legislation has been passed to allow for parental involvement in decision making and the development of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in Canada. Parental involvement and input on a day to day basis is encouraged by educators in both the U.S.A and in Canada (Weber, 1994; Gearheart et al., 1992). In 1989, the Manitoba Government introduced policies and general guidelines school divisions were to follow to provide educational programs for students with special needs. The policies included four specific points describing parents' and students' rights and the responsibilities of Manitoba Education and Training. One of the four points of the mandate specifically involves parents as part of the transition planning team. A cooperative planning approach involving parents, teachers, outside agencies, and the students themselves is advocated. Regular meetings involving parents in planning and decision making for their children are mandated. In addition, parents have the right to inquire about any aspect of their children's programs at any time. The guidelines also

make provisions to ensure parental access to student's files, the information in those files, and the opportunity to add or change information that may be incorrect.

The Regular Education Initiative

In the mid-eighties, in response to some of the problems associated with special education, the Regular Education Initiative (REI) was started in the United States. Special educators argued that neither general nor special education systems were suitable to meet all the needs of individuals with special needs and that, in many instances, diagnostic practices were unable to differentiate between students with and without disabilities (Clark and Kolstoe, 1995). This movement was initiated by special educators to try to shift the responsibility for students with special needs to regular classroom teachers and maintain a truly mainstreamed educational system (Andrews and Lupart, 1993; Winzer, 1993; Gearheart, 1992).

The REI was based on the idea that two kinds of students, regular and disabled, could be viewed as 'students' and the education of all students should become individualized and a shared responsibility between regular and special educators (Gearheart, 1992). The REI has been controversial and is not a widely accepted plan, but rather is seen as the philosophy of several researchers (Stainback and Stainback, 1989). Consequently, the mainstreaming

of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers continues to be a topical and much-debated educational issue (Winzer, 1993).

Legislation to Guarantee Education

Since the early 1970s, due to the increased awareness of human rights and the passing of Public Law 94-142 in the United States, there has been a shift to increased acceptance of mainstreaming in education (Gearheart, 1992; Kiernan & Stark, 1988; Wheman & McLaughlin, 1981; Bellamy, 1979). The PL 94-142, in the US, was established in an attempt to correct certain problems in educational programs for students with disabilities (Gearheart and Weishahn, 1992). The law provided:

1. A requirement that all children be screened to identify needs.
2. A guarantee of free education.
3. A stipulation that the student must be placed in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate.
4. Due process for parents and guardians.
5. Confidentiality.
6. A requirement that parents must be consulted prior to any decision.
7. A requirement that an IEP must be developed for all exceptional students.

8. A requirement for appropriate teacher training.

In 1990, in the US, PL 94-142 was amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, PL 101-476). This act made some changes to PL 94-142, the Education of the Handicapped Act, such as adding separate disability categories, changing the term 'handicapped' to 'disabilities' throughout, and adding rehabilitation counselling. A significant change in IDEA was the introduction of a mandate to provide transition planning for students with disabilities aged 16 and older (Andrews and Lupart, 1993; Clark and Kolstoe, 1995).

In Canada, as a result of this legislation passed in the US, and as a result of the pressure of parent and advocacy groups, individual provinces amended their Education Acts to include special education (Weber, 1994). By the end of the 1980s, all provinces and territories were providing special education programs in regular schools (Weber, 1994; Andrews and Lupart, 1993). Early on in the process of integration, most students with special needs were grouped together and taught as a group by a special teacher or resource teacher. Later on, by 1990, many more students with special needs were integrated into the regular classroom (Weber, 1994). In 1989, the Manitoba Government issued policy and procedure directives designed to assist school divisions in implementing an integration

policy (Manitoba Education and Training, 1989). Based on the provision that all students are entitled to an education, as stated in the Public Schools Act, the key points in the Policy of Manitoba Education and Training are as follows:

1. School divisions/districts are responsible for offering appropriate educational programs and the support services students need to benefit from these programs.

2. Education programming will be provided in the most enabling learning environment available or possible under the circumstances. In the majority of cases, integration in the regular classroom, with the provision of special supports, affords such a setting.

3. Education programs will be individualized when appropriate.

4. The program planning process will involve a team approach, the team consisting of all those who have information that is relevant to the student: parents, educators, support personnel, and the student, if possible.

In 1995, Manitoba Education and Training published the document entitled Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Individualized Programming Designation, Senior Years. The purpose of this document is to provide information for students in Senior 1 through

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4 who require an Individualized program. The document clearly identifies the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) as well as the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and delineates the process for developing these plans.

Transition planning. Students with disabilities have gradually been accepted into school systems and, with services and supports, have been experiencing successful school careers (Gearheart, 1992; Kiernan and Schalock, 1989; Clark and Kolstoe, 1995).

Since the early 1980s, there have been positive changes in the education of students with special needs. As a result of mainstreaming and desegregation, students with disabilities who were once excluded from regular classrooms and schools are now graduating from high school and entering the workforce and post-secondary training. Once these students finish high school, however, data have shown a trend of unsuccessful post-school achievement (Cummings and Madden, 1987; Wilcox and Bellamy, 1982; Kiernan and Schalock, 1989). It is at this point in the student's life when program continuity, on-the-job training, and follow-up services become areas of concern (Nisbet, 1990; Sailor, 1989; Turnbull and Turnbull, 1986).

In the 1990's, educators are still struggling with the question of how best to meet the needs of this group of students. How do we

provide a quality education and the opportunities for them to lead full and productive lives? This study approaches the transition process from the perspective that students will be a part of the community and will live and work in integrated environments.

The education of students with disabilities in the past decade has included an increasing emphasis on individualized long-term planning. The first transition programs, which began in the early 1980's, emphasized work skills or specific work related tasks students would need on the job. Supported employment and job coaching became popular (Clark & Kolstoe, 1995). Later on, educators realized that in order to help better prepare students for life after graduation, they had to teach skills that an adult living in a community would need to lead a full independent life as well as vocational skills. This philosophy is an alternative to traditional career and vocational education programs (Clark & Kolstoe, 1995) which did not include this wider perspective on adult living and employment.

All students, disabled or not, must make the transition to adulthood. Society has expectations of young adults, such as living independently, attending a college or university, and beginning employment. The education of students with disabilities should reflect these expectations.

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The transition from school to work and adulthood has been one area that continues to interest educators as well as rehabilitation workers and vocational educators (Wheman, 1992). The idea of a planned, coordinated, outcome-based process came to be known as Transition Planning. In this process, the planners pictured what a student's life would be like, where he or she would live and work, how he or she would participate in community life, and who would be involved in helping him or her make decisions. The plan may best be initiated while the student is still in school. The Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is seen as a means of coordinating services for students in transition from school to adult life. It is a written document designed to plan and implement strategies to enhance the futures of students with disabilities.

In Manitoba, the Minister of Education and Training (1989) outlined the protocol for collaboration between three Departments of government: the Department of Family Services, the Department of Health, and the Department of Education and Training. Transition Planning was to be implemented for all students with special needs, beginning at age sixteen, to facilitate successful transition from school-based programming to community-based programming. Wheman (1988) describes the transition planning process as:

a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within

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an outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment including supported employment, continuing adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs taking into account the student's preferences and interests and shall include instruction, community experiences, development employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (p. 70)

Educators and policy makers have not always agreed on the planning process due to differing philosophies of education, vocational training, and supported employment. According to Stodden and Browder (1986), there is a lack of counselling, comprehensive work experience, and cooperative planning with outside adult services in the transition planning done for students with disabilities.

Current literature reveals a growth in the area of strategies and methods that facilitate employment, independence and

integration (Nisbet, 1989; Sailor, 1989; Wehman & Kregal, 1985; Luecking & Tilson, 1992).

The literature also reports several models of transition programming. Most transition programs have the following components:

- 1. Initiation of planning process.**
- 2. Interagency involvement.**
- 3. Community-based needs assessment.**
- 4. Ongoing communication between family, agency, individual.**
- 5. Vocational planning.**

There appear to be two basic types of transition programs. One type trains and prepares an exceptional person for a specific vocation or program such as a sheltered workshop or day program. This is a system centered approach. The other type plans and integrates learning within the community and is a more person centered approach.

Successful models of transition do exist, but are varied from region to region. In Manitoba, service delivery varies from school division to school division (Freeze, 1994). The whole transition process has been described as a bridge from education to the rest of the community, business, and the adult service agencies that will be part of a student's life after school (Sailor, 1989).

Issues in Transition Planning and Service Delivery

There are many issues and areas of need that must be considered when planning the transition process. Researchers such as Clark and Kolstoe (1995) have identified some of the developmental tasks of adolescence. They note that this period of transition in life poses challenges for all students, with and without disabilities, including:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes.
2. Achieving a sexual identity.
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults.
5. Achieving economic independence.
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
7. Preparing for marriage, family life, and intimate relationships.
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour.
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a

guide to behaviour.

Based on the above developmental tasks of adolescence, this segment will include a discussion of some of the components that are critical to a successful high school program for a student with special needs: (a) work education, including work experience, vocational training, and career exploration, development, and counselling, (b) academic supports, including special education support and adapted curriculum, (c) personal supports, including counselling, career counselling, life skills training, and social skills training in the areas of relationships, attitudes, and motivation, (d) parental roles and responsibilities, community presence, and independent living, and (e) education in areas such as transportation, housing, financial management, leisure, and recreation.

Work Education. In the transition phase, an emphasis for students with disabilities is on work experience and job training in the communities where they will live. This training allows the student to gain specific work skills on the job. The belief that a student must have all of the necessary skills before he or she can go on the job has changed. Supported employment has allowed students with disabilities the opportunity to work in integrated work environments and should allow for varied experiences before they

leave high school (Nisbet, 1989). Students should also be given access to the vocational training programs available in schools.

Comprehensive career exploration and development prior to transition has been recommended for all students with disabilities (Halpern, 1985). Career exploration opportunities should be planned, reflect the student's interests, and follow a pattern of short community experiences preceding long term placements. According to Clark and Kolstoe (1995) career development is needed for all persons, young and old, with and without disabilities, male and female, poor and affluent.

Academic Supports. The goal of an effective ITP is to maximize a student's abilities. While the student is in school, different types of supports allow for this: (a) physical supports such as ramps, and washroom adaptations, (b) personnel supports such as educational assistants, counselors, and physical assistants, (c) administrative supports such as funding acquisition, and timetable flexibility, (d) curricular supports such as computer assisted instruction and annotated texts, and (e) personal supports such as mentors, circle of friends, and tutors.

Modified academic courses in high school enable students with disabilities to participate. Flexible timetabling allows for community work experience as well as academic coursework to be

completed. Teachers, paraprofessionals, guidance counsellors, and school administrators all contribute to completion of IEP and ITP objectives.

Personal Supports. This portion of the ITP includes personal counselling for the student at school and on the job, dealing with issues such as peer relations, social skills, motivation, career exploration, and parental involvement. Teachers also assist the student to access the community social services needed after graduation.

Independent Living. The student's current living environment as well as housing options for adult living after graduation should be considered. These options should reflect the basic principle of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972) as societal limits placed on persons with disabilities often restrict their independent living (Clark and Kolstoe, 1995). The role of the parent in the student's future living arrangements, such as a group home, shared apartment, or student housing, should be included in the plan. The method of transportation to and from work and around the community should be a consideration, particularly if the student has special health or therapy requirements. Teachers and counsellors should help provide the student and his or her family with information about financial management, including wages, benefits, insurance, banking,

shopping, housing, and the availability of assistance programs.

As the school and the workplace are slowly becoming integrated environments, the leisure and recreation component also must be planned to ensure age-appropriate fun and fitness activities and hobbies are available to students with disabilities.

Issues for High School Students at Graduation

Problems at graduation. Formal transition planning has evolved to ensure a future vision for students with disabilities. Transition planning has changed the roles of educators, parents, and students in the process (Clark & Kolstoe, 1995). The planning process forces participants to look at the future education, employment, residential, and personal options of the student.

Most non-disabled students usually have a vague idea, early in junior high school, of what their futures might be like (Brodinsky, 1990). Course work, part time jobs, clubs, sports, and extracurricular interests all help them to define themselves and choose what is important. In senior high, more specific courses and vocational options may be chosen in preparation for graduation. Friends, parents, older siblings, teachers, and guidance counsellors may help the student to make choices.

Most students with disabilities do not have an idea of what their futures will look like once they leave high school (Hasazi,

1985; Wehman & Moon, 1988; Kiernan & Schalock, 1989; Wehman, 1993; Clark & Kolstoe, 1995). The passing of laws to ensure an appropriate education and transition planning does not guarantee success for individuals with disabilities as adults. Parents typically have limited expectations for their disabled children and society has limited knowledge as to how these students could become functioning, contributing citizens.

Examples of problems facing students with disabilities at graduation include: (a) unemployment or underemployment, (b) limited community participation, (c) financial dependence, (d) limited access to post secondary education, (e) dysfunctional or nonexistent relationships, and (f) discrimination (Wehman & Moon, 1988; Kiernan & Schalock, 1989; Homer & Meyer, 1986; Clark & Kolstoe, 1995).

Students Labelled 'At-Risk'

Leaving high school and going on to the next phase in life is one of many transitions every student makes. Young people with, and without, disabilities must face the time school life ends and an independent adult life begins. Many of the previously mentioned components of an ITP and many of the issues facing students with disabilities are identical to those facing many non-disabled students. These students are often given the label 'at-risk'.

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According to Hasazi (1989), there is a trend emerging in the field of transition planning focusing on students with mild disabilities. Many of these students are falling through the cracks as well as falling short of their potential.

In the past decade, many more students have been educated in the mainstream. Students who were once segregated for various behavioural, emotional, or social reasons are now, in increasing numbers, part of regular classrooms. "Dropout", "at-risk" and "youth in crisis" have become terms used by educators to describe students at risk of not completing their schooling. 'At-risk' is a term used widely by educators and researchers and, as a result, has many meanings. Educators and researchers tend to agree on the descriptions, characteristics, and profiles of students who are at-risk of leaving school before graduation (Cato, 1989; Weis et al., 1989; Neufeld, 1992; Morris et al., 1991). Characteristics such as the following (Cato, 1989) are typical of those used to describe students in at-risk or "high-risk" categories:

- 1. Poor overall grades.**
- 2. Frequent truancy.**
- 3. No future orientation.**
- 4. Failed 1 or more grades.**
- 5. Low perceptual performance on one or more areas.**

- 6. Disruptive behaviours.**
- 7. Poor social adjustment.**
- 8. Failure to see relevance of education to the life experience.**
- 9. Rebellious attitude toward authority.**
- 10. Generally not accepted by peers. ("a loner").**
- 11. Low or inappropriate self-concept.**
- 12. Immature, suggestible.**
- 13. Inability to function within a traditional classroom.**
- 14. Frequent contacts with police.**
- 15. Gifted and/or talented abilities, but bored with school.**
- 16. General unacceptance by school staff.**

Much educational research has been conducted in the area of students dropping out of school and the economic and social consequences of leaving school without adequate skills (Glasser, 1990; Allison & Paquette, 1991; Churchill, 1991; Brodinsky, 1990; Morris et al., 1991, Feldhusen, 1995). Researchers tend to agree that the reasons for school dropout are complex and students drop out of school before graduation for many reasons.

Educational researchers suggest that the major factors putting students at-risk of not graduating are social, personal, academic, or school related (Brodinsky, 1990; Wheman, 1990;

Neufeld, 1992, Feldhusen,1995).

Social factors. Not all factors are school related. Social factors that may put students at-risk include:

1. Low socioeconomic status of family.
2. Single parent families.
3. Parental history of dropping out of school.
4. Low value placed on education.

Personal Factors. Personal factors associated with students themselves include:

1. Low self-esteem or negative self-concept.
2. Lack of life goals.
3. Poor emotional health.
4. Peer pressure.
5. Pregnancy and/or parenting.
6. Alcohol/substance abuse.
7. No self discipline.
8. Employment that interferes with schooling.

Academic and school related factors. Not all students at-risk of dropping out come from low socioeconomic families with problems. Schools and educational systems are also a major contributing factor (Glasser, 1990; Allison & Paquette, 1991).

School related factors contributing to students not completing high school include:

- 1. Inappropriate course offerings.**
- 2. Inadequate school services such as health care and guidance counselling.**
- 3. Irrelevant curriculum.**
- 4. Attendance problems, failure to attend school on a regular basis.**
- 5. No extracurricular involvement.**
- 6. Frequent transfers between schools.**
- 7. Repeating one or more grades.**
- 8. Below average basic skill level.**
- 9. Poor grades.**

According to Klassen and Stevens (1995), at-risk students usually follow a pattern or sequence of steps before actually dropping out of school. They found the students usually lose interest in school work, fall farther behind in assignments and grades, and begin to skip classes, which leads to suspension from school and conflict with the school administration.

Students labeled at-risk in high school, who may need support academically, socially, and emotionally, face specific problems.

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These students may or may not seek assistance from teachers or counsellors. These students may have problems with punctuality and attendance and be at risk for dropping out. They could benefit from a transition plan. Typically, these are students who may not formulate a vision of what their future will look like through coursework, partime jobs, or extracurricular activities. Feldhusen (1995) believes students labelled underachievers or at-risk or problem youth may have underdeveloped ability and talent. Feldhusen also argues that learning capabilities are partly inherited but are also developed throughout life through interaction with parents, siblings, and teachers. Feldhusen's research with students who are at-risk is based on the belief that students can be drawn back into school to learn if they can achieve success and can tap into their own talent, creative ability, and learning style.

Students who are at-risk of dropping out often have been placed below their age appropriate grade level, have low academic achievement, and skill deficits. This, however, is not always the profile. According to Beck and Muia (1981), academically gifted and talented students who are bored with school are also at risk of dropping out. According to McCluskey and Walker (1986), gifted or bright students face problems such as trying to hide their talents to fit in with their peers or acting out as a way of seeking attention

and the approval of their peers. Often, bright students underuse their potential, become bored with and uninterested in school, and then drop out.

Common problems of students with disabilities and students labelled at-risk

The problems students labelled 'at-risk' face can be categorized into the same components that make up an ITP for a student labelled 'disabled': work education, academic supports, personal supports, and independent living.

