

**Motivation & Success:
An Exploratory Study of Aboriginal Students in the University of Manitoba's
Special Pre-Medical Studies Program**

Tammy V.L. Harper

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

**The Faculty of Education
Division of Post-Secondary Studies
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

**Motivation & Success:
An Exploratory Study of Aboriginal Students in the University of Manitoba's
Special Pre-Medical Studies Program**

BY

Tammy V.L. Harper

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Tammy V.L. Harper © 2007

Permission has been granted to the Library of the University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to University Microfilms Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.

This reproduction or copy of this thesis has been made available by authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright owner.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence Aboriginal students to apply to and be successful in the University of Manitoba's (U of M) Special Pre-Medical Studies Program (SPSP), to explore their initial motivation to apply to the program and to identify which supports they believe they will most help to keep them enrolled. This study involved a comprehensive content analysis of the autobiographies that Aboriginal students submit when applying to SPSP. The results of the content analysis allow readers to understand the goals and beliefs of the students before entering the university. The use of the completion status variable to the autobiographies allows initial conclusions to be made about what motivated them to apply and if a life changing event factored into this decision. Finally, conclusions are made on how initial goals, beliefs and determination affect student success in completing their program.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Literature Review Map.....	13
--------------------------------------	----

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of Figures.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Chapter II: Literature Review.....	10
Chapter III: Methodology.....	34
Chapter IV: Data Analysis.....	47
Chapter V: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion.....	69
Literature Cited.....	76
Appendix A: Questionnaire for Individual Interviews with Non - Completers.....	91
Appendix B: Questionnaire for Individual Interviews with Completers.....	93
Appendix C: Letter of Consent for Participating Education Students.....	95
Appendix D: Letter Requesting Participation in Interviews.....	97

CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

Education has been called “the key that unlocks the door to the future” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], 1996, p. 161). Although there are many things that can be learned outside the classroom, a formal education has become increasingly important in today’s workforce.

According to the 2001 Aboriginal People’s Survey (APS), there has been a positive change in the level of post-secondary education attainment for non-reserve Aboriginal students. In 2001, 8% of off reserve Aboriginal people aged 25 to 34 had completed university as compared to 5% in 1996. As large numbers of people retire and leave the workforce in coming years, employment opportunities will exist for many well educated young Aboriginal people. Given the increases in post-secondary education attainment it would seem that Aboriginal youth are making strides that would contribute to their success in the paid labour market. However, the APS indicates that there are still obstacles to overcome. Although the rates for post-secondary education attainment are increasing for Aboriginal youth, they are increasing for non-Aboriginal youth as well. This means that the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal post-secondary attainment remains.

With respect to labour market participation, Aboriginal people between the ages of 25 to 54 have seen improvements in employment rates but again, the gap remains between the off reserve Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. In 1981, Aboriginal people had an employment rate of 58% as compared to 75% of non-Aboriginal people. By the 2001 Census the Aboriginal population had a 65% employment rate compared to 80% for non-Aboriginal people.

Demographic profiles of Canadian population growth indicate that the Aboriginal population has been increasing at almost twice the rate of the non-Aboriginal Canadian population (Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat & Human Resource Development Canada [MAAS & HRDC], 2002, p. 30) and given that Aboriginal birth rates are still higher than that of the general population this trend is continuing.

With respect to Manitoba, Statistics Canada's 2001 Census reports that 150,040 Aboriginal people lived in the province, accounting for 14% of Manitoba's total population. This is the highest concentration of Aboriginal people in all the provinces and 10% higher than the national average.

Also reported in the Census is the fact that the Aboriginal population in Manitoba is young and increasing in number. In 1981, the Aboriginal population in Manitoba was 66,280 or 7% of the total Manitoba population, by 1986 this had risen to 93,450 or 9% and in 1991 the Aboriginal population in Manitoba had increased to 116,200 or 11% of the total population¹. The increases in the Aboriginal population have been due to a higher birth rate than non-Aboriginals and a decreasing mortality rate. According to a joint federal/provincial report, *Aboriginal People in Manitoba* (2002) "the factors which have been linked to the growth in the Aboriginal population are: (1) a greater propensity to declare Aboriginal origins; (2) the effects of Bill C-31, [which were threefold: (a) to reinstate 'Indian Status' to those individuals who had lost or were not allowed Status through previous versions of the *Act*, (b) changes to the 'status inheritance rules,' which under the new *Act* gave registered Indian Status at birth that could not be lost or restored and, (c) to allow First Nation Bands to establish their own Band membership rules]; (3)

¹ Aboriginal populations in the 1991 Census and earlier were based upon ethnic origin or ancestry, and figures from these Censuses are not comparable with the 1996 census.

improved Census coverage of remote and urban populations; and (4) more diligent Indian Act registration of young children” (p. 13, 23, 24).

In 2001, 55,760 or 37% of Manitoba’s Aboriginal population lived in Winnipeg which is about equal to the number of Aboriginal people living in Nunavut, Yukon and the Northwest Territories combined (Statistics Canada Census, 2001). Most of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal people are concentrated in the inner north end of the city and 80% of these Aboriginal residents fall below Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut-off (MAAS & HRDC, 2002, p. 85).

Although statistics show that Aboriginal women have experienced declining birth rates over that past six Census’, the birth rate is still higher than non-Aboriginal women (at 2.6 compared to 1.8) (MAAS & HRDC, 2002, p. 30). With the large numbers of young Aboriginal children moving into their reproductive years, comes the guarantee that the Aboriginal birth rate will remain extremely high in Manitoba for several decades, even with the declining birth rates.

The Research Problem

Despite the proliferation of support programs in Canada over the past 20 years, few Aboriginal students have successfully completed post-secondary education. In 2001, only 6% of the Aboriginal population (25 years and older) in Canada had completed a university degree, compared to 24% of the general population (APS, 2001). Part of the reason behind these low rates is within the institutions themselves. Being the new student on campus in a large university is terrifying for many young adults, but for Aboriginal students university life is different from anything they have ever experienced. It is larger, louder, more impersonal and faster paced than

anything most Aboriginal students have seen previously - especially in the loss of family, friends and community.

Then there is the additional barrier of history. Aboriginal people's fear of formal education dates back to the assimilation policies of the Canadian government in the 1870s. "These assimilationist methods were failures but [also] resulted in low educational attainment and resulting poverty" (Hampton and Roy, 2002, p. 3) for Aboriginal people. Approximately 50% of Aboriginal Manitobans 25 years and older have less than a high school education, which is 22% higher than the figure for the general Manitoba population (Statistics Canada Census, 2001). This gap between educational attainment for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Manitobans is smaller at the high school and trade/non-university education levels but increases again at the university level by 13% (Statistics Canada Census, 1996).

Aboriginal high school completion rates have improved throughout the 1990s but are still much lower than that of the general population. Graduation rates vary by Aboriginal group; from a high of 57% for Métis students aged 30-39, to a low of 15% for Status Indians on reserve aged 50 plus (MAAS & HRDC, 2002, p. 53). Manitoba's university graduation rate of 3% is typical among the provinces (MAAS & HRDC, 2002, p. 53). This low graduation rate results in Aboriginal people being under-represented as both students and faculty in post-secondary institutions in Canada (Monture-Angus, 1995). This issue was corroborated by the joint federal/provincial report, *Aboriginal People in Manitoba* (2002);

The age distribution of the non-Aboriginal population has important consequences for the demands for certain social services, now and in the future. Most obvious, close to one third of Aboriginal people are in the primary and secondary school age population, compared to less than one fifth of the non-Aboriginal people. There is also greater potential demand for post-secondary education and vocational training, a demand that will increase dramatically as the large cohort of Aboriginal children aged 14 and under grows into the working age population. Finally, the labour market will need to absorb increasing numbers of Aboriginal youth over the next few decades, or social institutions

will need to absorb the consequences of a failure to absorb these youths into the labour market. (p. 28)

The response by most institutions is to assist Aboriginal students in adapting and becoming more integrated into the culture and fabric of the institution so that they can be retained until graduation. This response often results in Access programs, which offer special counseling and support services to assist Aboriginal students in their transition to university life. Despite the Access programs having increased the retention rates of Aboriginal students, their efforts alone do not create the desired results of full and equal participation.