For example, students labelled at-risk, like many students with disabilities, face unemployment as a result of dropping out of school, limited access to post secondary education, and vocational and academic skill deficits. They may be participating in youth gangs or dysfunctional personal relationships. They may live at home, on the street, or in a group home. Students labelled at-risk may have limited involvement or lack positive participation in their community or school.

According to O'Brien and Lyle (1988), an individual or personal futures plan is based on a positive valuing of the person as well as developing a quality lifestyle. The identified components of an ITP for students with disabilities are community presence, community participation, choice, respect, and competence.

This leads to the concern of this research study. In order for a high school student to be mandated to receive an Individual Transition Plan, he or she must be identified and labelled with a disability. This may be an overly restrictive policy. The application of transition planning techniques for unmandated students with 'other' needs will be considered in this study.

Transition Planning Models

Planning the transition from school to work for students should be the concern of schools, parents, the business community, and community service agencies. The goal of a planning process should be to ensure a successful, contributing, productive, independent individual, who is able to accept and fulfill adult responsibilities (Gearheart et al., 1992; Eaves & McLaughlin, 1993; Weber, 1994).

There are many approaches to planning for the future. These vary according to differing philosophies. In this segment, transition planning approaches, counseling methods, cooperative education programs, and stay-in-school initiatives for at-risk students will be examined.

System Centered

Although recent reports describe the ITP process, what should be included in it, and how it should be developed (Stowitschek &

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Kelso, 1989; Rusch, Chadsey-Rusch & Lagomarcino, 1987; Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982), less has been reported on the success of the programs recommended (Wehman, 1987; Freeze, 1994).

System centered approaches for developing and evaluating services for persons with severe disabilities are those that prepare the person for a specific vocation or area, usually a sheltered workshop or adult day program (Nisbet, 1989; Wehman, 1988). In the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of developmental readiness was adopted by many schools and adult agencies. The train-place approach was believed to be the most effective (Pumpian, West & Sheppard, 1989). However, studies focusing on students' lives once they graduated from school showed unemployment rates ranging from 42% to 88% (Halpern, 1973; Wehman, 1988).

Person Centered

Transition models that addressed personal, residential, as well as employment needs and outcomes emerged in the early 1980s as a result of deinstitutionalization and mainstreaming (Kiernan & Stark, 1986; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). The person centered approaches focus on the whole person living and working in an integrated environment. The community is seen as the alternative to the institution (McKnight, 1980). Supported employment programs emerged and allowed students with disabilities to work in the

community along with their non-disabled peers (Nisbet & Hagner, 1988; Wehman & Kregel, 1985; Nisbet & York, 1989; Schalock, McGaughey, & Kiernan, 1989). The transition planning process evolved in the 1980's to focus on the person and his or her employment and living outcomes. The characteristics of most successful transition programs included: (a) an initiation of the plan, (b) inclusion of all participants, (c) access to resources, (d) frequent regular meetings, and (e) an individualized client centered approach (Wehman, 1988). A comprehensive plan with a life-span perspective that includes all facets of the student's life is recommended by Freeze (1995).

Personal Futures Planning

Based on the philosophies of integrated education and community presence (Thousand, 1986), supported employment (Nisbet, 1990; Bellamy & Horner, 1988), and residential support (O'Brien, 1989) specific planning tools have emerged which have been applied to transition planning.

Circle of support. The circle of support concept (Forest & Snow, 1980) developed in response to a personal situation and crisis where a group of friends came together in different roles of support. As a result of this circle, the concept of support circles around a person with disabilities began. Marsha Forest and Judith Snow

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developed a plan from personal experience to be used in classrooms where a child with disabilities could be included and supported by a group or circle of friends.

McGill Action Planning System. The McGill Action Planning System (MAPS) (Forest, Snow, & Lusthaus, 1988) is another process that leads team members with a common vision for the student through a series of eight steps to assist in planning for the student's life. The following questions are associated with the MAPS planning process.

- What is the individual's history?
- What is the dream?
- What is the nightmare?
- Who is this person?
- What are his/her strengths, gifts, abilities?
- What are the individual's needs?
- What would an ideal day look like?
- What is the plan of action?

Out of this plan, a vision of the future for the person with a disability takes shape.

Personal plans. Personal Futures Planning (Mount, 1990) is a planning tool designed to focus on the total person. The method uses conversation and graphics to cover five areas of accomplishment:

community presence, community participation, choices/rights, respect, and competence. Typically, this approach to planning is being used for people with a wide range of disabilities including mental illness and stroke recovery (Amado & Lyon, 1992).

Personal Futures Planning is a framework that provides strategies to increase the likelihood that people with disabilities will develop relationships, develop control over their own lives, and acquire positive roles in community life (Mount & Zwernik, 1990). A Personal Futures Plan is a positive experience and focuses on the person's strengths, but not his or her deficits. The planning depends on the support of people who are close to the person with disabilities to assist the person achieve his or her goals.

PATH. Planning Alternative Tomorrows With Hope (PATH) is another group planning process designed to help the pathfinder reach his or her life goals. The PATH process (Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1992) is also used to help individuals, schools, organizations, businesses, and families in future building. It is a process that involves a dream for the future as well as an action plan for the implementation of identified goals. In Manitoba, the PATH process is used by The Association for Community Living, some supported employment agencies, vocational rehabilitation workers, and some school divisions as part of life planning for individuals with special

needs.

TIDE. Talent Identification and Development Education (TIDE) is a planning process designed to help students at-risk identify their talents, creative abilities, and learning styles (Feldhusen, 1995). The TIDE process begins with a Growth Plan for each student. The first part of the Growth Plan begins with the student, assisted by the guidance counsellor and teachers, identifying current strengths, interests, abilities, courses and test scores, talents, awards and honors, and learning styles.

The second part of the Growth Plan requires the student to formulate goals. These goals are based on the information in part one of the Plan. The goals are used to help the student plan the program he or she will follow in the upcoming year. Extracurricular activities and personal activities are linked to classes the student will choose and the goals the student will set for himself or herself for that school year.

Creative Problem Solving. Creative Problem Solving (CPS) is another method used as a framework for at-risk students to plan for the future (Treffinger & Isaksen, 1992). CPS is a problem solving tool used by individuals or groups. CPS is flexible and does not follow a series of prearranged steps. CPS relies on the group or individual to think and reflect a great deal about the problem to be

solved. One component of CPS requires the student to identify the current reality "now". The questions who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, how? are then asked to help evaluate Outcomes, Opportunities or Obstacles which will ultimately lead to a section called Future State.

The 3 components of Creative Problem Solving are Understanding the Problem, Generating Ideas, and Planning for Action. In order that Creative Problem Solving be implemented most effectively, a Creative Learning Model has been developed (Treffinger, 1988). In the 3 levels of the Learning Model, thinking tools such as brainstorming and critical thinking are used to help solve problems. The CPS model is a model which enables the student at-risk to identify and deal with the real problem. The model also helps establish ownership of the problem and commitment among group members to help the student reach his or her goal.

Counselling Methods

Comprehensive Guidance Counseling. In response to the increasingly complex world in which we live and expect our young people to fit into, a new model of guidance counselling has emerged (Guysbers, 1989). Gysbers identified and described changes to the traditional guidance program which originally began in schools as vocational guidance.

The Comprehensive Guidance Program Model evolved in response to the lack of an organized structure for guidance in schools. Many school counselling programs had become remedial and reactive. Many of the programs in high schools were becoming "ancillary" programs with measurement of student outcomes that were difficult or impossible to assess (Guysbers, 1990).

The main foundation of the Comprehensive Guidance Model is identifying the guidance knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a student will need for life or career development. It is based on the growth and development of the student as a human being (Guysbers, 1990). Life career development is defined as self-development over a person's life span through the integration of the roles, settings, and events in a person's life. The career portion of life career development, according to Guysbers, is not synonymous with occupation but includes all life careers including responsibilities to family members over the life span.

The Model is organized around the three areas of knowledge of self and others, career planning and exploration, and educational and vocational development (Gysbers, Hughey, Starr and Lapan, 1992).

A critical difference between the Comprehensive Guidance Program Model and a more traditional model used in many schools is the role of the counsellors. In a Comprehensive Guidance Program

they work cooperatively with the entire school staff to integrate guidance and career counselling into the subject areas. The four components in a comprehensive program are guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support (Guysbers & Henderson, 1988).

The individual planning component for students is vital in this model. It includes activities to assist students to plan, monitor, and manage their own learning. The plan helps to focus on personal as well as career goals.

Comprehensive school counselling. The New Hampshire Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program is another example of a change from traditional guidance and counselling.

The focus of this program shifts from the role of guidance counsellor to the role and function of the guidance curriculum. The New Hampshire model includes the philosophy that the emphasis and attention of education should focus on the "whole" person. This model includes guidance as an integral part of students education that should impact on the majority of students. Student outcomes and competencies are the focus of the program. The program model includes skills students need to gain that will help them throughout their lives in the various roles they choose. These are skills such as self-analysis, decision-making, written and verbal communication,

assuming personal responsibility, and analysis of one's behaviour and its impact on others.

In the New Hampshire Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Project (1988) study, researchers visited twenty-one vocational centres and fifteen high school guidance departments. The following results were reported:

1. Counsellors spent a large percentage of their time with a small percentage of the students.
2. Counsellors spent time completing a variety of clerical and administrative tasks.
3. There was no valid method of evaluating the guidance program.
4. There was no real agreement about expectations for the guidance program.

As a result of data collected about the guidance and counselling programs in New Hampshire senior high schools, the New Hampshire Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program was created in an attempt to help counsellors, administrators, and teachers develop individualized programs for their own schools.

Cooperative Education Programs

Cooperative education is an experiential method of learning that involves integrating work placements with students' school

programs. A co-op program involves a partnership between the student, the school, a business or industry, and a labour organization. Many high schools and post secondary institutions offer cooperative education programs.

Cooperative education allows the student to assess his or her needs, interests, aptitudes, and skills. Once initial planning has started, a match for the student can be made with an employer in the community. All co-op education programs have carefully developed models. Most programs ensure student and employer input, develop goals, determine areas of responsibility, and establish evaluation and monitoring systems.

Historically, business leaders and educators have agreed preparation for work is an objective of education. In the 1960s, the business community was separate from schools and could still manage to draw enough workers to fill jobs. Changes in the labour supply have caused a new interest in business-education partnerships. Partnerships typically involve employers, employees, support staff, teachers, and principals.

In a study to measure the actual effects of field education on young people, researchers found areas of development reflected in achievement, self-concept, career maturity, values, and attitudes (Williams, 1990). The findings, from twelve groups studied, were in

four main areas: personal development, career development, affective development, and academic development.

In another study Conrad & Heden (1982) looked at 4000 secondary school students enrolled in Co-op education across the U.S.A. The researchers wanted to look at results in student development and the program variables that promoted such development. Conrad and Heden reported that experiential education had a impact on the students' social, psychological, and intellectual development. They measured these variables against outcomes for students in regular classrooms.

Stay-in-School Initiative

In education, students at risk of dropping out of school before graduation are often labelled "at-risk". Students with attendance problems, social and emotional problems, or who are members of youth gangs also could be labelled at-risk.

In 1990, the federal government announced a Stay-in-School initiative aimed at lowering the 30% dropout rate in Canada. The initiative included three components: programs and services, mobilization of stakeholders, and public awareness. Many high schools in Manitoba received grants to hire a mentor to help school personnel with this growing concern (Minister of State for Youth and Employment, 1990).

One dropout prevention program (Conrath, 1989) used in British Columbia included the following basic components:

- 1. The program was part of a larger K-12 strategy involving, to some degree, all staff members.**
- 2. Students who might best be served by the program were carefully identified.**
- 3. Students were told why they had been invited into the program.**
- 4. Academic content was not watered down and students were not patronized.**
- 5. Students were never treated anonymously or impersonally.**
- 6. An effort was made to help discouraged students see the importance of education to the rest of their lives.**

Conclusion and Research Question

Many researchers support the idea that planning for the transition from school to work and adult life is an issue for all students (Clark & Koltoe, 1995; Wehman, 1995; Browning, Dunn, & Brown, 1995; Halloran, 1995). Students with disabilities have been provided with a formal plan (ITP) to assist with this transition.

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Students labelled 'at-risk' have programs in place to help them see the importance of education and work. Some schools have adopted a comprehensive approach to career and guidance counselling and assist all students with a personal plan long before they graduate from high school. It therefore seems logical to ask if individual transition planning, typically used as planning tool with special needs students, can be used to benefit at-risk students.

Chapter III

Methods

Design

Research Question

Can a personal planning tool, specifically Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), typically used in special education, be used effectively to plan the school to work and adult life transition of at-risk students?

Participants

Six at-risk students were selected, interviewed, and included in a PATH. The criteria for student selection was based on the following requirements:

- 1. They were currently attending high school.**
- 2. They were currently in Senior 1, 2, 3, or 4 (grade 9, 10, 11, or 12) or taking a combination of courses at these levels.**
- 3. They were identified by a teacher, guidance counsellor, or resource teacher as being at-risk for graduation or transition to work and/or post-secondary education.**
- 4. They were not identified as special needs students, as**

defined by Manitoba Education and Training.

5. They were not currently following an IEP or an ITP.

6. They were not receiving individually funded special education assistance.

The purpose of these criteria for participant selection was to ensure students participating in the study were following a regular high school program of studies, had not been identified in any way as students with special needs, but who, nevertheless, were 'at-risk'.

Selection of Schools

The Director of Education of the St. James-Assiniboia School Division # 2 approved the study and identified the high school to be involved in the study. The school identified was Sturgeon Creek Collegiate (SCC). Sturgeon Creek Collegiate has a population of 1050 students. It is the largest high school in the Division and offers technical, vocational, and academic courses.

Selection of Subjects

The students in the study were selected by the Guidance Counsellor and the Resource Teacher of SCC based on the aforementioned criteria. A list of students was submitted to the researcher. Student participants were selected from the list. To ensure gender balance, three boys and three girls were chosen to be

participants in the study. Also, because the label at-risk has many implications and meanings, the Resource Teacher and the Guidance Counsellor identified six students based on the degree to which they were at-risk, i.e., mildly at-risk, moderately at-risk, or severely at-risk. They considered also how likely each student was to complete a PATH.

When the students had been identified, the researcher informed them of the study, explained the PATH process, and presented each student with a letter of explanation to request their participation and to obtain their informed consent as well as the informed consent of their parents. At all times, the student had the opportunity to ask questions and to withdraw from the study if he or she so chose.

The PATH process allowed each student to invite family and friends to the PATH. A letter of consent was given to each person who agreed to be a part of the PATH. Each participant received a letter of explanation as well as a consent form. Each participant was informed that his or her name would not be used in the study and was informed of his or her right to withdraw from the study at any time.

A trained PATH facilitator agreed to facilitate a PATH with each student. A letter was sent to the facilitator, requesting her

assistance, explaining the nature of the study and assuring her of her right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Procedure

Procedures

The data were obtained through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with each of the subjects and through observations of the PATH transition planning meetings with each of the six subjects. Prior to the PATH, each student was asked questions from the pre-PATH questionnaire (see Appendix G). Answers and comments made during the interview were transcribed. One week later, the student met with the researcher to participate in the PATH. A few days after the PATH had taken place, the student met with the researcher to be asked the questions from the post-PATH interview (see Appendix H). The responses from each student were analysed for possible trends, and for similarities and differences between answers. The results from each PATH were analysed as were results from the pre-PATH and post-PATH interviews. Each student's responses were grouped together and reported as a case study in Chapter IV. The results are discussed in Chapter V.

Face to face interviews were chosen for this study for several reasons. First, the nature of the personal futures planning process

itself is interactive. Consequently, interviews were seen to be harmonious with the PATH process. Second, an interview is an appropriate method to gather specific information about the planning process from each student as these questions could not be structured easily into a multiple-choice format. Third, some of the questions were of a personal nature and the researcher may have been able to obtain data the student might not have given on a questionnaire. Fourth, interviews allow for probes and follow-up questions. The question was asked, and if no response was given by the student, the researcher would move to another question and return to the first question later. Interviews also helped to facilitate student responses to all questions. Finally, students, who typically do not like taking tests, and who may be somewhat reluctant to complete a pencil and paper task may have found the interview to be more amenable.

It must be noted that the intent of a person-centered planning process such as PATH is to help people make a commitment to work together, to help make change for that individual. Because it is an ongoing process, teachers in the school agreed to follow up with participants once the study and the initial PATH ended. Because the students involved in the study were students in the school division where I teach, I agreed to be a part of any follow-up sessions for

the study participants. For example, this may mean that I will assist with one or more of the goals set at a PATH for a student, be present at a future meeting with the student, or help him or her assess his or her progress at the end of the school year.

PATH

The procedure to set up a PATH (Pearpoint, O'Brien, Forest, 1992) for this study is listed in Appendix E. PATH is a person-centred planning tool used to bring people together to clarify goals and plan for the future. PATH is a social process relying on the active involvement of others who know and care about the person. PATH has been used in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division to help students with disabilities and their families to set goals and reach their potential. A trained PATH facilitator, assisted by the researcher, conducted a PATH with each student.

The authors (Pearpoint et al., 1992) recommend that a PATH facilitator experience the process as a participant, as an observer, and as a guide. Prior to the study, the researcher has had the experience of all three roles in the past six years as a teacher of special needs students and as a graduate student at the University of Manitoba and at McGill University.

Steps in the PATH Process. The three key elements of PATH are:

- 1. Team facilitation.**
- 2. Graphic recording.**
- 3. Group/Team empowerment.**

There are eight steps in the PATH process. The sequence allows for clarification of goals, visualization of change, and recognition of the persons involved in the process.

Step 1: The Dream for the Future

Step 2: Goals

Step 3: Now

Step 4: Who to Enroll?

Step 5: Building strength

Step 6: Action Plan for next few months

Step 7: Action Plan for next month

Step 8: Commitment to first step

Step 1: The Dream for the Future is when the student identifies and describes a future dream to work toward.

Step 2: Sensing the Goal is the stage where the student identifies what is important to him or her clarifying in concrete terms what he or she will be working toward. The goals should be possible for

the student to attain and also be positive in nature.

Step 3: Grounding in the Now is the step where the student recognizes what he or she has now and where he or she is now in relation to his or her dream for the future.

Step 4: Identifying People to Enroll is the stage where the student and PATH participants identify people to help achieve the dream for the future. The question, "What contribution can this person make to what you want to create?" is asked.

Step 5: Recognizing ways to Build Strength is the stage where the student acknowledges the need to gather knowledge, learn skills, and build healthy relationships.

Step 6: Charting Action is the stage where the student recognizes, and the facilitator records, actions to be taken over the next three to six months in order for the student to achieve his or her goal.

Step 7: Planning next month is the identification of who will do what job by what particular date in the immediate future.

Step 8: Committing to the First Step is the stage where the group moves from planning to action, the stage where immediate tasks that have been identified now are assigned to specific people.

Graphic Recording of PATH

The graphic recorder of the PATH has the job of recording comments of the group using words, symbols, and images on chart

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paper. The graphic format used is an integral part of PATH (Appendix A). The authors recommend that 3'x 10' paper be used and be given to the student at the completion of the planning process. The graphic acts as a permanent record of the PATH as well as a tool to help the group see patterns and events in the student's life. The facilitator will not have the job of graphic recorder. A record of each student's PATH is found in Appendix P.

Chapter IV

Results

Participants

Number of Participants

There were a total of 6 students who participated in the study. A list of 20 students identified as having at-risk behaviour and being at-risk of not completing high school was submitted to me by the school guidance counsellor. I asked the guidance counsellor to identify students by gender and by level of at-risk behaviour (i.e., those students being mildly at-risk, moderately at-risk, and those severely at-risk of not completing high school). The list of students selected was shown to the school principal who agreed with the descriptions.

Of the original six students identified to participate in the study, four remained and completed a PATH as well as the pre and post-PATH interviews. Two of the original six students withdrew from school before the study began. The next two students on the list were then selected and agreed to be part of the study. Four female students and two male students participated in the study.

In the following descriptions, I have used pseudonyms for each

of the participants. Family members will be identified and described by their relationship to the student and not by name.

Individual Descriptions

Lisa

Lisa was a fourteen year old female student who was repeating most of Senior 1 and was taking a few courses at the Senior 2 level. She lived with her mother, her older sister, and her mother's boyfriend. She indicated her interests were sports, cheerleading, shopping, finding a boyfriend, and kids. Lisa has been identified as being severely at risk of not graduating from high school.

Lisa has had difficulty attending school in the past. In grade 7 and 8, she was required to repeat several subjects due to low marks as a result of absenteeism. At the time of the study Lisa was in her second year of high school. She was repeating most of the credits she did not obtain in the 1995-96 school year. Lisa was taking four credits and believed she would pass only one of the four this semester. Lisa has been suspended from school on one occasion for fighting. She was taking courses in the Vocational stream.

Lisa was willing and eager to participate in the PATH process. She invited one friend and three family members to her PATH.

Lisa's self description indicated she was, "... smart but not for

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school stuff." She said she was, "... a very good reader, I understand mostly everything, but I never go to class. I skip alot. I have a really short attention span, you know, for school stuff. I am really hyper. I can really be a pain. Some teachers say I can do the work, but I don't try."

"What am I good at? Well, I am a good person. I am a good friend. I am really there for people when they have a problem. I always solve it. I am a good problem solver."

"What would I like to change about myself? My nose, my feet, I wish I wasn't so annoying."

Lisa's goal (pre-PATH) was to finish high school, go to university, and become a child psychologist. "I really want to work with kids, you know, and their families. Like a Family Services worker, where you go and get kids and help them get a good home if they don't have one."

Liam

Liam was a fifteen year old male student who was in Senior 2. He was repeating one credit not completed in Senior 1. Liam lived at home with his father, mother, and one older sister. Liam indicated he enjoyed sports such as biking and skiing and that he liked animals. Liam was receiving Resource assistance to complete a Senior 2 English credit. He was having difficulty staying on task in

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the classroom and was not completing assignments. Liam has been identified as being moderately at risk of not completing high school. Liam was rarely absent from school. He had been suspended from school for fighting. Liam attended every class. His favourite courses were Phys. Ed. and Nutrition. Liam was in the Academic stream but also was exploring Vocational options.

Liam was very willing to participate in the PATH process. He wanted to invite his parents and his grandmother to the PATH. His parents were present at the PATH.

Liam's description of himself indicated he was "... really pretty smart, but I have a real hard time concentrating. I really am not, well..., like..., a special needs student but some people think I am. As a student I think I'm lazy, not very motivated. I don't like work, you know, to write things down."

"School should be more fun. I like some of the teachers, but I don't like work."

"What am I good at? Well, I really have to think. I guess I have a sense of humour, some people don't have one, but I do."

"What would I like to change about myself? Well, my grades I guess. I want to pass."

Liam's goal was to complete high school even if it took him five years. He had no career plans (pre-PATH).

Marg

Marg was a sixteen year old female student. She was in Senior 2. She was repeating one Math credit not earned in Senior 1. She lived at home with her mother, her younger brother and her mother's boyfriend. She had one older sister not living at home. Marg indicated her interests are skating, watching TV, painting, and cooking.

Marg has had many absences in all her courses. She was passing all four and planned to earn four credits this semester. Marg has been identified as being mildly at risk of not graduating from high school. She was taking courses in Photography and Cosmetology in the Vocational stream.

Marg was very willing to participate in the study. She invited her mother, but her sister and her boyfriend attended the PATH.

Marg's description of herself indicated she was, "Very quiet. I am really good in class, I'm not bad or anything, I'm quiet, when I'm there. Sometimes I come late. Sometimes I don't come to school at all. I'm doing way better this year though. I like my classes this year but they are too long."

"What are some positive qualities about me? I'm friendly, I'm a good friend, caring, I think of others before myself and I guess I'm not loud and bad."

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"What would I like to change, well, I'm lazy. I would like to change my hair. I should be more outgoing I'm too quiet."

Marg's goal was to finish high school and get a job. She would like to own her own hair salon (pre-PATH).

Marc

Marc was a sixteen year old male student taking courses in Senior 2 and a few in Senior 3. Marc lived at home with his mother. He said his interests include playing hockey and playing on the school football team. Marc has had difficulty attending school in the past. He has had to repeat several credits due to absenteeism. Marc has been suspended from school on two occasions for fighting. He anticipated he would obtain two half credits this semester. Marc has been identified as being severely at risk of not completing high school. Marc was in the Academic stream.

Marc was willing to participate in the PATH process. His mother agreed to attend the PATH.

Marc's description of himself as a student indicated, "I'm a slacker. I don't go to class or school all the time. I skip. I'm in the habit of not going to class. I'm late, then I just hang out with my friends." He also said, "School is boring".

"What am I good at? Well, sports, I guess. I like playing football. I play hockey. I'm a goalie."

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"My good qualities are, well... I don't have any. No, I guess I'm polite and I'm an ok person."

"The qualities I'd like to change are, I'm lazy, I guess and... the teachers would say I have a really bad temper."

Marc's goal (pre-PATH) was to get a part time job and possibly go to Red River Community College when he graduates from high school.

Cathy

Cathy was a seventeen year old female student. She has dropped out of school three times prior to this year. She was taking Senior 2 courses. Cathy lived at home with her mother and her mother's boyfriend. Cathy has been identified as being moderately at risk of not completing high school.

Cathy has had difficulty obtaining credits due to absenteeism and withdrawing from school midway through the semester. She anticipated she would earn two credits this semester and had already dropped two courses. She is in the Vocational stream.

Cathy was willing to participate in the PATH process. She was supported by her mother who was eager for her to graduate from high school.

Cathy described herself as a student as follows, "I suck at school. Well, I really do. I can't do work."

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"I have a part time job and sometimes I don't have time for homework. Between my job and partying I don't have a lot of time."

"I like Cosmetology. I think I'm even passing."

When asked to describe some positive characteristics about herself, Cathy replied, "I'm outgoing. I get along with people and I'm an awesome driver."

When asked what she would like to change, she answered, "My hair and I'm too short."

Cathy was on an attendance contract with the school administration.

Jane

Jane was a seventeen year old female student. She was in Senior 3 and had completed a few Senior 4 credits. She was living with her mother and younger brother but at the time of the study was staying with a friend and her mother. Jane said her interests were reading, drawing, Advertising Art, and hanging out with her friends. In the past two years Jane has had difficulty attending school. She has been required to repeat several courses due to absenteeism. Jane has withdrawn from school on two previous occasions. She has been identified as being mildly at risk of not graduating from high school. This semester she is taking two credits and expects to pass them both. Jane still needs to take 2

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courses in Senior 3 and three courses in Senior 4 that are required for graduation. Jane is in the Academic stream.

Jane was willing to participate in the PATH process. She invited a friend to the PATH.

Jane's description of herself during the pre-PATH interview indicated she was, "... smart enough but kinda lazy".

"I want to get good marks and everything but sometimes things come up." When asked to describe herself as a student she answered, "I used to be an A+ student, you know that. I was really good in school. In junior high I got pretty good marks."

"What am I good at? Well, I can write pretty well and I get good marks on all my essays."

"I'm a people person. I like to party."

"I don't really care what other people think, you know. I do what I feel like."

"What would I like to change about myself? I don't really know."

Jane's goal (pre-PATH) was to finish high school. She said she wanted to go to university but that she would have to save some money first.

Data Collection

Descriptive data were collected for this research study using interviews and observations. The observation style used was participant observation. As the researcher, I was primarily an observer, but at times I was a participant in the PATH process. The observation by the researcher was overt. All participants were aware I would be taking notes during the PATH, but when asked to give input as a teacher or contribute as a supporter of the student, I contributed to the PATH.

Each student met with me for a pre-PATH interview (see Appendix G). All responses were recorded. Following the pre-PATH interview, each student then participated in a PATH. Comments and anecdotes made during the PATH were also recorded. A few days later, each student met with me to complete the post-PATH (Appendix H) interview. Their answers were recorded.

Following the post-PATH interviews, I examined the students' responses to the pre and post-PATH interviews and my PATH notes and began looking for trends, commonalities, and differences. Based on the similarities in responses, I identified common themes that I saw emerge.

Initially, all of the students were curious about and interested in doing a PATH. Many of the students asked if they were in trouble

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again. I assured them that the PATH would be positive and would not dwell on past performance. All students were given an explanation of PATH and told that once they had gone through the process, I would be asking them how they perceived the process at different stages. I would also ask them if they thought PATH was a positive, useful experience for them and if we should do PATHs with other students in the school.

Individual Results

The following section will include results from each student's pre-PATH Interview (Appendix G), observations from each student's PATH, and results from each student's post-PATH interview (Appendix H). A discussion of the results is included in Chapter V.

Pre-PATH Interview: Lisa

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked if Lisa knew what a personal plan was, what its purpose was, whether she had participated in a plan before, what had she done in school so far that she considered to be beneficial in preparing for the future, and what could be done in school to assist her. Lisa responded that she knew that "a personal plan is a plan to figure out your future and plan ahead." She had not participated in one prior to the PATH. The assistance she received was talking to the guidance counsellor about higher level courses she would need to be accepted into

university. She indicated she had not had any career counselling or done any career exploration.

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Lisa to describe herself. As a student, she described herself as having "A short attention span, poor grades, sometimes poor behaviour, and I skip school a lot." When asked to describe herself now, Lisa said, "I'm in grade 10, I'm funny, I have good qualities like I'm not always hyper and I'm not lazy, actually." When asked to list personal characteristics that were positive, Lisa paused for a few seconds while trying to think of some. I told her we would come back to that question and asked the next question which was to list personal characteristics that she would like to change. She responded immediately, "My nose, my feet, my hair." All were physical characteristics. When asked if there was something about her character or personality she might like to change, she responded, "I wish I wasn't so annoying all the time." When I returned to question 16 and asked Lisa to list some positive personal characteristics she responded, "I talk lots and I'm a good friend, I guess. I'm a good problem solver."

When asked to describe likes and dislikes about school, Lisa said she "... liked different activities in school." She also said she liked to hang out with her friends, and she liked some of the teachers. What she didn't like about school were, "the long classes,

the boring classes, long school day, and some of the teachers."

Lisa could identify important people in her life, "My mother, my sister, my grandfather." Important things in her life were family, friends, and education.

When asked what direction she could see her life taking, Lisa responded, "I'm going to get smarter. I'm going to marry a rich guy and get a good job." She seemed to have a clear idea of the job she would have. She wanted to become a child psychologist, "... and work with kids, with abandoned children. I want them to have a good home and stuff."

When asked where she could see herself the year after graduation, she replied, "I don't know, maybe a secretary. I don't even think about it."

The questions about pride and accomplishment seemed to be difficult for Lisa to answer. Her first response was, "I don't know." After I repeated the question and probed with what it was she felt good about, she answered, "I am always there for people."

To describe herself in the future as a successful person, Lisa said a successful person would "have a good job, nice home, lots of friends, and having people love me for who I am."

When asked to identify someone who may help her to see herself in the future, she identified her grandfather.

Observation of PATH: Lisa

Lisa's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the participants and listing their names in a corner of the PATH poster. The facilitator was introduced and she explained that she regularly facilitated PATHs. She explained she had done them with schools, school divisions, and even the leader of a political party. She reviewed the steps the PATH would take and referred to the graphic. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix P.

Initially, Lisa had to think about her dream for the future in the Dream step. Her dream focused on a big house, a car, a family, a husband, a pool in the backyard, a good job, and a trip to Hawaii.

When others were asked what their dream was for Lisa, the dream was more general. "I want Lisa to be happy, and I know she will be successful at anything she puts her mind to," said her aunt.

When her grandfather spoke, it was after all the other participants. He seemed to be cautious. He contributed during the Goal phase when Lisa indicated that one of her goals was to get her beginner's driver's licence and that she wanted to enroll in Driver Education. He said, "It will be good for her to drive, so I don't have to cart her around all over the place all the time." Lisa's goals were to pass grade 10, to pass the subjects she was currently enrolled in, and to get a summer job working with children.

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During the Now phase, Lisa described herself as happy, pleased with her life, and she said she was feeling good about herself. When asked why she was not attending school regularly, Lisa responded, "I can't ever be on time for the school bus. It comes at 7:30 am and I am always late." She agreed she had been missing quite a few classes. Her grandfather added she had been ill for the past month and the doctors were unable to help. During the discussion about school and attendance, there seemed to be quite a bit of dissatisfaction on the part of the grandfather. He was unhappy with the school administration and he faulted the school for Lisa's absences. She had been suspended the previous year for two days and he attributed her attendance problems to school policy.

In one year from now Lisa could see herself in grade 11 and passing all her courses. In one month from now, she planned to have studied for her final exams, passed her courses, and applied for the Driver Education course. The first step Lisa planned to do tomorrow was to show her PATH plan to her mother and meet with three teachers to get all the assignments she had missed.

Post-PATH Interview: Lisa

Question 1 asked if Lisa thought the PATH process was beneficial. Lisa said, "Yea, it was good. I liked it. It actually made me think. It was too long though. My Mom was waiting for us to get

home. Even she thought it was too long."

Question 2 asked about life direction. Lisa responded her life was heading in a "good" direction. "I'm going to get a job and I guess go to school more often."

Questions 3 and 4 asked what and who is important in your life? Lisa indicated the same people as the pre-PATH interview: her family and her friends. She said college and child development courses were things that were important. In response to the question about where she sees herself in the year after graduation, Lisa had a specific answer. She said, "In university, taking child care courses."

Lisa's description of herself in the future as a successful person was "Rich, happy, and doing a job and things I like to do."

Lisa's suggestion to schools to help students plan was: "Tell them (kids) not to skip. I would make it harder for kids to skip classes." She indicated grade 9 was a good time for students to start planning for life after high school and she thought PATH was a good idea for other students in her school.

During the first part of the PATH, the Dream setting phase, Lisa said she felt a bit uncomfortable. She wanted to say she could look for guys when she was in Hawaii, but she couldn't because her grandfather was there. She thought that part was "fun".

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When she was asked if she thought she could accomplish all of the things that were mentioned in the Goal setting phase she replied, "Probably, if I tried."

Lisa's response to question 13, asking if the Now section helped her to see herself as she is now in relation to what she dreamed for herself for the future was, "I've got to go to school and make sure I go to my classes and get an education."

Lisa indicated her positive characteristics were, "I'm smart and funny and what did they say, I'm unique."
She repeated one of the qualities that was mentioned by her grandfather during the PATH.

Table 1

Lisa's Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Level of Agreement</u>				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful					x
2. PATH useful				x	
3. Parents positive				x	
4. Courses to reach goals				x	
5. Personal needs				x	
6. Need to graduate					x
7. Live on my own				x	
8. Vocational choices				x	
9. Important people				x	
10. Financially independent			x		
11. Future plans, marriage				x	
12. Socially responsible			x		
13. Contribute to community				x	
14. Money decisions				x	
15. Fun					x
16. PATH for other students					x

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

Pre-PATH Interview: Liam

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked Liam if he was familiar with a personal futures plan, what its purpose was, whether he had participated in a plan before, what had he done in school so far that he considered to be beneficial in preparing for the future, and what could be done in school to assist him. He said he did not know what a futures plan was, he had not participated in one prior to the PATH. He said he, "... hadn't really gone for any help or anything" and he hadn't done anything in school that helped him to think about preparing for his future.

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Liam to describe himself as a student. He responded, "As a student, I'm pretty lazy, I think. Sometimes I can be lazy and not very motivated. Like not liking to do work." My best subject is Phys. Ed. and Foods and Nutrition. Those are my best marks. When I get motivated, I'm a good student." When asked to list positive personal characteristics Liam said, "I can't think of any right now." After a probe, he indicated he was good at running, skiing, bike riding, and that he had a good sense of humour. "Some people don't have one, but I do."

"I guess I'm good at cooking and I'm helpful." When asked if there was something he would like to change he indicated he was

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"... pretty lazy in school. I want to be more motivated and get some work done and pass, but I'm too lazy to do the work. I think that, in the past, I didn't work and I would still pass the grade. In grade 8, I did very little amount of work and I still passed."