As previously mentioned, Aboriginal people make up approximately 14% of the total population of Manitoba, yet they represent only 7% of the post-secondary enrollments at the universities, and 6% of the total undergraduate student population at the University of Manitoba (U of M) in 2001 (APS, 2001 & Council on Post-Secondary Education [COPSE], 2004, p. 7). As indicated, the growth in this section of Manitoba's population is quickly outpacing that of the non-Aboriginal population. By 2021, the Aboriginal population is projected to increase by 47% (INAC, 2002, p. 16) while the rest of the Manitoba population remains stable.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that influence Aboriginal students to apply to and be successful in the Special Pre-Medical Studies Program (SPSP), to explore their initial motivation to apply to the program and to identify how personal goals and determination affected their success. Historically, retention theories have been designed specifically for the traditional, able bodied, 18 to 24 year old middle-class male, who resided on campus. But over

the past 25 years student demographics have changed to include women, students from different ethnic backgrounds, physically disabled individuals and older students (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Guppy & Bednarski, 1993; Johnson, 1991; Stahl & Pavel, 1992). Researchers have begun to create models that may predict retention of non-traditional students as well as students in the growing variety of higher education institutions (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983), as seen in the use of Kirkness and Barhhardt (1991) and Hampton and Roy's (2002) research in this thesis.

Since the literature review revealed little about the success or failure of Aboriginal students in university, the Researcher conducted an exploratory study to gather as much information as possible from a Manitoban Aboriginal perspective.

In order to keep the research focused; this study will examine the university careers of all Aboriginal students enrolled in the SPSP at the U of M between 1998 and 2000. Aboriginal students were chosen because they have lower high school and post-secondary completion rates as well as lower labour market participation rates in Manitoba. SPSP was chosen as it is a pre-professional program which requires specific skills in math and science, which are common programs for Aboriginal students to have difficulty in because of the lack of qualified teachers at the secondary level in northern Manitoba.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions to be used in this study. They were formed based on the data above and the results of the literature review.

1. What factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the program? How did this contribute to their success in the SPSP program?

2. What factors did a personal life changing event play in a student's decision to apply and in their success in the SPSP program?
3. How much did personal goals and determination play in their success?

Definitions and Terms

Aboriginal: People who self-identify as North American Indians, Métis or Inuit or are registered under the *Indian Act* of Canada.

APS: Aboriginal People's Survey.

Completer: Those students who successfully complete their prescribed degree.

FIPPA: *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

First Nation: A term that began replacing Indian in the 1970s. Now widely used, the term describes both Status and Non-Status Indian people. Many Indian people have also adopted the term First Nation to replace band in the name of their community. (Métis National Council - As quoted by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, 2007)

HRDC: Human Resource Development Canada, now Human Resources and Social Development Canada

INAC: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

MAAS: Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Métis: A person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation. (Métis National Council - As quoted by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, 2007)

Non-Completer: A student who has left the U of M prior to completing their degree and is not an academic or voluntary withdrawal.

Non - Status Indian: Those people not registered under Canada's *Indian Act*.

PEPS: Statistics Canada's Post-secondary Education Participation Survey.

SPSP: Special Pre-Medical Studies Program.

Status Indian: A person who is registered under the Indian Act of Canada. (Métis National Council - As quoted by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, 2007)

U of M: University of Manitoba.

UMAP: University of Manitoba Access Program.

YITS: Statistics Canada's Youth in Transition Survey.

Summary

The fact that the Aboriginal population in Manitoba is young and increasing in size should be cause for concern. This population is also the least educated, the least likely to remain in school, has the highest birth rates, and the lowest incomes. There are far reaching consequences for the province as a whole if attention is not paid to this population. It has been said that "education is the key to unlocking the future" (INAC, 1996, p. 161) and a "correlation between educational attainment and employment, economic well being and health has been well established" (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., 2004, p. 5). Thus, an increased effort towards educating our Aboriginal population in Manitoba is a good beginning. The most logical first step is to find ways to retain more of the students that have already chosen to attend post-secondary

education. To begin this, one must examine why Aboriginal students require extra support from a program such as SPSP.

CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature is required to determine the critical issues affecting success or failure of Manitoba's Aboriginal students. The literature suggests that students' likelihood of remaining in post-secondary education though graduation depends on the level of social and academic integration into university life. This integration depends on a number of characteristics that the students hold before they enter post-secondary education and those they gain during and afterwards.

For years American researchers have studied Hispanics, Blacks, low income students and minorities in higher education and the Australians have begun to study their indigenous population, but Canada has undertaken little research on our Aboriginal people and how they have fared in post-secondary education. Therefore, much of the background research for this review will be based on American models of retaining minority and Aboriginal students in higher education and the Australian research will be added where applicable. Although the educational system and economies of the United States and Australia vary widely from the Canadian system, there are many factors that affect all students in their transition to higher education. In her paper, *Creating an Affirming Culture to Retain African-American Students During the Postaffirmative Action Era in Higher Education*, Jones (2001) suggests that there are "many factors that all students, regardless of ethnicity, experience in their move towards and into post-secondary education" (p. 8). Barring any major differences in economics and the educational system, this Researcher argues that this is just as true for Canadian students as it is for American students. The factors that Jones mentions are:

1. "The need to adjust to a new environment, a different value system and an intensified awareness of one's own ethnic minority status;
2. The need to receive adequate financial aid;
3. The need to perceive the social and academic climate as inclusive and affirming;
4. The need to establish long term goals, short term objectives and a commitment to both; and
5. Background characteristics that are conducive to successful achievement of personal goals."

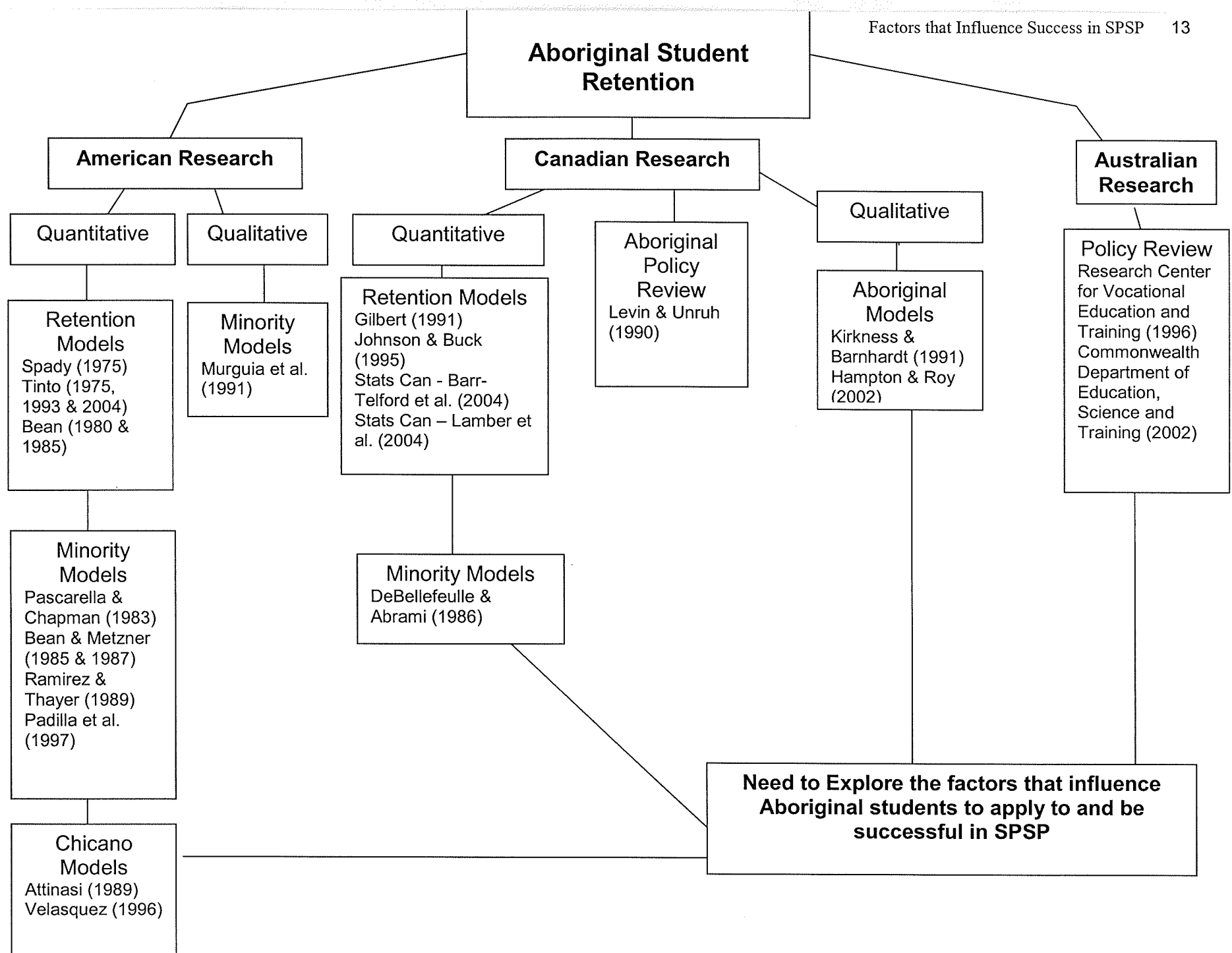
(p. 8-11)

Attrition and Retention Models

Canada has not been front and center in retention research for Aboriginal or minority students. In order to begin breaking ground a detailed historical look at the available Canadian, American and Australian research must be examined. Theories on ethnic minorities and black students will also be used to fill out the history. The Researcher is undertaking this study with the knowledge that the American and Australian systems are different from our system in Canada and that the results may not necessarily be the same as in those countries. But as this is an exploratory study which is attempting to break 'new ground' in a historically under-researched segment of the Canadian population it makes sense to start with what is known and improve the methodology with time and experience.

Figure 1 gives a pictorial overview of the attached literature review and how each area leads to the gap in retention research and the main research question of 'the factors that contribute to an Aboriginal student's success or failure in the SPSP program'. The literature

review itself is written in chronological order beginning with American research, followed by the available Australian and Canadian research.



American Retention Models

Spady's (1975) model of attrition is based on his study of Durkheim's (1966) theory of suicide. As noted in Andres and Carpenter (1997), "Durkheim argued that suicide is a result of a person breaking ties with the social system because of a lack of integration into society. Spady claimed that these types of integration directly affect student persistence or withdrawal. [Suggesting that withdrawal] is a result of students not integrating into the higher education environment" (p. 12). Family background characteristics, according to Spady, are one of the many sources that affect students with outside expectations which in turn affect their integration level. Full integration into post-secondary education means that the student must meet the demands of the institution's social and academic spheres.

Tinto (1975) expanded on Spady's model by applying exchange theory. Exchange theory states that individuals withdraw from college when the cost of their investment (time, energy and resources) outweighs the benefits of remaining. As the students continue their education, several variables influence, what Tinto calls the 'student-institution match'. When students enter university, they bring a set of background characteristics that influence their experience in post-secondary education, i.e., family background, individual attributes and pre-university schooling. Combined, these characteristics influence each students' commitment and goal of completing their program. "Tinto measures successful academic integration through grade performance and [...] social integration through the development and frequency of contact with peers, faculty [members, as well as] involvement in extracurricular activity. The stronger these commitments are to the institution, and the goal of completing, as well as the higher the levels of academic and social integration, the less likely the student will be to withdraw" (Andres & Carpenter, 1997, p. 14). Tinto (1975) also notes that a person can be integrated into the social aspects of an

institution and still withdraw from the institution because they are not integrated on the academic side. Thus the need for both academic and student supports.

Tinto's theories have been confirmed and refuted in the last twenty-plus years but his model was specifically designed for the traditional, able bodied, 18 to 24 year old middle-class male, who resided on campus. Although Tinto's (1975) model is considered comprehensive (Guppy & Bednarski, 1993; Tierney, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1987), as it provides a general theory of student participation, it does not leave a lot of room to look at those non-traditional students, which include women, mature students, visible minorities, those with special needs (Bean & Metzner 1985, 1987; Guppy & Bednarski, 1993; Johnson, 1991; Stahl & Pavel, 1992) and Aboriginals who do not live on campus.

Bean's (1980) model of attrition was based on Price's (1977) model of employee turnover in industrial organizations and adapted it to student withdrawal from post-secondary education. Price's model stated that internal issues affect employee satisfaction and thus their decision to stay or leave. Bean added personal background characteristics (high school performance, socioeconomic status, state of residence, distance from home to university, and hometown size) to Price's model in order to examine how they influence the student-institution fit. Bean found a causal relationship between background characteristics and institutional factors, which led to institutional commitment or withdrawal.

Pascarella and Chapman (1983) tested Tinto's 1975 model of student attrition in predicting retention in non-traditional post-secondary institutions. Pascarella and Chapman's model of college withdrawal was meant to test the validity of Tinto's model for three different types of institutions four-year residential, four-year commuter, and two-year commuter institutions. They found differences in the influence exerted by different types of institutions on student retention. According to Pascarella and Chapman, social integration plays a stronger role

in retaining students at four-year residential institutions, while academic integration is more important at two and four-year commuter institutions.

Bean (1985) studied the factors affecting post-secondary education withdrawal. Although normally the factors most commonly cited for student withdrawal are academic integration, social integration, institutional selection and the socialization of students. In this model, Bean found that peers were more important in socialization than faculty contacts. Furthermore, Bean found that academic, social-psychological and environmental factors affect socialization/selection factors such as college grades, institutional fit and institutional commitment.

Bean and Metzner's (1985) model of non-traditional student withdrawal concludes that there are four variables that affect attrition: academics (past and present GPA); intent to withdraw; demographic variables; and environmental variables (finances, hours of employment, outside encouragement, and opportunity to transfer).

Bean and Metzner (1987) found that non-traditional student² attrition was affected more by the external environment than social interaction. Social integration was not found to be significant for the non-traditional group, while GPA and institutional commitment directly affected a student's withdrawal decision through its impact on the perception of usefulness in finding employment (as cited in Andres and Carpenter, 1997).

Ramirez and Thayer (1989) use a combination of two theories called the asset model and the ecological model. The assumptions behind their model are that all students admitted to an institution are capable of succeeding and that the institution has the responsibility to create an environment in which all of these students (both minority and majority) can succeed. Under this model, minority students are defined as "those students from ethnic backgrounds historically underrepresented in American higher education. [But this term can also be applied to] any group

² Defined as "older than 24, lives off campus, part time student, or some combination of these factors; is not influenced by the social aspects of the institution; and is concerned with academics.

that finds itself the minority with respect to the predominant population on a given campus” (p. 18).

Ramirez and Thayer believe that institutional retention must come out of the belief that a diverse student body is an asset, and that this must be apparent to the general student body, so that all students feel their participation in that institution is meaningful. In order to accomplish this, Ramirez and Thayer emphasize the importance of student connectedness to the institution during the transition period and throughout each student’s academic career.

Attinasi’s (1989) interest in minority student retention has arisen from the low percentage of college graduates in the Mexican American population in the United States. In his work he examines school going behavior at three points in time: before, at the point of, and after college entry. Attinasi attributes the low percentage of the Mexican American population graduating from college to the high attrition rates at the elementary and secondary levels, which decreases the available pool of students eligible for university entrance.

Attinasi’s model is based on an exploratory study using qualitative interview data from Mexican American students and their persistence decisions. He believes that a qualitative study using in-depth interviews is the best format because the present models of student retention “present conceptual and methodological shortcomings” (p. 250). He says they are “grounded in a framework that was used to explain some other social or socio-psychological phenomenon; and they have been developed on the basis of and tested with, data collected from institutional records and/or by means of fixed choice questionnaires” (p. 250). Attinasi believes that these research models strip away the real meaning of the students’ persistence decisions and loses the students’ perceptions of the withdrawal process.