When asked to describe his likes and dislikes about school Liam answered, "That's a tough question. I like teachers but I don't like work. School should be more fun. Have it more fun, not always writing down stuff, but more interesting. Writing work is boring. Especially for long periods."

When asked about the direction his life is taking he responded, "I don't know."

Liam could identify important things in his life, "Family, friends, not school." Important people were his Mom, Dad, sister, and Grandma.

When asked where he could see himself the year after graduation he replied, "For me, the way I am going now? I don't know, some job I guess. Gas station, maybe."

When asked about what does he feel a sense of accomplishment and pride he said with no hesitation, "My Phys. Ed. mark. It's up now."

When asked to describe himself as a successful person, Liam replied "I don't know. A person with lots of money I guess. And a car, and a job, I guess."

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When asked if he could name someone to help him see himself in the future, he named the Resource teacher. When asked what could be done in schools he said, "I don't know, resource is sort of helping." When asked what he had participated in that may help him to plan for the future, he replied, "Nothing really. I'm not one of those people to go and sign up and do stuff."

Observation of PATH: Liam

Liam's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the participants and listing their names in a corner of the PATH poster. The facilitator was introduced and she explained that she regularly facilitated PATHs. She explained to the group that she had done them with schools, school divisions, and a leader of a political party. She reviewed the steps the PATH would follow and referred to the graphic. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix C.

Liam's PATH started very positively. He seemed glad to be the centre of attention. His parents were positive and were contributing. They appeared to be concentrating on what was important for Liam. Liam's Dream included having a good job, probably working with computers, being a famous downhill skier, and having an apartment with a cat (not a dog), a car, no wife, and no children. He also wanted to be a famous chef. His parents' dream for

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him included a career that he enjoyed by which he could support himself and lead a happy life. After some discussion, Liam's mother said, "I would like Liam to have a friend." The focus of the PATH shifted to relationships and relationship building.

The Goals that were identified for Liam were to get a part time job, to get his driver's licence, to have his own spending money, to volunteer in a pet store, to join the ski club where he could meet people his own age, and to volunteer for things at school such as the Senior's Christmas Dinner where he would meet people his own age who are interested in cooking and helping the community.

During the Now phase, Liam did not appear to be uncomfortable with the description of himself. He agreed with his mother that he would like to have a friend to do things with and go places with.

In one year from now, Liam could see himself with a part time job, some friends, and passing grade 11.

In one month from now, Liam would have caught up in course work, be studying for final exams, have joined the ski club, and taken his resume to apply for jobs.

The first step for Liam was to contact the Guidance Counsellor to change his Semester 2 timetable to include a Food Services credit.

Post-PATH Interview: Liam

Liam responded to Question 1 by saying he believed the PATH was beneficial. He liked the process and was positive when we left the PATH. "It made me think more. I sort of know what to do with my life a bit more now and how to help and learn about yourself."

"It was kind of long, I didn't really mind though, and some of the questions were hard to answer."

Question 2 asked what direction he could see his life heading and he thought it was "... better, better than before anyways. I have a clearer idea now and possibilities."

Question 3 asked him to identify important things in his life and he answered a job, money, a computer, and friends. He identified his family as important people in his life.

When asked who would be able to help him see his dream he had changed his answer slightly from the pre-PATH and answered, "Parents, guidance counsellor, and food service chef."

Liam thought schools could help students plan for the future by "... making a course or having a PATH in a course." He thought grade 9 or 10 would be an appropriate time for high school students to plan for their future. He thought PATH could be done for other students in his school.

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He thought the Dream setting phase was, "interesting and made me think and really plan what it might be like when I'm older."

When asked if he could accomplish all the goals identified in the Goal phase, he replied, "Yea, I guess if I put my mind to it."

Liam was asked if the Now section helped him to see where he is now in relation to where he wants to be. He thought the description was accurate. "I see what I am now and what I want to be. It's kind of neat, now isn't what I will be then."

Liam thought he knew who to ask to help him reach his goals.

This time when asked to identify positive qualities he listed, "Well, she (the facilitator) said I'm a nice person, I'm kind, good looking, I guess, and a good memory, and a good personality."

When asked what he might like to change he replied, "Getting more friends, doing more activities, getting out of the house, and get organized!"

Table 2

Liam's Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Level of Agreement</u>				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful					X
2. PATH useful				X	
3. Parents positive					X
4. Courses to reach goals				X	
5. Personal needs				X	
6. Need to graduate					X
7. Live on my own				X	
8. Vocational choices					X
9. Important people					X
10. Financially independent				X	
11. Future plans, marriage				X	
12. Socially responsible				X	
13. Contribute to community			X		
14. Money decisions			X		
15. Fun					X
16. PATH for other students					X

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

Pre-PATH Interview: Marg

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked if Marg knew what a personal futures plan was, what its purpose was, whether she had participated in a plan before, what she had done in school so far that she considered to be beneficial for preparing for the future, and what could be done in school to assist her. Marg responded she knew that a PATH was, "... to help you think of the future." She had not participated in a planning session before and said, "I haven't really talked to any counsellor or anything before, I just come to school."

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Marg to describe herself as a student. She said, "I am good in all my classes, I don't cause trouble or get kicked out or anything. I'm late. Sometimes I don't come to school. But lately, I have been doing good, now I go to all my classes."

When asked to describe positive personal characteristics, she replied, "Marg is lazy, Marg is happy. I am a late person all the time. I am friendly and caring. I think of others before myself."

When asked to describe characteristics she would like to change, she said, "Lazy, late, my hair, and change to be more outgoing."

When asked to describe her likes and dislikes about school, Marg said long hours and boring classes were what she disliked. She

liked to come to school to see her friends and she liked her Photography and Cosmetology classes.

Marg could see herself later on working in hair salon.

When asked what was important in her life she replied, "My family, getting a good education, graduating." When asked who was important in her life, she replied, "My Mom, my sisters, my grandma and grandpa."

When asked where she would be the year after graduation she replied, "University I guess."

When I asked Marg about what she feels a sense of accomplishment and pride she replied, "I feel good about getting a good mark because I usually get low marks on stuff."

Marg thought a successful person was one who had a good job, a family, a house (not an apartment), children, and a job working at something enjoyable.

When asked who could help her see herself more clearly in the future, she replied, "The guidance counsellor, Ms. Rokosh, the Cosmetology instructor, and my sister's boyfriend. He helps me sometimes and talks about the future with me, he helps me with my homework sometimes and with home problems and stuff."

Observation of PATH: Marg

Marg's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the

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participants and listing their names in a corner of the PATH poster. The facilitator was introduced and she explained to the group that she has done PATHs for schools, school divisions, and the leader of a political party. She reviewed the steps the PATH would take and referred to the graphic. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix P.

The Dream setting phase in Marg's PATH included her dream to become a hairdresser and to own her own salon. Her dream included, "A big house on the river, two dogs and two cats, a car, a husband that works, and children." Marg invited a friend and her sister and her sister's boyfriend to the PATH. Her mother could not attend. Her sister's dream for Marg was for her, "...to be happy and to have a life where she didn't have to be a slave." Her friend's dream for Marg would be for her to "find a nice guy, not a loser, to go out with and one that treats her good."

The goals that emerged during the goal setting phase were to get her beginner's driver's licence, to work part time on the weekends, and to apply to be a Candy Striper over the summer.

During the Now phase, Marg agreed she would have to make an effort to finish all outstanding assignments in school in order to complete her Math and Science credits. She agreed that she had shown improvement in attendance this semester, but that the

number of lates per week was still high. She agreed with her friend's view of her choice of boyfriends. Marg said she has trouble saying what she wants because she is so quiet. She agreed she was taken advantage of at times.

In one year from now, Marg planned to have completed grade 11. She hoped to be in the last year of Cosmetology and to be out in the community on work experience.

In one month from now, Marg planned to have completed all her outstanding assignments and to have studied and passed three exams in Semester 1.

The first step was for Marg to enroll in the next session of Driver Education and to check with her teachers for late or unfinished assignments to complete.

Post-PATH Interview: Marg

Marg responded to question 1 by saying she felt the PATH was beneficial to her. "It was a good idea, it helped me to see things about myself."

Her response to question 2 indicated she had a direction in mind. "I can finish school and in the meantime, maybe get a part time job in a salon washing hair until I get my licence."

The things and people she reported to be important to her were, "An education, and my family and my friends."

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After she graduates, Marg saw herself "working downtown in a hair salon, maybe like the Bay or something where they give manicures and facials and stuff."

She described a successful person as having, "a good job, house, and children."

She was able to identify people she could contact who could help her to reach her goals.

When asked what schools could do to help students plan for life after high school, she answered, "Have more days where we talk about careers or jobs and we don't do it much." She felt grade 9 was a good time to start planning for the future.

When asked about the Dream phase, she said, "It was ok. I could say anything I want."

During the Now phase, Marg agreed with what was said about her at the PATH. She agreed with the comment that she was, "A bit lazy, but has a good heart and spirit". She said, "I know I am a nice person. To my friends anyway. I am quiet and I have to be a little more outgoing."

She knows who to ask to help her reach her goals.

When asked to list positive qualities she said, "I am a good listener, I am quiet and not rude to people. I am happy and I am a good friend." The things about herself that she would like to change

Table 3

Marg's Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

Question	Level of Agreement				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful					x
2. PATH useful				x	
3. Parents positive		x			
4. Courses to reach goals				x	
5. Personal needs				x	
6. Need to graduate					x
7. Live on my own				x	
8. Vocational choices				x	
9. Important people				x	
10. Financially independent			x		
11. Future plans, marriage				x	
12. Socially responsible			x		
13. Contribute to community				x	
14. Money decisions			x		
15. Fun				x	
16. PATH for other students					x

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

are, "I still think I'm quiet and a bit shy sometimes, maybe if I talk to people more I won't be afraid to speak up."

Pre-PATH Interview: Marc

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked if Marc knew what a personal plan was, what its purpose was, whether he had participated in a plan before, what he had done in school so far that had been beneficial in preparing him for the future, and what things could be done in school to assist him. Marc answered that he didn't really know what the PATH was, "Even though you explained it and everything." He had not participated in anything that was intended to help him make decisions about the future.

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Marc to describe himself. As a student, he described himself as "A slacker. I don't go to school all the time and I don't go to all my classes. Right now, I guess I'm in grade 9 and part of grade 10 and I'm really in grade 11." When asked to list personal characteristics that were positive, Marc paused and said, "Nothing". When I said we could come back to that question, and asked him to identify qualities about himself that he might like to change he said, "Some of the teachers said I have a bad temper. And I guess you could say I was lazy." When I repeated the previous question he replied he still did not see any positive qualities in himself. I then asked him to see himself as his coach might see him

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and describe himself through his eyes and he said, "Well, I guess I'm a team player. I get along with the people on my team."

When asked what he liked and disliked about school he replied, "I like to see my friends, I come here to get an education. I like this school because it's big and I like to play football. What I don't like are boring classes. 90 minutes are too long. I'm in the habit of not going to class."

Marc indicated sports and his mother were important in his life.

When asked in what direction he could see his life taking he said he didn't know, "I don't know what I want. I can't see myself in a job, really."

In the year after he graduates, Marc said he could possibly see himself going to Red River Community College but that it was not an important goal for him.

When asked when he feels a sense of pride or accomplishment, Marc did not answer and just shook his head.

When asked to describe himself in the future as a successful person, Marc said, "I don't know."

Marc indicated his friends were the people who could help him see himself more clearly in the future.

Observation of PATH: Marc

Marc's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the participants and recording their names on the PATH poster. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix P. Marc's mother attended his PATH. It appeared she became more at ease as the evening progressed. She had been at the school on many occasions when the meetings had not always been positive.

During the Dream phase, Marc had to be given lots of ideas and choices to help him dream about his future. He seemed to be a bit uncomfortable during this first step in the PATH. He was quiet and at times did not really answer the questions. His Dream for the future included being a professional football player, owning his own home, and having a family, and a car. His mother's dream for him was to, "Get out of high school and get a job."

One of the the goals Marc identified during the Goal setting phase was to get a part-time job. He had his resume ready and planned to apply for a job at Subway. He said he had to make some money. He was going to meet with his History teacher to see about handing in late assignments and to write two tests he had missed.

During the Now phase, Marc repeated many of the self-descriptions he reported on the Pre-PATH interview. He said he was not very motivated to attend school and that he skipped a lot of

classes. He agreed this was an accurate description of himself. He seemed to agree with the description of himself as a good athlete and a good sport. He agreed with the observation that he was now actually attending more now than at this time last year. Also, his attitude toward school and teachers and other students seemed to be much more positive.

In one year from now, Marc saw himself finishing all outstanding grade 10 credits and being midway through grade 11.

In one month from now, Marc planned to be working after school and on weekends. Also, he planned to be studying for final Semester 1 exams. He planned to attend the Open House at Red River Community College.

The first step for Marc was to update his resume and check with the teachers he used as references. He planned also to make arrangements to meet with his History teacher.

Post-PATH Interview: Marc

Marc thought the PATH was, "Sort of helpful." He thought the process was too long but that, "... there were some good parts."

"I know I have to finish school so there are things that can help me. I don't know what I want to do in the future, so I can't really answer that question." Marc completed his PATH, but it seemed that of the six students who participated, his was the least

specific and lacked the details of the others.

When asked what direction he could see his life heading he said, "Maybe go to Red River."

The people and things in his life that were important were "Hockey, football, getting a job, getting money."

When asked who would be able to help him see his dream he answered, "My friends, guidance counsellor."

Marc thought school could help students plan for their future by, "Not being so boring."

Marc agreed that the Dream setting phase was a bit uncomfortable for him at times.

When asked if he could accomplish the things mentioned in the Goal phase he said, "If I want to, I can."

When asked if the Now description of him was accurate Marc answered, "I have changed since last year, from a bad temper, to now. This year I am not really in any trouble, except for missing too many classes." Marc said he planned to ask his friends, teachers, or his mother to help him reach his goals.

When asked to list positive qualities about himself he said, "I'm pretty good at sports, and I'm polite." The thing he wanted most to change about himself was his temper.

Table 4

Marc's Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Level of Agreement</u>				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful				x	
2. PATH useful			x		
3. Parents positive			x		
4. Courses to reach goals				x	
5. Personal needs		x			
6. Need to graduate				x	
7. Live on my own		x			
8. Vocational choices				x	
9. Important people			x		
10. Financially independent		x			
11. Future plans, marriage			x		
12. Socially responsible			x		
13. Contribute to community			x		
14. Money decisions			x		
15. Fun				x	
16. PATH for other students				x	

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A= agree, SA = strongly agree

Pre-PATH Interview: Cathy

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked Cathy if she was familiar with a personal futures plan, what its purpose was, and whether she had participated in a plan before, what she had done in school so far that she considered beneficial in preparing for the future, and what could be done in school to assist her. She said she really did not know what a PATH was and had never heard of one until I had approached her to participate in the study. She indicated she had not had any sort of career counselling at her previous high school which was in rural Manitoba.

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Cathy to describe herself as a student. She replied, "I'm a slacker. I'm not real motivated for school." She said what she liked about school was, "The people at this school, better than my old school." She said she disliked getting up early for school and English class. She also disliked Phys. Ed. "I hate Gym. You have to run around and look all gross and then stay like that for the rest of the day." When asked to list characteristics about herself that were positive, she replied, "I'm outgoing, I'm pretty friendly to people and I'm able to meet people easily." When asked about something she might like to change about herself, Cathy replied, "The way I act, sometimes, and my attitude toward school. I am doing a bit better now and everyone in my family is happy for me

that I haven't dropped out yet."

When asked about the direction she could see her life taking, Cathy replied, "Not university or nothing like that. Maybe a hair salon, I could see myself doing that, working in one."

Cathy said her friends and family were important to her. She said her grandma and her mother were important people in her life.

Cathy said she could see herself the year after graduation, "Hitchhiking and travelling around, probably in B.C."

When asked to identify someone who could help her see herself more clearly in the future, she replied, "My Mom and my Grandma."

Observation of PATH: Cathy

Cathy's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the participants and recording their names in a corner of the PATH poster. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix P. Cathy invited her mother to the PATH.

Cathy's PATH started positively and Cathy seemed to be glad her mother was there to help her discuss her future. Cathy made the comment, "This year I might even stay in school the whole year."

Cathy's Dream included having a job she liked and a family, although she did not want to get married until she was, "... about 30." She wanted to have pets, a nice car and clothes. Her mother's dream for Cathy was for her to be happy and to be independent and

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successful. The focus of the PATH seemed to be on the immediate future and not years from now. Cathy indicated her goal was to, "graduate from high school already."

The Goals that were identified during the PATH were for Cathy to spend less time partying and socializing and more time concentrating on passing and eventually graduating. One goal identified for Cathy was to pass six credits this year. At one point, Cathy said she was interested in volunteering somewhere in the community, but that her focus should be, "... getting out of high school."

During the Now phase, Cathy did agree with her mother's description of her as, "... usually late for school and spending too much time on hair and make-up in the morning." Cathy described herself as having lots of friends and said she, "Likes to party" but described herself as, "Not liking school that much."

In one year from now, Cathy planned to have completed all her grade 10 subjects. She hoped to be in grade 11 and to be taking two grade 12 courses.

In one month from now, Cathy planned to have completed English, Phys. Ed., and Cosmotology and to be prepared to write exams at the end of the semester.

The first step for Cathy was one her mother suggested: to "get

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a new look (hairstyle) that did not require her to get up every morning at 5:30 am." Cathy also planned to get all missed assignments from her teachers and to complete them. She hoped to cut back on her hours at work in order to concentrate on finishing the semester successfully.

Table 5

Cathy's Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Level of Agreement</u>				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful				x	
2. PATH useful					x
3. Parents positive				x	
4. Courses to reach goals				x	
5. Personal needs		x			
6. Need to graduate				x	
7. Live on my own		x			
8. Vocational choices				x	
9. Important people				x	
10. Financially independent		x			
11. Future plans, marriage			x		
12. Socially responsible			x		
13. Contribute to community			x		
14. Money decisions				x	
15. Fun					x
16. PATH for other students				x	

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

Pre-PATH Interview: Jane

Questions 1, 2, 3, 18, and 19 asked if Jane knew what a personal plan was, what its purpose was, whether she had ever participated in a futures plan before, what had she done in school so far that she considered to be beneficial in preparing for the future, and what could be done in school to assist her with her planning. Jane responded she did not really know what a PATH was but that it was to, "Help me look at what I might like to do with my life." She had not participated in one before. She said she had not had any assistance from the school and had not had any career counselling or done any career exploration.