In his conclusion, Attinasi states that for Mexican American freshmen:

1. the effects of background variables on college persistence are mediated by the influences of family and peers;
2. following in the footsteps of an older sibling attending college influences both the decision to go to college and the decision to stay; and
3. social integration influences student persistence by means of assisting the student to deal with university life.

Attinasi's believes that researchers do not have a clear enough understanding of the minority students' persistence decision from the current models and therefore he proposes an exploratory study to gain some insight on the way these people think. To begin this process he used personal interviews with a limited number of Mexican American students, he then used the insights that he gains to lead into more detailed future research.

Murguia, Padilla and Pavel's (1991) model used qualitative analysis to explore the role of ethnicity in Tinto's 1987 model of integration. They proposed that by modifying the concept of social integration, Tinto's models could be used for ethnic minority students. Murguia et al. found that an individuals' ethnicity is rooted both "biologically (from the parents) and socio-culturally (through family and friends)" (p. 436). This ethnicity then produces a sense of self identity. According to Tinto (1987), successful students are more integrated into the social aspect of campus life but that this integration occurs in smaller sub groups. In 1989, Attinasi found that students attending a large university would find smaller sub groups to minimize the impact of the social, physical and academic environments so that they could deal with them. Once the students were integrated into the smaller version of campus life, they can then deal with the larger campus as they choose.

The implications from this study are two fold; ethnicity is an important element in the social integration and because social integration involves participation in sub groups rather than the campus as a whole, social integration should be measured with respect to these sub groups.

Tinto (1993 Revised) revised his 1975 model to reflect the changing demographics and new research surrounding post-secondary education. Tinto's new edition takes a more extensive look at "the experience of students of colour and adult students and to the [attrition] situation facing commuting institutions and two-year colleges" (p. x). In his revised model, Tinto argues that,

... individual departure from institutions can be viewed as arising out of a longitudinal process of interactions between an individual with given attributes, skills, financial resources, prior educational experiences and dispositions and other members of the academic and social systems of the institution. The individual's experience in those systems, as indicated by each student's academic and social integration, continually modifies their intention and commitments. Positive experiences reinforce persistence through their impact upon heightened intentions and commitments both to the goal of college completion and to the institution in which the person finds him/herself. (Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora, and Hengstler, 1992) Negative experiences serve to weaken the intentions and commitments, especially commitment to the institution, and thereby enhancing the likelihood of leaving. (p. 113-115)

Another point of note is that in 1993 Tinto distinguished between formal and informal integration in both the social and academic areas of college life. Formal social integration involves contact with representatives and organizations of the university, specifically, faculty and staff and membership in officially recognized student organizations (Mayo, Murguia, & Padilla, 1995). Informal social integration refers to involvement in the social sphere of campus, and relationships with fellow students. The definition for academic integration is similar. Formal academic integration involves instruction, academic activities and grades, while informal academic integration involves faculty and staff interaction (Gilbert, 1991).

Velasquez (1996) model details the core issues surrounding the historical and present day characteristics of Chicano (or Hispanic) students and how these characteristics relate to the

Chicano post-secondary experience. He argues that American institutions place Chicano students at a low priority (in terms of funding for specific student supports) and that only those students with a strong bicultural focus are able to adapt and do well in higher education. The major concepts addressed were student characteristics, institutional characteristics, external stress factors, campus integration and demographic information.

Velaquez, quoting Darder (1992) and Ramirez and Castaneda (1974), states that “the institutional remedy for the neglect of these students has been described as cultural democracy, which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between culture and power, both inside and outside the institution” (p. 8). According to Darder, cultural democracy in higher education is a way of looking at cultural differences as normal and legitimate and an institution’s response to these differences should be accepting. Thus a culturally democratic institution accepts the values of equity and social justice, rather than putting emphasis on conformity which allows diversity to become embodied in campus practices.

The main conclusions of the paper were that the students who participated described themselves as having a strong bicultural profile, and, those students indicated that their perceptions of their campus’ institutional conditions were not equally conducive to students’ positive experiences - there was little cultural democracy apparent in the institutions surveyed.

Padilla, Treviño, Gonzalez & Treviño (1997) examined what successful minority students (Asian American, African American, Native American and Latino) at Arizona State University did in order to complete their degrees. The researchers found that successful minority students overcame barriers by using support groups related to their ethnic background; by making their own decisions; and by researching the profitability of their chosen careers.

Tinto (2004) examines what is and what can be done to enhance student retention. He concludes that increasing student retention is attainable. Moreover, Tinto states that although

retention is normally an institutional matter the federal government can help to improve retention through the development of a national database that tracks students over time, by increasing transfer programs and increasing student aid assistance for low income students (p. 14).

This research further concludes that although these are costly suggestions – doing nothing is more costly because many these individuals will become dependant on government transfers if they cannot get access to better paying jobs through education. In order to provide meaningful education to all citizens Americans must do more to make higher education accessible and make a post-secondary degree attainable.

Australian Retention Research

The Commonwealth of Australia has taken a different route with respect to retention research. Where American and Canadian researchers have used mainly quantitative studies of the ‘mainstream student’ and then tried to modify the model for use with non-traditional students, the Australians have been mainly using government policy to evoke change. A few of these policies and models were available and are summarized below.

Research Center for Vocational Education and Training (1996) - For the past 20 years, government policy has been pressing the Australian education system to respond to the educational needs of Australia’s indigenous peoples. These efforts have led to increased access, participation, and increased use of delivery methods which acknowledge culture and the identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This qualitative study is a response to the lack of information on the factors, which effect access, participation and success rates of indigenous Australians.

In the area of success, the respondents stated that change needed to be made to the institutions organizational structure as it was too inflexible and inappropriate to the needs of indigenous Australians. Other recommendations included increased support services, an indigenous student's center, more culturally inclusive academic practices, an increased number of indigenous faculty, and further modifications to the institutional and course structure to increase their effectiveness for indigenous students.

Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (2002) - In 1989, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) was developed and implemented. This policy was created to address the profound disadvantages in many elements of life as experienced by indigenous Australians. In this policy Australia was seeking equity for all members of Australian society. It was seen as unacceptable to allow such a major gap to exist in the present society. The Australian government committed itself to a "practical reconciliation... through strategic program interventions across the whole-of-government, [to] progressively overcome barriers to full indigenous participation in the Australian society and remove the disadvantages that indigenous people face" (p. ix). Unfortunately, mainstream post-secondary education in Australia does not support traditional learning methods which have increased the gap in representation of indigenous Australians as compared to non-indigenous Australians in post-secondary education.

The four long-term goals of the AEP are:

1. "involving indigenous people in educational decision-making;
2. equality of access to educational services;
3. equity of educational participation; and
4. equitable and appropriate educational outcomes." (p. 1)

The paper stressed that though changes and improvements were made in access to post-secondary studies for indigenous Australians, there is still no place for complacency. Thus, several strategies were adopted.

1. To address the issue of equity, the indigenous community needs to be involved in the planning and implementation of education and in overcoming cultural isolation and prejudice.
2. The institutions need to be accountable when accepting funding for the support of indigenous students.
3. Support is a crucial factor in achieving academic success by indigenous higher education students. The current program is not accomplishing this goal.
4. Australia suffers from unequal representation of indigenous professionals in relation to non-indigenous Australians. This gap has been slowly closing in recent years. Improving the representation is vital to the well being of indigenous communities.
5. The current post-secondary education system shares little understanding for traditional indigenous values. Therefore, the system has been implementing new courses for indigenous learners.
6. Indigenous higher education centers and the indigenous online network have been opening more opportunities for indigenous researchers. Barriers still exist however and many indigenous post-graduate research students still feel their isolation acts as a barrier to being successful.

Canadian Retention Research

DeBellefeuille and Abrami (1986) studied the effects of culture on post-secondary success. They believed that differences in cultural learning may effect a student's academic beliefs. Therefore they compared post-secondary level English speaking Canadians to post-secondary level minority students, in terms of:

1. each student's perceived importance of university education and the likelihood of success;
2. the likelihood of success at both competitive and non-competitive tasks;
3. the causal attributions for task outcomes and affective reasons to those outcomes, and;
4. in 'fear of success' (FOS) measures. FOS measures a person's anticipated reaction to success. For example, in 1972 Horner found that individuals with high FOS scores (especially women) tended to avoid achievement situations where they anticipate negative outcomes from success, including ridicule and/or loss of femininity. These people generally avoid competitive tasks and have career and family aspirations that will keep them out of the limelight.

DeBellefeuille and Abrami found that English speaking Canadian students and minority students held similar beliefs on the importance of education and a successful career. They also found that there were few differences in the academic beliefs of both English Canadians and ethnic minorities. The fear of success factors did not vary between the groups regardless of the measure that was used. Third, there were no differences found between perceived successes at either competitive or noncompetitive tasks. Fourth, minority students attributed more responsibility to luck than English Canadian students. Finally, DeBellefeuille and Abrami found that minority students have a greater emotional concern for their educational performance.

Gilbert (1991) - In 1991, the Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education released a report on *Attrition in Canadian Universities*. The report looked at students across Canada, who first enrolled in university in the fall of 1985 and noted how many graduated from their original institution five years later, in the summer of 1990. The report concluded that:

1. the institutional attrition rate for first year full time undergraduate students was 42% and increasing because it is taking longer to complete degrees;
2. undergraduate withdrawal is highest in the fine and performing arts (47%), science (44%) and arts (42%). It is lower for professional programs such as engineering (36%), health professions (23%) and law (6%);
3. most undergraduate withdrawal occurs before second year and is voluntary, and;
4. the degree of attrition varies by university, highly accessible institutions have attrition rates between 37%-68%, while selective institutions range between 15%-48%.

Although this report is useful for providing a historical benchmark for attrition in Canada, only the general student population was used so there were no statistics available on Aboriginal or minority students.

Levin and Unruh (1990) - According to Levin and Unruh, the Access programs in Manitoba use two principles: equality of access and equality of condition. Combined these equalities produce what Levin and Unruh refer to as the success model. Equality of access means that changes must be made at the administration and delivery levels of an institution so that those students who previously could not participate in post-secondary education now have the chance to do so. The equality of condition means that each person requires different services to allow them to learn (learning strategies, length of time to learn, supports) and these services should be provided. It also implies a shift from educational standards through entrance requirements to clear and defined exit requirements.

The Access program is successful because it offers student-specific supports: financial, academic, and personal support. This is an important factor because many students feel as though they have been forgotten after their fees have been paid. These supports aid in the success of this program because they give students options, rather than having to dropout of school.

Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) paper discusses the concept of 'coming to university' versus 'going to university' from the perspective of Aboriginal students. These researchers define coming to university as the perspective where the students come to join in what the university has to offer. This means that the university is seen as an institution with policies, practices, programs and standards intended to serve the needs of the mainstream student body. The notion of going to university is also described by Tierney (1991), whose research shows that an Aboriginal student's reasons for attending university were very different from the administration – social integration into the culture of the university at the expense of their own culture.

In order to provide an appropriate learning experience for Aboriginal students, Kirkness and Barnhardt have argued that university courses and programs must be presented in ways that have value to the students themselves. Universities must provide programs that are relevant to a student's aspirations and culture in order to achieve a comfort level that will make post-secondary education worth continuing for that student (as cited in Matheos, 1998, p. 5).

In order to ensure that an appropriate learning situation is provided by the university, Kirkness and Barnhardt have specified four criteria that Aboriginal students require: (a) a post-secondary system that respects Aboriginal people as individuals and as a cultural group; (b) a curriculum that is relevant to their world view; (c) a system that offers reciprocity and exchange of knowledge between teachers and learners, and; (d) a system that is 'responsible' in that it provides participants with the skills for self-determination" (as cited in Matheos, 1998, p. 5).

Johnson and Buck's (1995) model is based on the assumption that each student arrives at a post-secondary institution with many personal and educational variables. These variables then mix with institutional variables and result in the quality of a student's educational performance. Johnson and Buck's research places emphasis on defining and differentiating between the types of university withdrawal - student and institution initiated. They also categorized the elements of undergraduate attrition into four main areas: (a) academic integration, (b) personal integration, (c) campus integration, and (d) institutional integration.

Hampton and Roy's (2002) research suggests guidelines for college instructors to use in order to help First Nation students succeed in their classroom. The data was collected from four focus groups with First Nation students and First Nation and non-First Nation faculty who identified five themes that could be used to create more positive learning environments for First Nation students. These themes included understanding of the life of a post-secondary First Nation student; using flexible teaching methods; including First Nation content in the curriculum; enhancing professor/student relationships, and; adopting a more culturally appropriate teaching style.

These themes are meant to enhance teaching practices. Hampton and Roy state that their research "validates the traditional First Nation pedagogy that describes teaching as an act of love which takes place in a loving relationship" (p. 23). This definition explains why many First Nation students feel lost at a large urban commuter institution.

In conclusion Hampton and Roy state that "previous research has suggested that Native students in non-Native university settings are expected to be bicultural; and that those who are bicultural succeed" (p. 24). Their findings put some of the responsibility of First Nation student success on the instructors and their ability to be bicultural which could facilitate First Nation student's success.

Barr-Telford, Cartwright, Prasil & Shimmons (2004) report provides an analysis of the first data set from Statistics Canada's Post-secondary Education Participation Survey (PEPS). The survey was designed to collect information on "three themes in post-secondary education: access to, persistence in and financing of post-secondary education" (p. 5).

According to the PEPS, high school grades, parental expectations, family backgrounds and setting aside savings are among the many factors that can influence the decision to pursue post-secondary education. Once enrolled in post-secondary education, the PEPS showed that after 18 months of classes 16% had left post-secondary studies. Of this 16%, half had dropped out because of 'lack of fit' with their program or the institution in general.

The general conclusions from the PEPS showed that a wide variety of factors are related to post-secondary participation and that a further analysis of these factors is needed.

Lambert, Zeman, Allen, & Bussière's (2004) paper examines some of the factors related to entry and early withdrawal from post-secondary education. For the purposes of this study they define access to post-secondary education as entrance to, participation in and completion of education.

Lambert et al's study of the Youth in Transition Survey (YITS) data supported the common belief that parental attainment, involvement, expectations and values were important to a student's participation and persistence in post-secondary education. The YITS data also showed that most students felt the lack of fit between themselves and their program of study or institution. Moreover, the survey data also added credibility to the notion of institutional versus system withdrawal. The data showed that while some students dropped out of post-secondary studies at some point, 40% of the respondents from the YITS had returned to post-secondary education two years later.

The report concludes that many of the factors reported are inter-related and that further analysis is required to measure the importance of each of the factors

University of Manitoba Access Program History

The University of Manitoba Access Program (UMAP) was created in 1975 to address the need to increase educational opportunities for historically under-represented groups. These groups include Aboriginal people, northern residents, women, single parents, immigrants, refugees, disabled students and other individuals of low-income backgrounds.

Over time program developers and the government recognized that accessibility alone was inadequate. What evolved was the principle of equality of condition (See Levin and Unruh above), which meant that UMAP needed to provide more than access to the institution. It meant that access had to be accompanied by supports that would give motivated but poorly prepared and under-resourced students, a realistic opportunity to succeed in university.

UMAP has since supported students in the attainment of a first degree in Arts, Science, Social Work, Fine Arts, health-related professions and Physical Education and Recreation Studies. This has been done through the systematic use of recruitment, selection, orientation, academic advising, personal counseling, student aid advising, financial assistance (Access Bursaries) and tutoring processes.

Discussion

With the limited amount of research done in the Canadian arena, the purpose of this paper evolved into an exploratory study looking into the historical affects of culture on an Aboriginal student's success in post-secondary education.