Questions 4, 13, 16, and 17 asked Jane to describe herself. As a student she said she has "had some problems, but mostly they were personal problems and I couldn't really deal with school last year." Jane said she could be an A student and that she had had good marks all through junior high. When asked to describe herself now, Jane said she was, "Trying to get my act together and pass." Jane could list positive qualities about herself. She said, "I'm intelligent, I'm a people person, fun, funny, I'm pretty mature, I guess." Some of the qualities about herself that she would like to change were, "I can get lazy sometimes and not want to work."

Jane said she liked school for the most part. "It's good to go to

a big high school, then you have lots of different people around."

What she disliked was, "Having to come everyday, and the classes are long."

Jane could identify people who were important in her life. She said, "My real Dad, not my step Dad. My friends and my brother." Important things in her life were family, friends, and getting an education.

When asked what direction she could see her life taking, Jane responded, "I want to go to university, it'll take me a while but I'll get it, finally."

When asked where she could see herself the year after graduation she said, "University, probably."

Jane felt pride and a sense of accomplishment in, "My art, my drawings, my poetry."

To describe herself in the future as a successful person, Jane said she would, "Have a good job and be a career woman."

When asked to identify someone who may help her to see herself in the future, she said, "My Dad, but he's in Quebec."

Observation of PATH: Jane

Jane's PATH began by the researcher introducing all the participants and recording their names on the PATH poster. A reproduction of the graphic recording is found in Appendix P. Jane

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indicated she had wanted her mother to attend, but that they had had a fight and were not speaking to each other. Jane invited a friend from school to her PATH.

Jane seemed a bit timid at first, but, as the PATH progressed, she seemed to be able to articulate what she wanted in life. Her Dream included travelling, having a lot of money to do whatever she felt like at the time, a car, a big house, and probably a maid. She wanted to be a famous artist or a psychiatrist. Jane's friend wanted her to be happy in her life.

The Goals that were identified for Jane were to get a part time job, to have her own spending money, and to get a second hand car.

During the Now phase, Jane seemed comfortable describing her present situation, the quarrel with her mother, the choice to live with a girlfriend, and, "The need to stay on track and finally graduate."

In one year from now, Jane planned to have completed all her optional courses in grade 11 and 12. She planned to return for one more semester to obtain her grade 12 English and Math credits which are compulsory for graduation.

In one month from now, Jane planned to have applied for several part time jobs.

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The First Step for Jane was to contact the Guidance Counsellor for a current list of successfully completed courses. She had dropped out of school on two previous occasions and wanted to be sure of her current status. She also planned to make a list of outstanding assignments in all courses and complete all her assignments.

Post-PATH Interview: Jane

Jane thought the PATH process was beneficial to her. She said it helped her to, "See and say things about myself."

She responded to question 2, by saying she would, "Probably go to university."

She indicated that an education and her family were important to her.

Jane said she could see herself going to university in the year after graduation, "But I might not be able to afford to go."

As a successful person, she would, "Have a good job and a good life."

She said, "Some teachers, my friends, counsellors," would be people she may go to for assistance.

When asked if she could accomplish the things mentioned in the Goal setting phase, she replied, "Yea."

When asked what schools could do to help students plan for

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life after high school, she answered, "Make it harder to skip classes and not allow us to get so many absences before we get kicked out of the course."

When asked about the Dream phase, she said she liked it. She said she, "sort of knew all along what I wanted to do in the next few years, though."

She agreed with what was said during the Now phase, and said that she did need to get back on track.

When asked to list some positive personal characteristics she replied, "Smart, funny." Some of the characteristics she wanted to change included being, "A bit lazy."

Table 6

Jane' Responses to Post-PATH Questionnaire

<u>Question</u>	<u>Level of Agreement</u>				
	SD	D	NO	A	SA
1. PATH helpful				x	
2. PATH useful				x	
3. Parents positive		x			
4. Courses to reach goals				x	
5. Personal needs				x	
6. Need to graduate					x
7. Live on my own			x		
8. Vocational choices				x	
9. Important people				x	
10. Financially independent				x	
11. Future plans, marriage			x		
12. Socially responsible				x	
13. Contribute to community			x		
14. Money decisions				x	
15. Fun					x
16. PATH for other students					x

Legend: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, NO = no opinion, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

Chapter V

Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine the usefulness of the PATH personal futures planning tool for students labelled at-risk.

In this chapter, the results are discussed and the feasibility and appropriateness of using PATH with at-risk students is assessed.

Data Analysis

Following the Pre-PATH interviews, the PATH itself, the Post-PATH interviews and the completion of the questionnaire, I examined the students' responses looking for frequencies, trends, commonalities, and differences between the pre and post interviews and the PATH itself. As I analysed the data, I found there were similarities in the responses. Based on these similarities, I identified common themes. These themes are discussed in relation to the research question.

Themes

Self-description. When asked the question, in the pre-PATH interview, to describe themselves as students, all six of the participants gave a description of themselves. The descriptions were consistent with the information the Guidance department had given me about each of the students. Most of the self-descriptions the students gave were partially negative. All of the students gave specific reasons why they were having difficulty at school or why they were not attending school. In general, they described themselves as poor attenders who did not come to school on a regular basis and who skipped many of their classes. All of the students described their past school performance negatively. They all said education was important to them but that they were not really motivated. Two students admitted they had difficulty in English and Math.

During the pre-PATH interview, one question seemed to pose some difficulty for most of the students. The students had difficulty identifying positive characteristics about themselves. Most students paused, asked for clarification and were not able to give answers easily. This stood in stark contrast to the fact that all of the students could readily identify negative characteristics about themselves. Three of the students identified physical

characteristics that they would like to change if they could.

In the post-PATH interview, several students repeated what had been discussed at the PATH. When asked to list the positive characteristics about themselves, post-PATH, most of the students answered immediately. Lisa repeated what someone had said about her in her PATH, "I'm unique." Liam said, "It's kind of neat, now isn't what I will be, then." Marc said, "I'm good at sports, I guess."

It may be the PATH process helps at-risk students identify and internalize positive characteristics about themselves.

It appeared the students had thought about what was discussed during the PATH. All of the students agreed with the descriptions of themselves that were recorded during the Now phases of their PATHs. This is likely due to the fact that the Now phases included positive descriptions of the students and did not focus solely on their negative characteristics or qualities. The descriptions were combinations of self-descriptions as well as descriptions from other participants in the PATH process.

These data suggest that PATH may have the potential to help students see themselves more clearly and more positively. In addition, it may help students see themselves as others see them. The PATH process may have helped the students see their positive and negative characteristics in a more balanced way.

Life Direction. The questions in the pre-PATH interview that asked the students the directions they could see their lives heading seemed to be difficult for all of the students to answer. Two students had a clear idea of a career they could see themselves in after graduation. Marg wanted to be the owner of her own hair salon and Lisa wanted to be a child psychologist. The other students did not have clear visions of what their lives would be like in the future. Another question that was difficult for all of the students to answer was the one asking them to describe themselves in the future as successful people.

During their PATHs, this question was asked during the Dream setting phase. At first, all of the students were shy and a bit hesitant about saying their dream aloud. However, as the meetings progressed most seemed to relax and were able to describe a dream they had for the future. They described where they would live, their dream job or career, their lifestyle, and the possessions they would like to acquire.

When asked about their dreams for the future in the post-PATH interview, three of the students repeated what they had said in their PATHs. They described what their lives would look like in the future and what they would be like as successful people.

It may be that at-risk students who are given the opportunity

to dream for the future and to say their dream out loud during a PATH are more able to form a clear picture of what is important to them.

Life After Graduation. Information gathered in the pre-PATH interview indicated two students had specific goals and career plans they wanted to pursue after graduation. One student (Lisa) wanted to go to university to be a child psychologist. Another student (Marg) wanted to be a hairdresser and own her own salon. The other students were less clear. They knew they wanted to graduate and perhaps go to university (Jane) or community college (Marc) but were unable to specifically identify a program of study or faculty that interested them. (Liam).

After the PATH, all of the students had clearer life goals. Most repeated what they had said during the Dream and Goal steps of their PATHs. Marc still did not know what he wanted to do after graduation but, during the PATH, indicated he intended to finish school so that he could pursue career options. Cathy indicated she wanted to travel after she had completed high school.

This information suggests that the PATH process allows students to think about career options but does not ignore other facets of life.

School as Part of the Bigger Picture of Life. All of the students could identify their likes and dislikes about school. Most of the students said school was boring, classes were boring, and that school should be more fun. Only one student (Marg) said she liked school more this year and was doing better than she had in previous years. All of the students said they had failed courses or grades in school. All of the students interviewed seemed to have a history of unpleasant experiences at school. Three of the six students had been suspended from school.

During each student's PATH, the focus was not entirely on school performance. Much of the time was spent allowing each student to dream his or her dream for the future, to identify his or her goals for the future, and to identify ways and means to achieve these goals and dreams. All of the students seemed to enjoy talking about their lives and the things that were important in their lives such as getting a part-time job or getting their driver's licence.

Information about school performance and grades became known to the group during the Now phase of the PATH. In all cases, students gave accurate pictures of themselves as students or agreed with the description of them given by the teacher (researcher).

One of the intended goals of the PATH process is to create a tension between what each student has dreamed for the future and

where he or she is now.

One possible benefit of the PATH process may be that it allows students to see high school as part of their whole lives. During the PATHs, the students specifically identify what and who is important in their lives. School is only part of the whole. PATH may allow students the opportunity to visualize the bigger pictures of lives and give them the chance to see themselves succeeding at parts of their lives even though they may not be succeeding academically.

Others roles in their life or future. During the pre-PATH interviews, all of the students identified their families as being important to them.

During the PATHs, the students could observe other people taking an interest in their progress. The guests the students invited to their PATHs were important people in their lives. They were there as a support to the student. In the Who to Enroll stage of the PATH, specific people were identified who might be of assistance to each student. Some of the people identified were present at the PATHs, others were not. For example, Lisa's grandfather identified a contact he had with the City of Winnipeg who might be able to help her obtain an application for a Parks and Recreation summer job. In addition, Marc identified a neighbour, who was not present at his PATH, as someone who might be willing to give him a resume

reference for yard work he had completed for him last summer.

Of the six student participants in the study, one student had two parents attend the PATH, two students had only their mothers attend the PATHs, and three students had neither parent attend their PATHs. All students were supported by other family members such as a grandfather, aunt, or sister.

All students had people they could enroll in their PATHs. They could identify people they could contact for assistance. A benefit of the PATH process may be that it allows students to identify and recruit people in their lives who are there to assist them, support them, and help them to reach their goals.

Positive group planning. All six students who participated in the study said they thought the PATH was a worthwhile experience and that PATHs should be done for other students in their school. After they had completed their PATHs, all six students could identify what a planning process was. All the students who participated in a PATH completed a pre and post-PATH interview. None of the students ended the process, although they knew they could do so at any time.

The students in the study seemed to be genuine in their interest of the PATH process. All of the students seemed to enjoy the attention focused on them and liked inviting their friends and

family to the school to discuss their future.

Prior to the pre-PATH interviews, several of the participants asked why they had been chosen to be in the study. They wondered if they would be "in trouble" again. I explained that the Guidance Counsellor had referred them as students who might be able to answer questions about personal futures planning as a process and be able to give information about the usefulness of a planning process such as PATH.

The philosophy of PATH is that the goals should be positive and possible. At the end of the PATHs, the students left knowing they had tasks to accomplish. All of the students indicated in the post-PATH interviews that they felt they could accomplish the things mentioned in the Goal setting and action planning phases of their PATHs.

PATH is a planning process for students where the focus is not always on what the students are doing wrong. It is an opportunity to meet and discuss issues for each student's future and to see him or her in a positive way. For example, Liam's mother said she had not had good news from the school about Liam's progress or behaviour for a long time. Liam's PATH was a chance to meet, discuss, and plan what was important for Liam in the future.

There were no paid personnel at any of the students' PATHs.

There were no principals, vice-principals, social workers, or psychologists at any of the PATHs. There were no teachers at any of the PATHs except for the researcher. The students were instructed to invite people with whom they wanted to share the PATH process and all of the students chose friends and family members to be participants.

Facets of life identified. Observations of the PATHs revealed some commonalities between the student's dreams and goals. All of the students wanted to have good lives in the future. Most of the students identified having a good job and lots of money as important to them. Most wanted a career, not just a job. They wanted to work at something that was important to them. All of the students could identify where they hoped to live. Most wanted a car. The female students wanted children and a husband and one of the males said he would probably have a wife and children. Most identified what they would do in life other than work. Leisure and travelling were important parts of their Dreams.

When the students identified their goals, almost all said they wanted to get their driver's licence and have a car. Having their own money was also very important and getting a part time job was listed as a goal for all but one of the students. All students, during their PATHs, said they wanted to pass the courses they were

currently taking and that they eventually wanted to graduate.

These data suggest a possible benefit of PATH to be goal identification. Students who identify and clarify their own personal goals may be more likely to achieve them.

The Now phase. Each student was asked to describe himself or herself in the pre-PATH interview. Some students gave two or three word self-descriptions or gave no response at all. Many of the students gave negative self-descriptions.

At their PATHs, the students were encouraged again to describe themselves during the Now phase of the PATH process. Most of the students, with input from the group, gave fairly accurate self-descriptions.

The Now phase of their PATHs allowed the students to express realistic views of themselves.

Specific, possible, positive tasks to accomplish. Each PATH gave the student specific "dreams, goals and tasks" for the future that he or she could work toward.

During the pre-PATH interview, the students were asked questions about their goals for the future and where they were headed after graduation. All but two students had very vague goals. They knew they wanted to finish high school, but were not able to articulate specific plans.

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However, after their PATHs, the students seemed to know the directions their lives were heading. Each student had specific tasks he or she planned to accomplish one year from the date of his or her PATH, one month after his or her PATH, and the day following his or her PATH. For example, Liam's identified tasks were to join the ski club, apply for a volunteer job at the pet rescue, enroll in the next session of Driver's Ed and make an appointment to change his second semester timetable.

School's role to help students prepare for the future.

During their pre-PATH interviews, several students indicated they had experienced nothing in school that had helped them plan for their futures. A few said they were not the type to seek help and just followed the advice of their friends in selecting a program of study. All of the students said there was a need for career planning and career exploration in high school. All of the students indicated, during the post-PATH interviews, that PATHs would be beneficial for other students in their school.

When asked what could be done at school to help students reach their goal of graduation, one student said, "They should make it harder to skip, and there should be more of a consequence to being absent."

Feasibility of PATH

The objective of this study was to determine the usefulness of PATH for at-risk students.

PATH is one of many personal futures planning tools that has been developed over the past decade. While its origins were in special education, its uses have spread to other areas such as business and organizational planning. The philosophy of PATH is that one may make changes in one's life through group planning and support. Other research supports this idea, particularly when students have input into decision making, take ownership, and know who they can count on to help them reach their desired goals (Guysbers, 1990; Feldhusen, 1995; Treffinger & Isaksen, 1992; Gearheart et al., 1992).

TIDE (Feldhusen, 1995) is one example of personal planning used specifically with at-risk students. TIDE, Talent Identification and Development Education, focuses on the student. With help from the group, the student identifies what his or her talents are and how best to use them.

PATH also focuses on students' strengths rather than their limitations. The process also allows for input from significant people in the student's life.

The question of the feasibility of PATH in public high schools

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can be answered in terms of population, time, and resources. PATH, as a process, is time consuming. A PATH can last two hours or more. The follow-up to each PATH is also time consuming. Once students are familiarized with the process, PATH could be done with students in a high school over a two year period. All students in high school must plan for the future and the transition into adult living. Most students plan informally through family discussions or meetings with friends. However, some students do not plan with friends, family, or peers. Some schools do not have career counselling as a part of their guidance curriculum. Schools that do not follow a comprehensive guidance approach may not have provisions for life career development or individual career planning. Considerations of time, staff, resources, and student population must be addressed by schools prior to implementing a planning process such as PATH.

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine the appropriateness of PATH for students labelled at-risk. The study focused on six high school students who were labelled mildly, moderately and severely at-risk of not completing high school. The data obtained could assist other educators who may want to provide direction and assistance for students at-risk. This chapter presents the limitations of this study, the recommendations and considerations for future research, and conclusions based on findings of the research.

Limitations

First, the research was limited to those students who were still in school. There is no way of knowing if PATH would benefit those students who have already dropped out.

Second, all students agreed to participate in the study; no one was forced to participate. As a result, it is not known how useful PATH might be with less compliant students.

Third, there was no comparison group of students who were not labelled at-risk.

Fourth, most of the students knew or knew of the researcher and may have been willing to participate because she was a teacher in their school.

Fifth, there was no long term follow up of this study.

Sixth, the study was conducted with a small non-randomly selected sample.

Seventh, the reliability and validity of the instruments used in the study are unknown.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study sought to determine the appropriateness of a personal futures planning tool, PATH, for at-risk students.

The data obtained from this study should be used as a basis for suggesting further research in the area of transition planning, personal planning, and life career planning for high school students who may be at risk of dropping out.

If this study were to be repeated I would recommend having a control group of "not-at-risk" students as a comparison group.

I would recommend also that follow-up data on each student be collected periodically from the date of the first PATH until two

years after graduation.

Considerations for Future Research

This study focused on students who had a history of dropping out of school, poor attendance, poor grades, difficulty with peer relationships, and difficulty following school rules and regulations. The six student participants found the PATH process to be positive and beneficial. It allowed them to plan and prepare for future life roles. If this group of students found PATH to be useful to them, then the process may be useful for other at-risk students. It may be advisable to begin with students in grade six. They could be asked to start planning their futures with the commitment to do a PATH every three years or more often if necessary, until graduation. This may be an area to be considered for future study.

Also, if PATH is to be used for another student population other than special needs, strategies need to be developed to be able to conduct a PATH within a shorter period of time. Most of the students in this study said they enjoyed the PATH process but that it was too long.