This literature review presents a chronological summary of most American, Canadian and a limited number of Australian models. It is clear from this review that although the United States has thoroughly examined the retention and attrition patterns of Hispanic's, blacks and other minorities – the American Aboriginal student has been left untouched in retention research. In this study of student retention many similarities have arisen between Canadian Aboriginal students and American minority students. For example, Canadian Aboriginal students like many of the American minority students (i.e., the Chicano):

1. face poverty – In 1996, 63% of Manitoba's off reserve Aboriginal children lived in low income households, as defined by Statistics Canada's 1996 Census. The Canadian average is 52% for Aboriginal children. For non-Aboriginal children in Canada the percentage falls to 23%;
2. have low primary and secondary school attainment – 12% of Manitoba's Aboriginal youth aged 15-29 have less than a grade nine education (Statistics Canada 1996 Census), compared to 2% of Manitoba's non-Aboriginal population;
3. have low high school completion rates – In 1996, 34% of Manitoba's Aboriginal youth aged 15-29 had completed high school (Statistics Canada 1996 Census) as compared to 63% of Manitoba's non-Aboriginal population, and
4. have low university and college completion rates – Between 1993 and 2003 there were 366 students enrolled in UMAP and only 20% have graduated. The overall retention rate of the

program is 49%. Retention rates for Status Indians were 41%; Métis 60%; Non-Status Indians 67%; Inuit 100%; and Non-Aboriginal 58% (Unpublished UMAP statistics, 2003).

On the Canadian side, where one would expect more Aboriginal research to be done, few papers were found that directly pertained to Aboriginal student retention. The reasons for this gap in the literature could be one of many. For example, Aboriginal education is governed by Aboriginal people which could imply that this avenue of research has been left to Aboriginal researchers - or possibly that Canadian research on retention has only just begun and that our researchers have not progressed the literature to the point of looking at such specific sub groups.

An interesting point that has arisen out of this review is the lack of exploratory studies done in the area of retention. Most of the work has been done using quantitative studies with pre-existing data sources or fixed choice questionnaires and frameworks that are “grounded in some other social or socio-psychological phenomenon” (Attinasi, 1989, p. 250).

The importance of attempting to extend the research base in this field is to find a model that can look at each type of student in their own terms, as opposed to the ‘ideal student’ - where the ideal student would be a sequential student, from an upper middle class family, with no financial issues, where the parents are married, previously university educated and able to provide all of the supports that a student needs at home. The current models rarely account for any other students than those in the mainstream; these models then influence institutional policy, which affects all students directly.

With respect to the literature available on indigenous Australian student retention, the number of models are quite limited although the number of critiques on government policy are wide spread. Where the Australian research does apply is in the commonalties between the Australian and Manitoban Aboriginal populations.

Manitoba, unlike Australia, has not formally stated that representational equity is a priority regarding its Aboriginal people. Though Manitoba has committed to improving the quality of life for its Aboriginal population, through targeted and specific programming across all levels of service, it has yet to make a formal statement regarding equity. Manitoba has made significant efforts at improving the representation for Aboriginal people in its post-secondary system; most notably, its Access programs. A cursory examination of the demographics suggests that Manitoba's Aboriginal population is equitably represented in the post-secondary system. However, equity is not visible in many of the other measures such as graduate level courses, instructors and in the job market. Thus, Manitoba might benefit from such a policy.

With respect to the Australian research, the Commonwealth of Australia has created distinct and clearly focused programs and funding arrangements with regards to its Commonwealth policy and the diffusion to its tertiary institutions. Manitoba has not made the same effort. This likely is a result of education being under the domain of the provinces and not a federal responsibility. It is possible that many of the issues facing Manitoba and the Aboriginal population could be addressed by clarifying the role between the three parties. However, this is easier said than done when taking on issues of multiple jurisdictions and governments, as is the case in Canada.

The negative experience of the indigenous Australian or Manitoban is very similar. Studying the effectiveness of each other's actions and plans may provide new opportunities in addressing the systemic inequities that exist in the common culture. The barriers to education are very similar in each country and further study could provide some additional insight and potential solutions. The similar experience of conventional education programs not fitting with traditional and indigenous ways of learning will continue to be a challenge in each jurisdiction. The U of M could benefit from this experience though it is not yet clear how this could be done.

Summary

From the continued attrition of Aboriginal students from the U of M it is obvious that there is room for research into why Aboriginal students leave post-secondary education. The findings from retention research on visible minorities and Aboriginal people have informed retention policy in Australia and the United States. The research shows that visible minorities and Aboriginal people in these countries leave post-secondary education because of social, environmental, academic and personal characteristics. In Canada there has been little research done, thus this study proposes that similar research for the Aboriginal population in Manitoba should be conducted to find the most likely factors that cause Aboriginal students from SPSP to leave the University.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

The focus of this research as described in Chapter 1 was to explore the factors that influence Aboriginal students to apply to and be successful in the U of M's SPSP program, their initial motivation to apply to the program and which supports they believe they will need the most to keep them enrolled. To respond to this query, the following research questions were posed:

1. What factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the program? How did this contribute to their success in the SPSP program?
2. What factors did a personal life changing event play in a student's decision to apply and in their success in the SPSP program?
3. How much did personal goals and determination play in their success?

Chapter 2, the literature review, demonstrated that there is a large body of literature available on retention theory, however the literature available on visible minorities and Aboriginal people is not Canadian based, nor has it been proven to be relevant in predicting completion of Aboriginal students. This is the gap in the literature that this research seeks to address.

The nature of the research lends itself to a qualitative research methodology for multiple reasons

1. It is exploratory in nature, "meaning that not much has been written on the topic and the Researcher seeks to listen to participants and build an understanding based on their ideas" (Creswell, 2003, p.30).
2. The population being examined is Aboriginal thus it was felt by the Researcher that a face-to-face and interactive research methodology would produce better results by being more

acceptable to the people and culture being studied. Furthermore, part of this thesis is looking at the Aboriginal culture and it was felt by this Researcher that you cannot get culture from statistics, which is what you would have if a quantitative methodology had been chosen.

3. An existing set of data was available to the Researcher.
4. The Researcher was studying students who had been out of the university for up to 9 years and it was felt that the likelihood of having correct addresses for enough of the sample in order to conduct a paper mail out survey with any success was limited.

These reasons were supported by many researchers, for example Bean (1990) states that “qualitative studies seem to be very appropriate for unique populations³ – students who for demographic or other reasons can be assigned to a group. Good policies can probably be made for particular groups of students based on qualitative research on those groups” (p. 179). And is further supported by Tahawai-Smith (1999) where she says “qualitative research is an appropriate method to research the lives of Aboriginal people” (p. 139). Furthermore Creswell (2003) states that “qualitative research is exploratory and researchers [should] use it to explore a topic when the variables and theory base are unknown” (p. 22).

This chapter outlines the specific methodology used to respond to the research questions. The methodology was designed to:

1. apply qualitative inquiry and analysis to address gaps in knowledge about the reasons why Aboriginal students complete or do not complete the SPSP program;
2. be consistent with a qualitative inquiry paradigm by using in-depth one-on-one interviews to explore participants’ reasons for completion or non-completion of their program, their satisfaction with the program, financial needs, other education and employment;
3. use existing research (as available) as a conceptual framework to guide the study; and

³ By unique populations the author was referring to sub groups on a university campus as opposed to all students attending the university. In this case the sub group would be Aboriginal students.

4. yield meaningful results that are accessible to the research community.

The next section of this chapter describes the qualitative data collection methods, the data analysis methods, and discusses the role of theory in the study, the trustworthiness and evaluation criteria for the study, and the role of the Researcher in the study.

Qualitative methodology is described as iterative, interactive, hermeneutic, intuitive, and open (Creswell, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The research design is flexible and continues to be developed as the research evolves. The research design is continually influenced by the emerging understandings of the Researcher, the data provided by participants and by the research context.

A critical element of a qualitative study is for the Researcher to articulate a theoretical perspective out of which the research is conducted. As there is no theoretical perspective specific to a content analysis, this Researcher utilized parts of multiple approaches. Specifically, the perspectives used in this study were narrative, ethnography, and case study research approaches. A narrative is meant to report the life stories of the individuals being studied. Normally a narrative study would combine the views from the participants with those of the Researcher's life in a collaborative narrative. This portion of narrative study is not used in this thesis. Also used was ethnography which seeks to further understand a cultural group over a period of time, however in this thesis the Researcher was not observing the grouping in its natural setting. A case study explores a program in depth where the cases are bounded by time and activity and the Researcher is responsible to collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a period of time (Stake, 1995).

The Researcher's Role

As the Researcher in a qualitative research study is the primary data collection instrument, it is necessary to identify personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of any qualitative study.

My perceptions of the Access Program and its work arise from my personal experiences in working with the administration of the Access Programs. Between September 2000 and September 2004 I worked as the Statistician for the government funding body for post-secondary education in Manitoba. As a staff member I was involved in all high level meetings as well as one-on-one meetings with Access staff. It was during this time that I learned about the work of the Access Program and it was where I learned to understand the difficulties in operating a program such as this. It was this work that pushed me to my final decision to use an Access Program as the basis for my thesis. I believe that this understanding of the context enhances my awareness, knowledge and sensitivity to many of the challenges that the Access staff face in attempting to keep their students enrolled and in assisting them to be successful.

Just after graduation from university, I took a posting with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) office in Vientiane, Lao PDR. With this move I became the visible minority. I moved to a place that to me felt huge and completely foreign. I did not speak the local language but could manage to get by with French with some of the older generation of adults. At work, I was working with people from all countries around the world; again there were cultural differences and language barriers in everyday life and in trying to get basic work-related things done. There were days where even going to the market for food seemed like an ordeal and I would like to think that I would bring the sensitivity that I learned in Vientiane to my work here with the Aboriginal students.

My current knowledge of Aboriginal people and culture has been learned through working relationships. I have been fortunate to work with people from Aboriginal backgrounds and their advice and encouragement has been especially helpful. I do not doubt that my being a white female will cause some speculation as to what I am really after, but I can only be honest about my intentions and hope that will allow the participants to trust me with their stories.

My personal biases towards current retention theory are that I wonder if they really 'work' for any culture, race or gender besides white males. As a high school student my grades were in the middle to upper grade categories, yet I had no family who had attended university or college. My parents and a few uncles and aunts supported my decision but many cousins did not. I had to finance my own education which meant that I worked over 20 hours per week during the academic year as well as during summers. I saw many friends beginning their lives earlier than I because they had gone to college instead. Based on many of these indicators I should not have completed my university degree, but I was determined and it was my goal to succeed. My bias is that I believe that goals and determination are more of an indicator than background characteristics because if the goal is real than background characteristics can be overcome at all costs.

Bounding the Study

To work in First Nation education is to work in a broader world, a meeting place between two cultures (Haig-Brown, 1994; As cited in Matheos, 1998, p. 1). Within a university campus, both the institution and its students are part of this broader world. To further complicate this picture is the fact that both of these cultures have a diverse set of voices.

This thesis is an exploratory study of this meeting place and how it affects the SPSP students. The thesis uses a qualitative approach to show what contributes to the reasons Aboriginal students apply to the SPSP program and their likelihood of completion.

Research and opinions aside, it is the belief of the Researcher that qualitative research will provide the best data for this study. The content analysis will allow for a fairly extensive examination into the background of the student sample. This method will allow the Researcher to begin to understand the effects of personal background and culture on an Aboriginal student's education path. The interviews will allow the Researcher to observe the end result of the student's success or failure to complete their chosen program of study and their reasons for completion or withdrawal.

Data Collection Method

In order to assess the feelings, attitudes and perceptions of participants with respect to their motivation to apply to the SPSP program, their success in completing the program and their goals, the data collection was meant to be completed in two phases - through a content analysis, and a series of four interviews with a mixture of urban and rural non-completers and completers.

The content analysis of the autobiographies was completed in April 2006, after two complete readings of each autobiography to ensure completeness of the Researcher's findings. The purpose of the content analysis was to ascertain Aboriginal student's feelings and values with respect to post-secondary education following the themes outlined in the literature review and the student's feelings of community and belonging on campus.

The only interview was conducted in March 2006. It involved a single non-completer who agreed to be interviewed by the Researcher. (Copies of the Interview Protocol are located in

Appendixes A and B and a sample of the Letter of Consent is located in Appendix C.) This student received a letter in January 2006 from the Access Program Director (see Appendix D) asking if they wished to participate. After responding the student was contacted for an interview. The original intent had been to have a series of four to eight interviews with a mixture of non-completers and completers from both urban and rural backgrounds. However, after the Access Program sent a follow up letter and made follow up phone calls on the Researcher's behalf, and three weeks passed with no further responses it was decided that no more responses were forthcoming and the single interview was not used for privacy reasons.

As the Researcher received 66 student autobiographies, it was decided to revise the research questions, given that the students' full story was no longer available through the interview process and a more detailed content analysis of the autobiographies would be completed. This involved a third and fourth read of all autobiographies, which was completed in June 2006.

During the course of reading the autobiographies the first time, the Researcher began coding the results. The codes were not defined ahead of time, but the Researcher let the codes emerge from the autobiographies. During the course of the second read, the Researcher ensured that codes from later autobiographies were noted on the earlier read autobiographies. The codes that emerged from these readings contained mostly background characteristics as the intent of the content analysis was to inform the interview process.

Once it was decided to use a more in-depth look at the autobiographies, the Researcher read the autobiographies two more times focusing on the student's story of why they applied to the program, their motivation, and goals. As mentioned, this was completed in June 2006.

Data Analysis

The main theme in this study is defining which factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the SPSP program and how their goals and determination factored into their success. The intent was to use the content analysis to show which factors seem to be the most prevalent in student's decision.

With respect to which factors that influenced a student to apply to SPSP; this Researcher looked for characteristics in each student's autobiography that spoke to what they felt they needed in order to complete the program. Based on the literature review, indicators for these themes would be family, peer or program support, high school academic attainment, financial issues, goals, role models, cultural barriers and finally any family history (married, have dependents, health or personal issues).

The second question, 'Was there a life-changing event in the student's life that made them come to the U of M for school?' For this theme the Researcher tried to identify commonalties between the completers and non-completers to identify if there was any effect on their likelihood of completing the program.

The last question revolved around personal goals and determination. For this section the Researcher looked for specific personal characteristics of the students who were completers or non-completers from the SPSP program. Some of these characteristics included: why were they determined to complete the program, had they made plans (financially, for family etc), were their goals realistic.

Trustworthiness Criteria

A major concern for any research project is the trustworthiness of the design itself and the results that the design yields. In qualitative analysis generalizability is added to validity and reliability measures. However, Creswell, 2003 states that “reliability and generalizability play a minor role in qualitative inquiry” (p. 195). Creswell further states that “validity [...] is seen as a strength of qualitative research, but it is used to suggest determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (p. 195-196). Creswell recommends that researchers identify one or more strategies available to check the accuracy of the results.

In qualitative research, the validity test asks if there is a similarity between the way the respondents perceive social issues and the way the Researcher portrays them. There are two types of validity tests: internal and external. Internal validity issues arise when the experiences of the participants threaten the researcher’s ability to draw correct inferences from the data and external validity issues arise when the researcher draws incorrect inferences from the data or generalizes the data to groups beyond the group being studied. (Creswell, 2003)

With respect to internal validity, triangulation of data will be used to ensure that the Researchers biases not cloud the study, and rich, thick and detailed description will be used to ensure external validity is covered so that anyone interested in transferability of the study will have a solid framework for comparison.

Triangulation of the data is defined as using different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for the themes. The Researcher will do this using the data collected from the content analysis and comparing it with the research highlighted in the literature review.