Most students plan their future with input from their friends and peers. Based on these observations of PATHs when the students had their friends present, most students enjoyed receiving input

from their peers. One recommendation could be that PATHs in schools could be facilitated or co-facilitated by peers. The data have shown that the PATH process should allow for the invitation of friends to the PATH. The students in this study indicated the presence of friends was important and valuable to the PATH planning process.

It appeared that PATH was successful for students in this high school. There was also a lack of career planning and individual life planning offered at this school. One suggestion for further research would be to study at-risk students using PATH, but in a school environment where a Comprehensive Guidance counselling philosophy had been implemented.

Finally, PATH appears to have the potential as a method to mediate adult-adolescent life planning in a positive way.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this study, I was very optimistic about the personal planning process, and the efforts being made with students with special needs to have a plan for the time they would leave school. In Manitoba, students with special needs, over the age of sixteen, are required to have an ITP. Many school divisions include a planning session such as PATH as part of the Transition Plan.

Prior to collecting data for this study, I became aware of another group of high school students who have similar needs. Students labeled at-risk have many of the same issues facing them when they leave school as students with special needs. The goal for both groups of students was the same. They both wanted to graduate from high school and go on into society as fully functioning members of their community.

Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) (Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1992) appears to be a positive, effective method for at-risk students to plan for their futures. PATH, as a process, may be time consuming to conduct. Consequently, this planning method may be most worthwhile if used in schools as a component of a comprehensive guidance counselling program.

The PATH process appears to have several advantages. First, the PATH process was received positively by all six students in the study. The students agreed to participate in a PATH and to be interviewed before and after the PATH. Second, the students indicated PATH was positively received by their family members and friends. Third, PATH may be useful for students in schools where guidance, counselling, and career counselling may be lacking or where students do not actively seek information or assistance from the counsellors. Fourth, PATH is an individualized and flexible

process and can be used to identify and set individualized social, emotional, and academic goals that are important to the student, parent, counsellor, and others.

The PATH process, as described in this study, was beneficial to this group of students identified as being at-risk.

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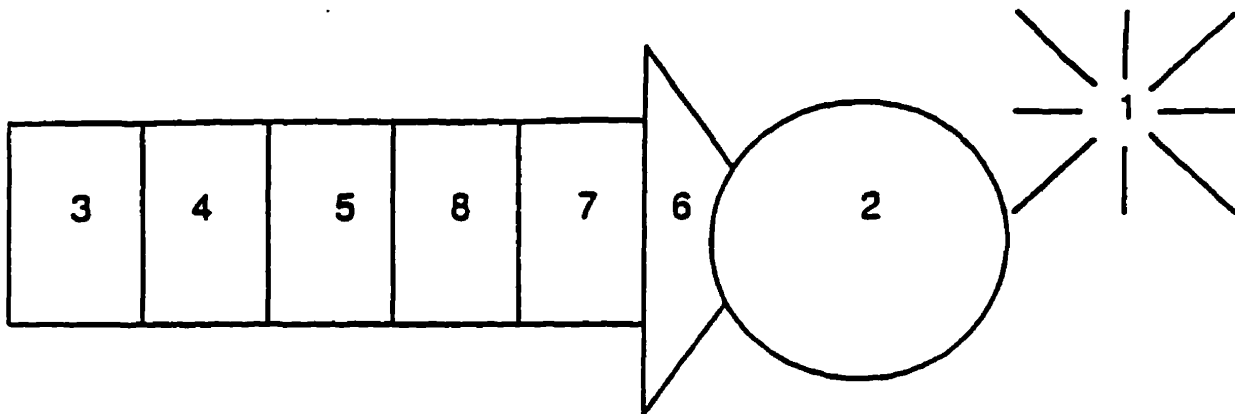
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Appendix A



Note:
PATH Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marsha Forest, 1992, Toronto ON:
Inclusion Press

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Appendix B

**Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 1A5**

September 13, 1996

**Mr. G.B. Buchholz
Director of Education and Secretary-Treasurer
St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2
2574 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J OH8**

Dear Mr. Buchholz,

Please accept this letter as my request to conduct a research study in St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education from the University of Manitoba. Specifically, I am requesting permission to conduct the study with students in one of the high schools in the Division. The title of my thesis is *Transition Planning for At-Risk Students*.

I have chosen to examine at-risk students at the secondary level and plan to have students go through an individual transition planning process (PATH) typically used with students with special needs in our school division. The students I wish to have participate in the study will not be open to Educational Support Services and will not be identified as students with special needs. Rather, they will be students whom staff have identified as being at-risk. Typically, students who have been labelled at-risk have one or more of the following characteristics: poor overall grades, frequent truancy, no future orientation, failed 1 or more grades, disruptive behaviours, poor social adjustment, immature, suggestible, inability to function within a traditional classroom, frequent contacts with police, gifted and/or talented abilities, but bored with school.

The research will answer the question "Can a futures planning tool (PATH) used for students with special needs be of benefit for at-risk high school students?" The student participants will be given a pre-PATH interview as well as a post-PATH interview. Their responses to these questions about a personal futures planning process (PATH) will be analysed to determine if the students have a clearer understanding of their personal future and what they need to do to achieve their plan. Responses made during the PATH plan itself will be hand recorded and analysed by me.

The pre-PATH interview and the postPATH interviews will each last about 20 minutes. The PATH itself will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. I will conduct the pre and post PATH interviews with each student. The PATH itself will be conducted by an outside trained facilitator and graphic recorder. I will introduce all the group participants to each other and then the PATH will begin.

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All interviews will be held at the assigned school after school hours or in the early evening to accommodate parents' schedules.

I am hoping to conduct the PATHs in the months of November and December.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide you, the students, his or her parents and other research participants, with a summary of the results. Students participating in the study may withdraw at any time without penalty. All personal information obtained in the study will be kept confidential. The identity of all participants will be protected as pseudonyms will be used. Upon completion of the thesis I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes, observation notes collected for use in the study.

A graphic recording of the PATH will be recorded on poster paper and given to the student on completion of the PATH. This is record of the steps in the PATH, what was said, and who would help the student reach his or her goals for that step.

The faculty member at the University of Manitoba supervising the study is Dr. R. Freeze, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology. He may be contacted at 474-6904.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Respectfully,

**Rhonda M. Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate**

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Appendix C

**Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave. Winnipeg, Man
R3J 1A5**

April 6, 1996

Dear Student,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Manitoba and I would like to ask you to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of the requirements for my degree. The purpose of the study is to determine the usefulness of a futures planning tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH). PATH has been used in other high schools in our division and students have found the process to be a positive experience.

The guidance counsellor at your school gave me your name and indicated that you may find a personal futures planning tool such as PATH, to be useful.

I would like you to plan your future transition from school to adult life using the PATH planning process and to allow me to interview you before and after the PATH. The process is individualized. You will be the focus of a personal futures plan where you look at your future after high school. There are eight steps in the PATH process and at each step you and the people you have invited will clarify what is important in your life, define where you see your life heading and then as a group, outline positive actions to help you achieve these goals. You will be asked to invite other people (your friends, family teachers etc.) to the PATH and at the end you will receive a plan with dates and names of people who will help you to reach your goals.

The PATH will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The interviews, before and after the PATH, will last approximately 20 minutes each. I will be asking you to meet with me during the lunch hour or after school to conduct the pre and post-interviews. The time of day the PATH will be conducted will depend on your schedule as well as those of the guest participants. During the PATH, I will be observing and writing notes. A trained facilitator will lead the group through the steps in the process. A graphic recorder will record information given during the PATH so you will have a record of the meeting as well as dates and names of people who have agreed to help you reach your goals. The record from the PATH meeting will be given to you after the PATH meeting. Upon completion of the study, I will provide you with a summary of the results.

All interviews will be conducted at the school. I am hoping to conduct your PATH in the month of November or December. Your answers will be kept confidential and I will not use your name in the study. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. Upon completion of the study, I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes, observation notes collected for use in the study.

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By participating in the PATH, and the interviews with me, your viewpoint will provide valuable information in the area of transition planning and the tools that are most useful for students.

If you would like additional information about the study, the faculty advisor is Dr. R. Freeze. He may be contacted at the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, 474-6904.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

**Rhonda M. Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
phone: 888-8624**

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Appendix D

Consent Form Student

Date _____

After having read the letter, I understand that this PATH is voluntary, that I may terminate the process when I choose to and that I am not obligated to answer any questions or say anything that I do not want to.

I, _____, agree to take part in this research study.

Signature of Student _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

Signature of Researcher _____

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Appendix E

Procedure to set up PATH

- 1. Identify student.**
- 2. Meet with student to introduce reseacher and to explain the study and PATH.**
- 3. Ask student who should be at his PATH.**
- 4. Interview student. PRE-PATH INTERVIEW APPENDIX G**
- 5. Arrange for location in school. (resource room, classroom large enough for chairs, board)**
- 6. Conduct the PATH.**
- 7. Interview student. POST-PATH INTERVIEW.**

Appendix F

Pre-PATH Interview Schedule

1. Introduce myself to student who has been identified by the school.
2. I will describe the study and the PATH process using examples of a previously completed PATH.
3. I will ask the student if he or she has any questions.
4. Ask student to sign the consent form
5. Ask student to take form home for parent signature.
6. Meet with student 1 week later.
7. Ask Pre-PATH Interview Questions . (Appendix G)

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Appendix G

Pre-PATH Interview

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of a personal futures planning tool called PATH, for high school students.

Preliminary

- 1. What is your present age?**
- 2. Where were you born?**
- 3. Where do you live?**
- 4. With whom do you live? Parents, brothers, sisters**
- 5. What are some of your interests?**

Part 1

- 1. Do you know what a personal futures plan is?**
- 2. Have you ever participated in a step by step process that was to plan for your future?**
- 3. What have you done in high school that you consider of help to you in preparing for future life decisions?**
- 4. Describe yourself as a student.**
- 5. What do you like about school?**
- 6. What do you dislike about school?**
- 7. What direction can you see your life taking?**
- 8. What is important in your life?**
- 9. Who is important in your life?**
- 10. Where can you see yourself in the year after graduation?**
- 11. About what do you feel a real sense of accomplishment and pride?**
- 12. Describe yourself in the future, as a successful person.**
- 13. How would you describe yourself now?**
- 14. Do you have a part time job?**
- 15. Who would you list as someone who may help you to see your self more clearly in the future?**

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- 16. List some personal characteristics about yourself that are positive.**
- 17. List some personal characteristics about yourself that you would like to change.**
- 18. What could be done in schools to help you reach your goal?**
- 19. What have you participated in that may have helped you to plan for your future?**

Appendix H

Post-PATH INTERVIEW

Interview

1. Now that you have completed a transition planning process, PATH, would you say this process was beneficial? Why and why not?
2. In what direction can you see your life heading?
3. What is important in your life?
4. Who is important in your life?
5. Where can you see yourself in the first year after graduation?
6. Describe yourself in the future as a successful person.
7. Who would you list as someone who may help you see your dream for the future?
8. What suggestions or changes would you make to schools to help students plan for life after high school?
9. When is a good time for high school students to plan for life after high school?
10. Could you see PATH being done for other students in your school?
11. How did you feel about the Dream setting phase of PATH? Did it help you decide what was important to you and important in your life?
12. Do you think you could accomplish the things you mentioned in the Goal setting phase?
13. How did the Now section or phase help you to see where you are now in relation to where you want to be?
14. Do you know who to ask to help you reach your goals?
15. Did the Plan for action phase help you to see where to begin to head toward your goals?
16. List some characteristics about you that are positive.
17. List some characteristics about you that you would like to change.

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Questionnaire

Please respond to the following statements about the PATH using the following scale from 0 to 4. A score of 0 meaning "strongly disagree" to a score of 4, meaning "strongly agree".

0 = strongly disagree

1 = disagree

2 = no opinion

3 = agree

4 = strongly agree

SD D NO A SA

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The PATH process helped me to see a plan for my future more clearly. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. I feel the PATH was useful. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. My parents thought it was a good idea. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. PATH has allowed me to think about choosing courses that will help me reach my goals. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. PATH has helped me to look more at my personal needs. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. I have a better idea of what I need to do to graduate. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I have an idea of how I may be able to live on my own. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. I have a clear idea of vocational training options available. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. I can identify important people in my life. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. I know how to be financially independent. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. PATH allowed me to think about the future and plans like marriage. | 0 1 2 3 4 |

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- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 12. I have a clear understanding of how to live a socially responsible life. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. I know how I could be a contributing member in my community. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. I know what I will do with the money I will make. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. I have a clear idea of what is fun recreation for me. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. I think high school students should go through a planning process like PATH before they graduate. | 0 1 2 3 4 |

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Appendix I

157 Oakdean Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 3N8

April 6, 1996

Mr. D. Timmerman
Principal Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Mr. Timmerman,

Please accept this letter as my request to conduct a research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education from the University of Manitoba.

The title of my thesis is *Transition Planning for At-Risk Students*. I have chosen to examine students the staff has identified as being at-risk of not graduating from high school. I plan to have the students go through an individual transition planning process (PATH) typically used with students with special needs in our division.

The research will answer the question "Can a futures planning tool used for special needs students, be of benefit for at-risk high school students?"

Typically, students labelled at-risk have the following characteristics: poor overall grades, frequent truancy, no future orientation, failed 1 or more grades, disruptive behaviours, poor social adjustment, immature, suggestible, inability to function within a traditional classroom, frequent contacts with police, gifted and/or talented abilities, but bored with school.

I am requesting permission to work with six students in Senior 1, 2 or 3. Each student will be asked to go through a personal planning session of approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours. This planning process will involve the student, the student's parents, friends, family members or any other person the student wishes to attend the PATH.

I will meet with each student both prior to and after the PATH for an interview. These interviews will each last approximately 20 minutes.

The PATH itself will be conducted by an outside trained facilitator and a graphic recorder will record responses during the PATH stages. I will introduce all participants in the group and then the PATH will begin. During the PATH, I will be observing and writing detailed notes.

Upon completion of this study, each student's responses will be analysed to determine if the student has a clearer understanding of his or her personal future and what he or she needs to do to achieve his or her plans. A graphic recording of the PATH will be recorded on poster paper and given to the student on completion of the PATH.

All PATHs are to be held at the school and will take place after school or in the early evening to accommodate parents' schedules.

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I am hoping to conduct the PATHs in the months of November and December.

Students involved in the study may withdraw at any time without penalty. All personal

information obtained in the study will be kept confidential. The identity of all participants will be protected as pseudonyms will be used. Upon completion of the thesis, I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes, observation notes collected for use in the study.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide you and each of the students with a copy of the results.

My thesis advisor is Dr. R. Freeze. He may be contacted at the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, 474-6904

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

**Rhonda Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate**

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Appendix K

Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 1A5

April 6, 1996

Dear Family Member, PATH participant,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Manitoba. I have asked _____ to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of the requirements for my degree. _____ has agreed to participate in a personal futures planning called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH).

PATH is a process where the student is the focus of a group planning session designed to help him set goals for his future. _____ will be the centre of the PATH and has asked that you be there to help him make important decisions about his future.

The purpose of this study is to determine the usefulness of PATH. The guidance counsellor at the school indicated _____ may be interested in and would benefit from a personal futures planning process. _____ will be interviewed by me before he does the PATH and then again after the PATH has been completed. _____'s input will provide useful information in the area of transition planning.

I am enclosing a PATH brochure which outlines the steps involved in a PATH and includes diagrams of the plan _____ will be left with once the PATH is completed. The PATH itself will be facilitated by an outside facilitator and a graphic recorder. I will observe and be taking notes during the PATH. I will introduce all participants, and then the PATH will begin.

The PATH will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. It will be held at the school on November _____ at _____ o'clock.

Your input and participation is very important. Your name will not be used in the study. All personal information obtained in the study will be kept confidential. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Upon completion of the study, I will provide you with a summary of the results. Upon completion of the thesis I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes and observation notes used in the study.

If you would like further information the Faculty Advisor of this study is Dr. R. Freeze. He may be contacted at the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, 474-6904.

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**Thank you for agreeing to participate in _____'s PATH.
I look forward to meeting you.**

Sincerely,

**Rhonda M. Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
888-0684**

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Appendix L

Consent Form for PATH participants

Date _____

After having read the letter from Ms. Rokosh, I understand my role as a PATH participant.

I understand that my participation in _____'s PATH is voluntary, that I may end my involvement at any time.

I, _____, agree to take part in this research study and participate in a personal futures planning session conducted by Rhonda Rokosh.

Signature of Participant _____

Signature of Researcher _____

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Appendix M

**Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave. Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 1A5**

September 1, 1996

**Ms. N. Robson
Association for Community Living Manitoba
210- 500 Portage Avenue Colony Square, Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3X1**

Dear Ms. Robson,

I am Master's student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Manitoba and I would like to ask you to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of the requirements for my degree. The title of my thesis is *Transition Planning for At-Risk Students*.

The purpose of the study is to determine the usefulness of a personal futures planning tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), for students at risk of dropping out of high school. PATH is typically used in our school division with students with special needs. I have chosen to examine at-risk students at the secondary level. The students will have been identified by school staff as being at-risk of dropping out of school. Typically, students who have been labelled at-risk have one or more of the following characteristics: poor overall grades, frequent truancy, no future orientation, failed 1 or more grades, disruptive behaviours, poor social adjustment, immature, suggestible, inability to function within a traditional classroom, frequent contacts with police, gifted and/or talented abilities, but bored with school.

The research will answer the question "Can a futures planning tool (PATH) used for students with special needs, be of benefit for at-risk high school students?"

I will be working with six students in Senior 1, 2, or 3 and their families. I will be conducting pre and post-PATH interviews with each student. Each of these interviews will last about 20 minutes. The PATH itself will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Upon completion of the study, each student's responses will be analysed to determine if the student has a clearer understanding of his or her personal future and what he or she needs to do to achieve his or her plans.

I am aware you are very familiar with the PATH process as well as a skilled and experienced facilitator of the process. I am requesting your assistance in facilitating PATHs for six students in Senior 1-3. I would also appreciate your assistance in locating a graphic recorder who may be available for the PATHs.

Each PATH will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The time of day the PATH will be

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conducted will depend on your schedule as well as those of the student and guest participants. All PATHs will be held at the school. I am hoping to conduct the PATHs in the months of November and December. A graphic recording of the PATH will be recorded on poster paper and given to each of the students on completion of the PATH.

You may withdraw from the study at any time. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The identity of all participants will be protected as pseudonyms will be used.

Upon completion of the study, I will be pleased to provide you with a summary of results. Upon completion of the study I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes, observation notes collected for use in the study.

Should you require additional information about the study please contact the Faculty Advisor, Dr. R. Freeze. He may be reached at the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, 474-6904.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Rhonda M. Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
phone: 888-0684

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Appendix N

Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
2665 Ness Ave. Winnipeg, Man
R3J 1A5

April 6, 1996

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Manitoba and I would like to ask you to participate in a research study I am conducting as part of the thesis requirements for my degree. The purpose of the study is to determine the usefulness of a futures planning tool called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH).

The guidance counsellor at your son's school gave me his name and indicated that he may find a personal futures planning tool such as PATH, to be useful.

I would like your son to plan his future transition from school to adult life using the PATH planning process and to allow me to interview him before and after the PATH. The process is individualized. He will be the focus of a personal futures plan where he will look at his future after high school. There are eight steps in the PATH process and at each step _____ and the people he has invited will clarify what is important in his life, help him to define where he sees his life heading and then as a group, outline positive actions to help him achieve these goals. _____ will be asked to invite other people (friends, family, teachers etc.) to the PATH and at the end will receive a plan with dates and names of people who will help him to reach his goals.

The PATH will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The interviews, before and after the PATH, will each last approximately 20 minutes.

I will be asking _____ to meet with me during the lunch hour or after school to conduct the pre and post-interviews. The time of day the PATH will be conducted will depend on your schedule as well as those of the guest participants. During the PATH, I will be observing and writing notes. A trained facilitator will lead the group through the steps in the process. A graphic recorder will record information given during the PATH so _____ will have a record of the meeting as well as dates and names of people who have agreed to help him reach his goals.

All interviews will be conducted at the school. I am hoping to conduct the PATH in the month of November or December. Your answers will be kept confidential and I will not use your name in the study. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

By participating in the PATH, your viewpoint will provide valuable information in the area of transition planning and the tools that are most useful for students. Upon

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completion of the study, I will provide you with a summary of the results. Upon completion of the study, I will destroy all raw data, notes, interview notes, observation notes collected for use in the study.

If you would like additional information about the study, the faculty advisor is Dr. R. Freeze. He may be contacted at the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, 474-6904.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

**Rhonda M. Rokosh
Sturgeon Creek Collegiate
phone: 888-8624**

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Appendix O

Consent form for PATH Facilltator

Date _____

After having read the letter from Ms. Rokosh, I understand my role as a PATH facilitator. I understand my participation in _____'s PATH is voluntary, that I may end my involvement at any time.

I, _____, agree to take part in this research study and participate in a personal futures planning session as a facilitator.

Signature of Participant (Facilitator) _____

Signature of Researcher _____

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Appendix P

Reproductions of Graphic Recordings during student's PATH

Lisa's PATH

DEC. 96

NOV	14	ENROLL	1	ONE MONTH
GRADE 10 Her own person unique -try harder in school Friends	Grades Auntie help with job search senior teacher for help	Research child psychology - get info or resume	show portfolio to MOM - get resume updated - meet with school teacher	- study to pass - finish all outstanding assignments
3	4	5	8	7

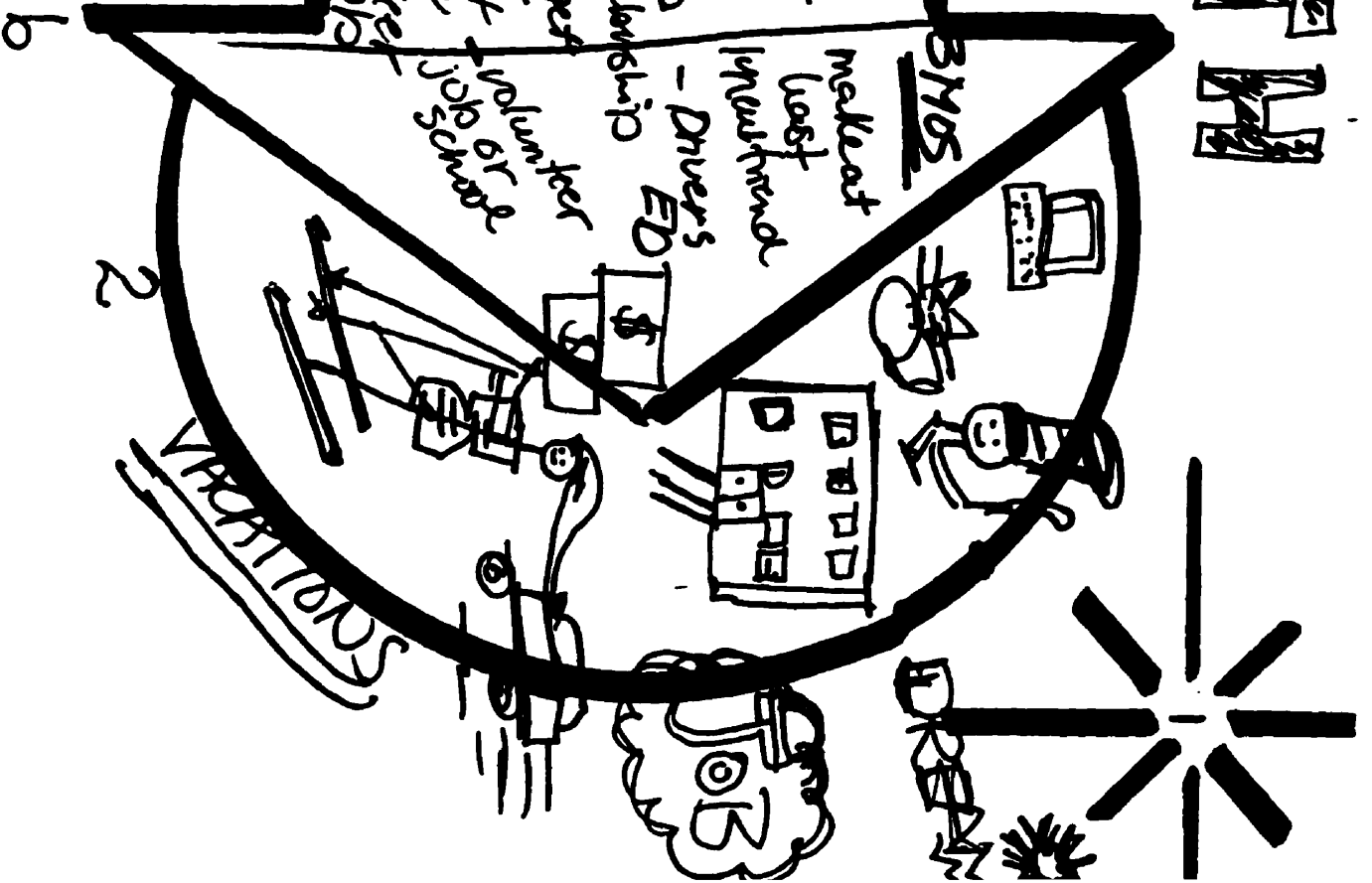


Liam's Path

DEC 96

<p>NOV</p> <p>NICE guy but need more friends do activities - parents not with mom + Dad "good guy"</p>	<p>EARLY</p> <p>MR. Sluis (chat) parents</p>	<p>STRANGER</p> <p>finish purchase of assignment - daytimer for Herald Luping</p>	<p>TRIP</p> <p>change travelable to newell Food Service Credit</p>	<p>ONE MONTH</p> <p>- call ski club for membership - Liam get resume + for pen + fine or volunteer b/c</p>
---	---	--	---	---

3 4 5 8 7

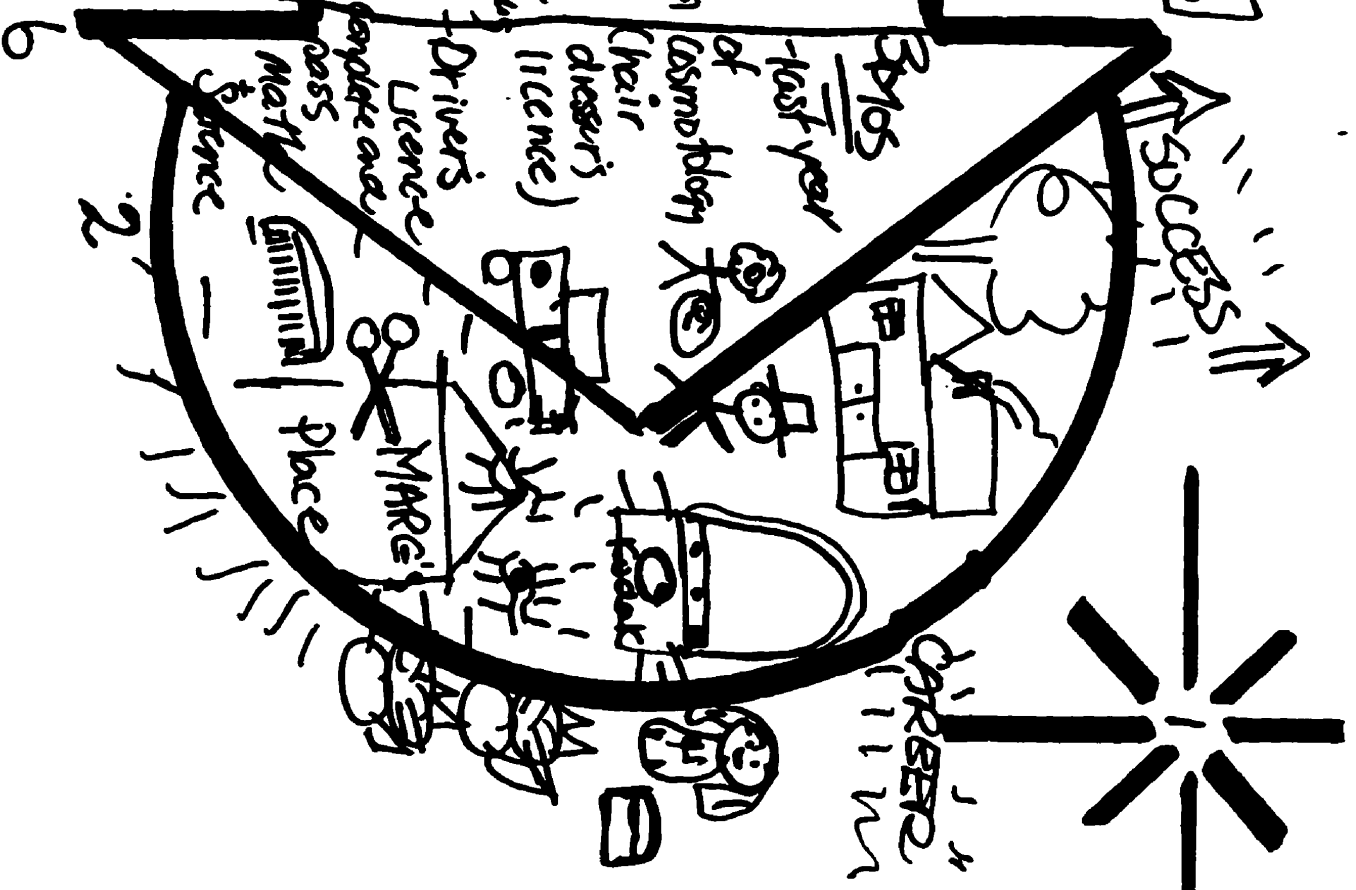


MARGI'S

DEC 96

PATH

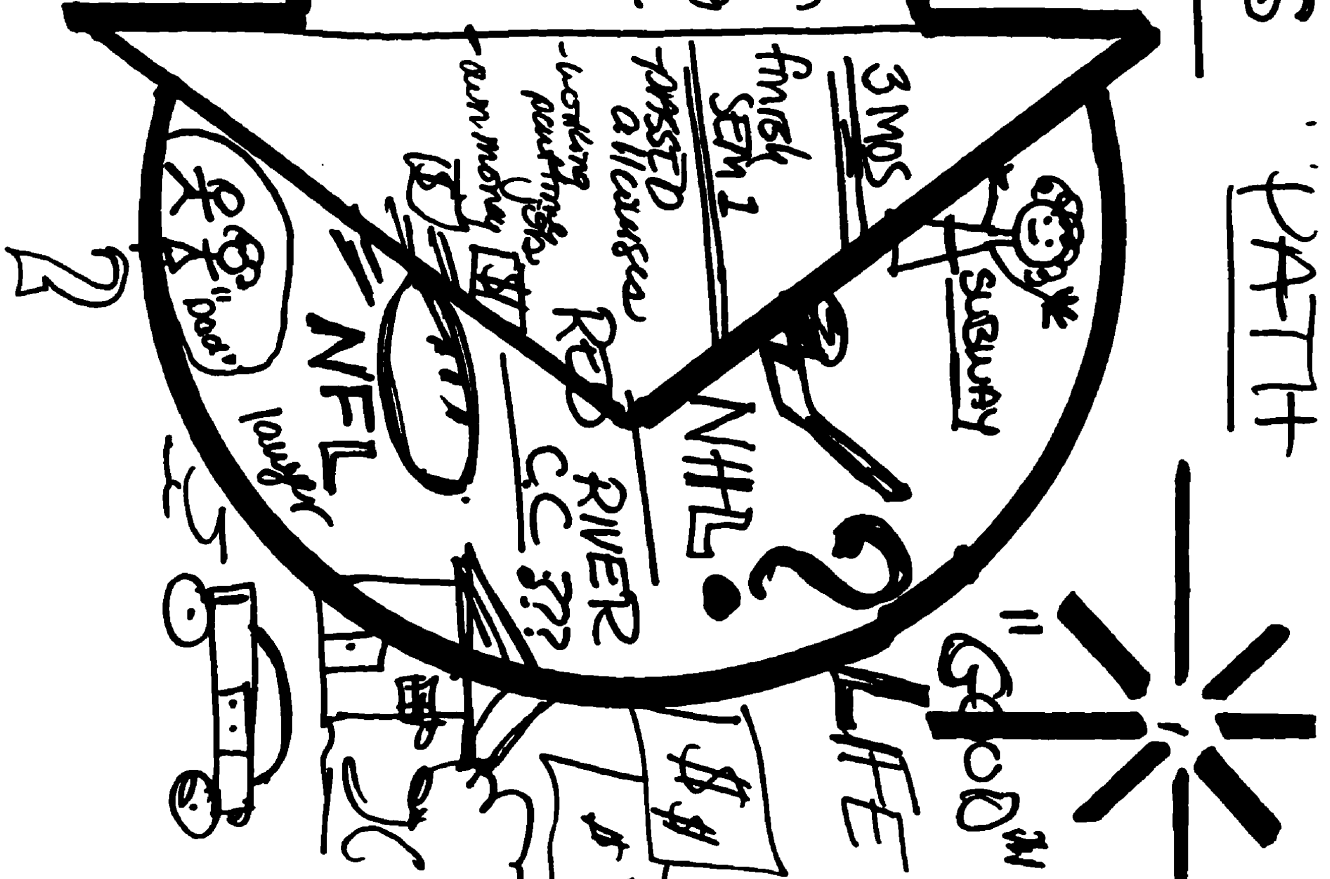
3	<p>Now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> quiet but nice person people skills abit leggy admitted "FAN" if funny! 	4	<p>ENROLL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stacy's grandpa Osimo teacher Melalash 	5	<p>Sherry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> finish assignments to complete hair washing license all photo assignments 	8	<p>1.0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enroll in Driver's Ed check with teachers re: assignments 	7	<p>ONE MONTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> get application for Candy Stripper complete all outstanding work enroll!
---	--	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	--



MARTIN G'S PART II

DEC '96

<u>NOV</u> good enable good post behaviour getting better!! happy!	<u>DECEMBER</u> -history maker (refuses)	<u>STRANGER</u> -coach go on RCC tour	<u>1</u> -write missed tests -note list of assignments -update resume for job	<u>one month</u> -working part time -go to RCC
--	---	--	---	---

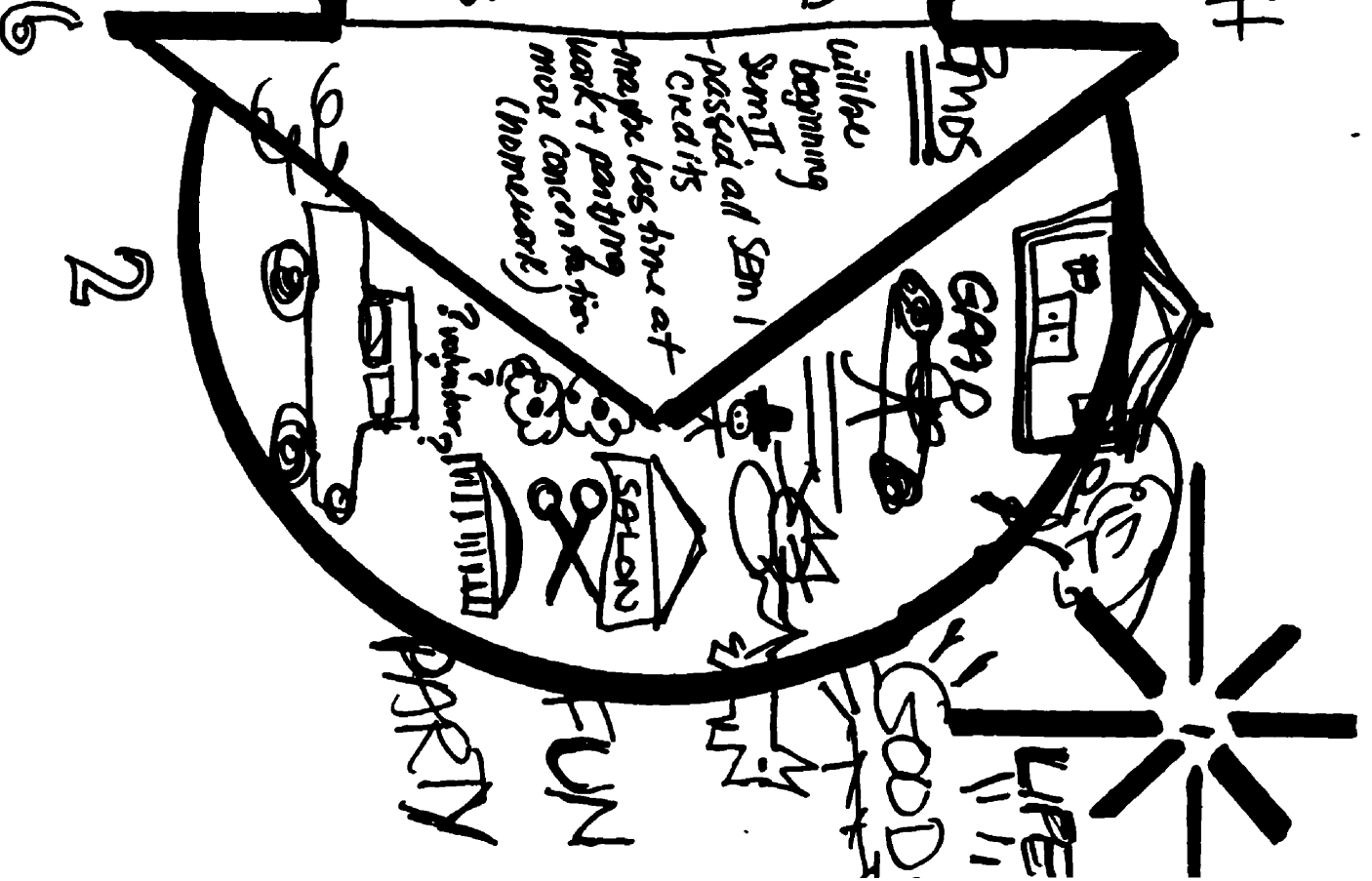


Cathy's?

PATH

DEC '96

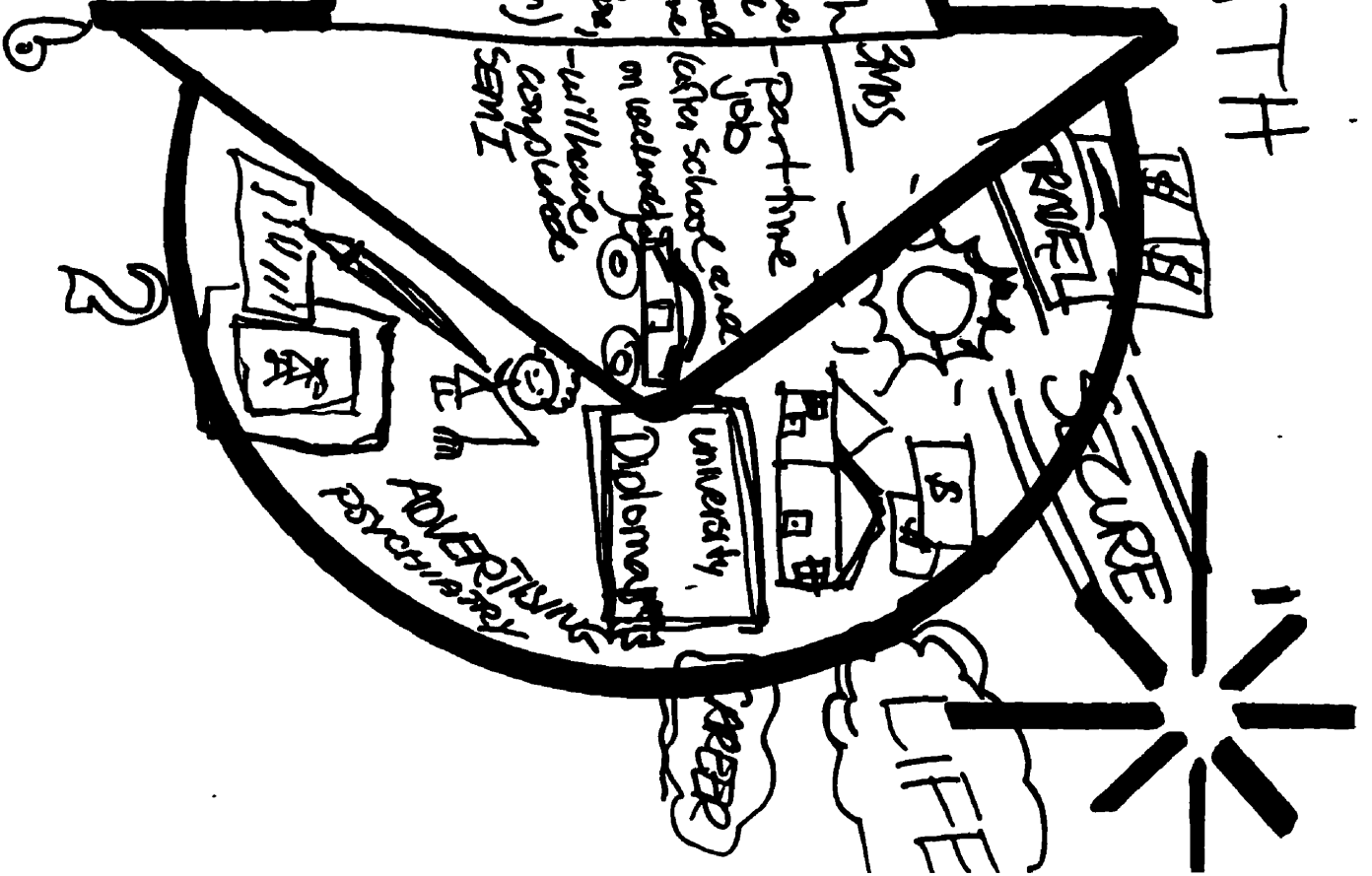
3	<p>NDSD ready capable but not real motivated nice person "PWL"</p>	4	<p>ENRPA comd keeler - mother to give a piece of money</p>	5	<p>Shogger - new hairdo - less time in am.</p>	8	<p>1 skp - new "look" (cathy) - get standing assignment</p>	7	<p>ONE month completed Eng. MINT comd credits (cathy) - study exam's</p>
---	--	---	---	---	--	---	--	---	--



JAMES'S PATH

Dec. 96

1	<p>NOV</p> <p>- good student just a bit easy</p> <p>- Needs to play on track</p> <p>- come to school regularly</p> <p>- likes to party</p> <p>FUN!</p>
2	<p>GRAD</p> <p>- guidance counselor</p> <p>- guidance to check to see if summer school is option</p>
3	<p>STUDENT</p> <p>- friends (supportive)</p> <p>- if trouble at home.</p>
4	<p>1 skip</p> <p>- contact guidance counselor</p> <p>- grad status sheets</p> <p>- make list of outstanding assignments for all course</p>
5	<p>ONE MONTH</p> <p>- will have applied for several part-time jobs</p> <p>- (drug store, Barren)</p>



3MOS

- part-time job

- (after school and on weekends)

- will have completed SEMI

2

Appendix J

PATH

PLANNING ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE

Dear Student,

You are about to embark on a journey and that journey is into your own future. The PATH process is one that will help you set goals for yourself and with the help of people around you, help you to make important decisions.

**You will be the centre of the group of people that has assembled.
You are the Pathfinder.**

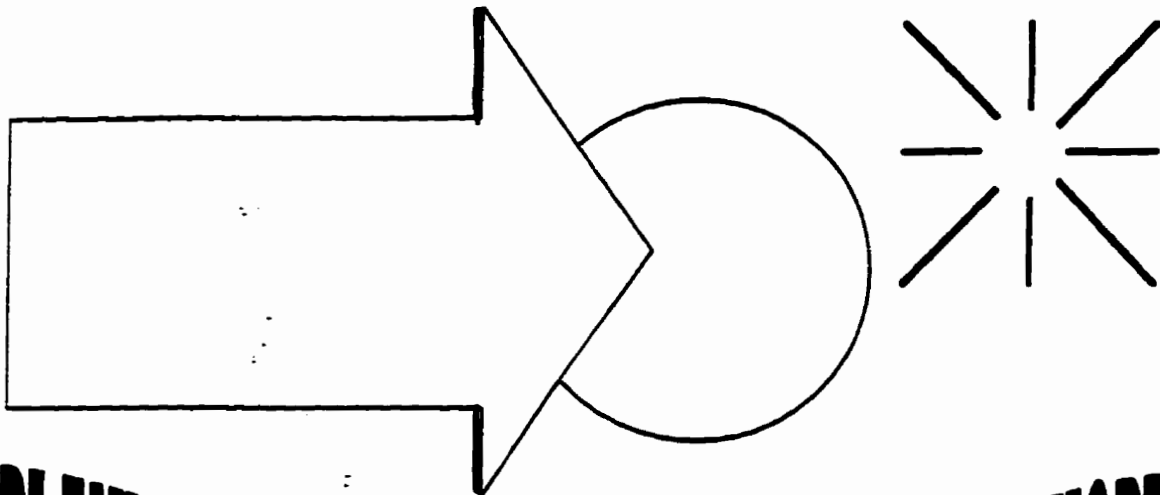
There will be a wall chart where everyone's contributions will be recorded.

Good Luck!



A Workbook for

PLANNING POSITIVE POSSIBLE FUTURES



PLANNING ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE

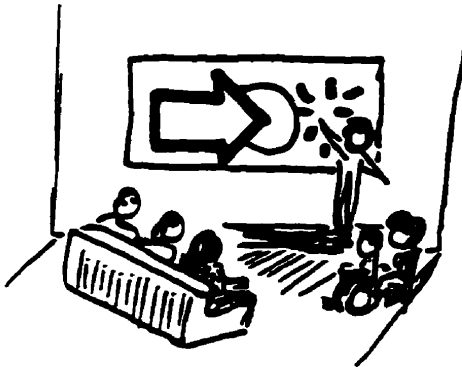
for Schools, Organizations, Businesses, Families

Jack Pearpoint John O'Brien Marsha Forest

INCLUSION PRESS

Creating the First Occasion

Path needs time and space conducive to reflection and focused work. We have productively used two days with a team of pathfinders and we have made satisfactory beginnings in two or three hours. The shorter the time, the more follow up work will be assigned to specific task groups and future meetings. It is vital that the time be free of distractions, anyone who owns a beeper must check it at the door, and everyone must be beyond the reach of any but life and death telephone calls.



The only unusual space requirement concerns the graphic record. There needs to be at least ten feet of open wall space in a place where all the pathfinders can sit in a semi-circle and see it. The graphic recorder will tape a big piece of chart paper with the *Path* outline drawn on it to the wall and fill it in during the meeting (using tape and markers that will not damage the wall surface).

Otherwise the space, and the seating arrangements need to be comfortable and there needs to be a supply of coffee, tea, juice and light snacks. When the group meets long enough to need meals, we have found it important to share them rather than send people off on their own.

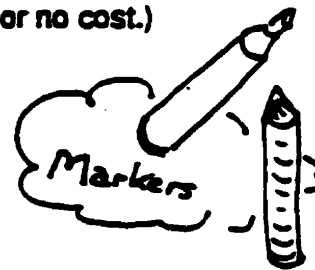
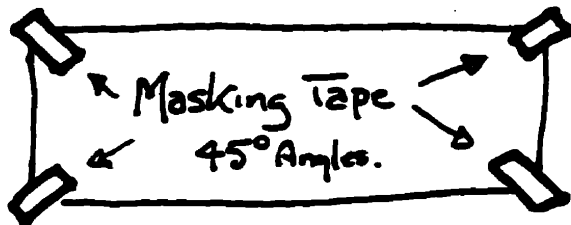
Key elements of *Path*

- 1. Team facilitation:** By working as a team you model the essence of the process which is collaboration and cooperation. "Together We're Better" becomes a living reality, not simply a phrase.
- 2. Graphic Recording:** This colorful and creative process is a key element. It says, without words, "This is really different, important, creative, new!" The quality of the graphics is not nearly as important as the process of creating a group memory where everyone sees their contribution on the paper. Use as many images as possible; not just words.
- 3. Group/Team Empowerment.** At the end of the process the graphic is presented as a gift to the *Path* makers. They alone decide what they will act on. The facilitators are simply catalysts for change. The power is in the hands of the *Path* makers.



Materials

- Water soluble colored markers (Not the permanent kind.)
- Masking tape to hold the poster on the wall.
- A large piece of paper (3 X 10 feet) with the PATH diagram drawn on it. (Office supply stores often carry 'signwriter bond' paper. Large "end rolls" of paper are often available from newspaper or other printers at low or no cost.)



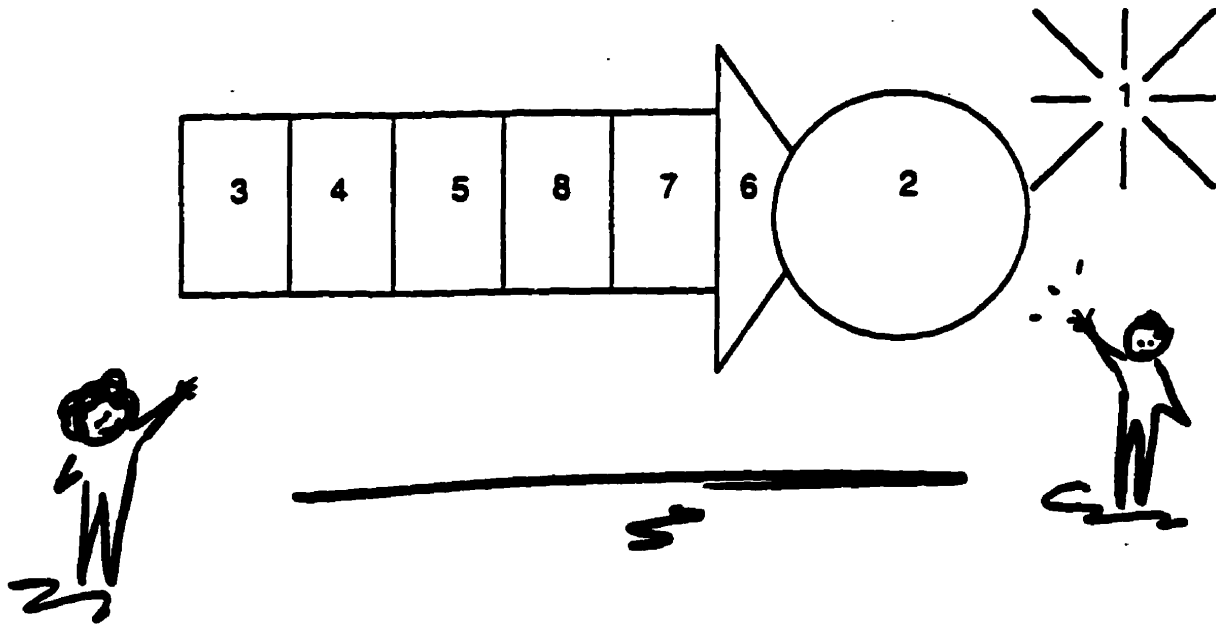
Creating a safe space

- Minimize interruption. Turn off phones and beepers. In one school, we (temporarily disconnected the public address system. If there are concerns about safety or other urgent issues, arrange for an outside party to take messages during the *Path* session.
- Atmosphere: The exploration of the future is the key to the exercise. The atmosphere must be relaxed and comfortable. Seat people facing the blank chart. Now you are ready to begin.
- Check the agreed a completion time as you start and stick to it. Departure of key participants before closure is unsatisfactory.
- Introductions: Ask people for brief statements of who they are in relation to the issue that is the focus of the *PATH*. Demonstrate by introducing yourself.
- If the facilitators don't know people's names, or if everyone doesn't know the all the others, ask each person to make a colorful, readable name tag for someone else in the group.
- Orient people to the idea that *Path* is a process which begins with this meeting. Tell people that you will pace the process so that the group will deal with all eight steps of *PATH*, but that they can expect some steps to be incomplete. Sub-groups, can take responsibility for completing unfinished steps and reporting back at a later meeting.



The *Path* Process

Eight steps define the *Path* process. Their sequence guides pathfinders to clarify the meaning of their work, visualize the results of significant change, experience the tension between where they are now and where they want to be, and outline positive actions to move toward the results they want.

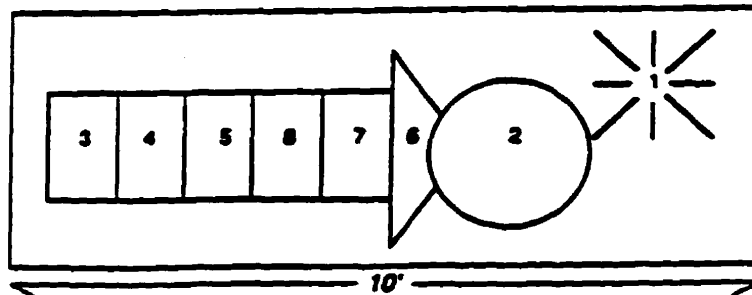


1. Touching the **Dream** - the "North Star"
2. Sensing the **Goal**
3. Grounding in the **Now**
4. Identifying People to **Enroll**
5. Recognizing Ways to **Build Strength**
6. Charting Action for the **Next Few Months**
- 7 Planning the **Next Month's Work**
- 8 Committing to the **First Step**



The graphic recorder finishes this step by summarizing the Pathfinder's dream and asking for the Pathfinder's confirmation that the summary is accurate.

Graphic facilitation hints



This graphic is an integral part of *Path*. Its format keeps focus, sets the sequence of work and organizes a record of the pathfinder's work. Read from left to right, the completed graphic is an implementation plan for the pathfinder.

On a 3 foot by 10 foot poster, draw the format you see above. Use a black marker to draw the arrow and the circle; use bright colored markers to draw the starburst; and use a very pale color, like yellow, to write the numbers. Record what people say in bold colors like black, blue, or green.

As people speak, capture key words and images on the chart. Do not paraphrase; use key words of the pathfinder's own. Record images whenever possible, with words to clarify. This is particularly important when pathfinders have a strong image that carries more meaning than can easily be put into words. For example, a pathfinder talks about walking in a garden of restoration. A few flowers and a stick figure will capture and strengthen an image that may be a key to the plan.