Rich description is the use of a highly detailed account of the findings. "This may transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences" (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). This Researcher will accomplish this through the use of multiple quotes from the autobiographies, in essence by allowing the participants to tell their own stories.

Three techniques for reliability will be used; first the Researcher will provide a detailed account of the focus of the study, and the Researcher's role using an established and documented process. Second, triangulation of the data will be used which strengthens reliability as well as internal validity (as cited in Creswell, 2003, p. 204). Finally, data collection and analysis strategies will be reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in the study.

Ethical Considerations

This research used the personal stories of real people in the research process. The primary ethical consideration related to this research was the protection of privacy of individuals. For the autobiographies, this Researcher had to apply through the U of M's FIPPA unit to receive her data. This data had all personal characteristics severed from the documentation under FIPPA. The Researcher also made a special request for gender, urban/rural geographical location and completer/non-completer status to be added to the autobiographies. This request was granted. The FIPPA unit provided the severed autobiographies in November 2005 and the data analysis began.

As none of the autobiographies contained names, the autobiographies were numbered upon receipt by this Researcher and referred to by number only. Copies of the autobiographies will be destroyed after this thesis is complete.

With respect to the one interview that was conducted during the course of this study – informed consent was used. Prior to engaging in data collection, the interviewee was given a written letter outlining the context, purpose and nature of the research and the Researcher formally requested their written informed consent as a participant. A sample letter is included in Appendix C.

The tape and transcript will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Researcher's home until the research is complete at which time it will also be destroyed. The offer of a transcript was made to the interviewee, however it was declined.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Research

Limitations refer to limiting conditions or weaknesses of research. There are times when all factors cannot be controlled as part of a study design, or when the optimal number of observations simply cannot be made because of problems involving ethics and feasibility. If the investigator has given careful thought to these problems, and has determined that the information to be gained from the compromised aspect of the study is nevertheless valid and useful, then the investigator proceeds but duly notes the limitation. Delimitations describe the populations to which generalizations may be safely made. The generalizability of the study will be a function of the subject sample and the analysis employed. (Locke, F.L., Spirduso, W.W., & Silverman, S.J., 1987 – as cited in Creswell, 2003)

This study was subject to the following limitations:

1. This study looked at Aboriginal students who were enrolled in the 1998 to 2000 SPSP cohorts. This is a limitation because the Researcher used a small select sample or a sub group of a sub group as a sample.

2. The information that was available only after being vetted through FIPPA which reduced the data set further. FIPPA severed a lot of the data and it is impossible to tell if important information was missing.
3. Interviews rely on second hand verbal information of what participants can recall from the 1998 to 2000 time period.
4. The experimenter effects or social acceptability of what participants will say during an interview due to audio taping.
5. The Researcher imparting her views on the context of the terms and comments provided in both the autobiographies and during the interview process as the Researcher does not have direct experience with the issues that were expected to arise in the interviews and autobiographies.

Mitigation techniques of these limitations included:

1. It is human nature for participants to act differently in different situations, the Researcher must remain aware that this is the case in an interview situation.
2. Spending sufficient time with the participant and creating an open and friendly environment where conversation flowed easily. Also, allowing for time to speak about topics not related to the study in order to allow the participant to feel relaxed with the Researcher.
3. Obtaining consent for tape recording the interviews.
4. Reminding the participant that they only had to answer questions with which they were comfortable with.
5. Interview questions were planned to put the participant at ease and to allow for thoughts to emerge in a non-defensive way.
6. Awareness of the risk involved in imparting the Researcher's views on the data and through asking questions and gaining clarification thought this Researcher's Aboriginal colleagues.

This study was delimited to Aboriginal students at the U of M between 1998 and 2000 who were enrolled in the SPSP program. Although it is possible to generalize the results for all students in the U of M's Access program and possibly to regular entry⁴ Aboriginal students on campus, it is not advisable to extend the generalization to all students on the U of M's campus.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are being made:

1. That the students self-reported needs and feelings are manifestations of real situations and experiences at the U of M. It is also assumed that their reports are accurate and honest.
2. The sample was representative of Aboriginal non-completers and completers from the U of M.

Summary

Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the proposed research design and methodology that will be used in this project. The advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative methods approach were discussed, followed by an explanation of the development of the analysis instruments.

⁴ By regular entry the Researcher is referring to those students who applied to the University as a regular student as opposed to having the assistance of the Access Program.

CHAPTER IV - DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the content analysis was organized to answer the Researcher's three research questions.

1. What factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the program? How did this contribute to their success in the SPSP program?
2. What factors did a personal life changing event play in a student's decision to apply, and in their success in the SPSP program?
3. How much did personal goals and determination play in their success?

In reviewing the autobiographies many themes surfaced flowing from each research question. The following data analysis explains the significant findings that emerged from the content analysis. It should be noted that the Researcher used many quotes to highlight these issues as in most cases the autobiographies were no more than two pages in length and as such, the students were not given a lot of space to describe their situation in detail.

It should be noted that the following analysis is a summary of what individuals wrote in their autobiographies. The questionnaire that the students filled in for their autobiographies did not ask specific questions about their lives and therefore the exclusion of certain points noted in this thesis does not mean that the events did not occur in these individuals lives, but rather that they did not think to include those points in their autobiographies.

During the analysis, this Researcher read and categorized major themes of 66 autobiographies. These main points were then placed into a spreadsheet where commonalties surfaced. Initial statistics show that 62 autobiographies contained full information while 4 autobiographies were incomplete. Thus the following analysis will include only the 62 complete applications.

Demographics

Gender

To begin, this Researcher looked at basic gender and geographical characteristics that were included with each autobiography. For the entire 1998 to 2000 cohort of students, the gender breakdown is following the more recent trend where women are enrolling at a much higher proportion than men (76% female and 24% male). With respect to the university as a whole, there were 55% women and 45% men during the same time period (COPSE, 2004).

Of the females enrolled in SPSP during the 1998 to 2000 period 32% completed the program and 68% did not complete. For the males, 20% completed the program while 80% did not.

As quoted by Matheos (1998), Sheldon (1992) states that in Aboriginal culture, the anthropological evidence suggests women were responsible for the transmission of both skills and knowledge. In this sense, women are, as it were, the academic and archivists of traditional Aboriginal society. Thus it is not surprising to see a higher number of Aboriginal women in the SPSP program.

Female

I feel that my background personally and professionally is a treasure box filled with experience, wisdom and knowledge. I believe that I am a role model for young people to see that anything is possible. (Autobiography 61)

I have many nieces and nephews and I spend as much time as I can with them. I enjoy the company of children and young adults. I hope I am a positive role model for them, particularly in continuing and completing their education before starting a family. (Autobiography 24)

I enjoy the company of children and young adults and hope I am able to provide a positive role model for them, especially in continuing their education, and completing their education before starting a family. (Autobiography 36)

Male

I want to help my people as well as become a good role model. It is my dream to have them see that a person like me can be successful with effort and perseverance. (Autobiography 19)

I feel I should be chosen because my community really needs doctors, dentists, lawyers etc, that are [severed under FIPPA] with my knowledge and will to learn I know I could be able to successfully complete the dentistry program. I hope to reach new heights for my community and my people. (Autobiography 64)

As noted in Matheos (1998) women seem to see “the most important value of [their] education as being role models for [their] children and [their] community, and being able to better help [their] own children achieve their education goals.” (p. 240) Also noted in Matheos (1998) older women “believed it was important to act as a role model by succeeding and by offering support and encouragement to the younger students.” (p. 138) Interestingly, 23% of the female students enrolled in SPSP between 1998 and 2000 are over the age of 25, which lends support to Matheos’ theory above.

Geographical Location

Looking at geographical location in the province, 58% of all 1998 to 2000 SPSP students were from rural Manitoba. Of these students 28% were completers and 72% did not complete the SPSP program.

An interesting point to note is that only one completer (0.1%) noted concerns about the move to Winnipeg and the large campus at the U of M, while 14% of non-completers mentioned these points specifically in their autobiographies.

Completer

When I chose my classes for my second year I did not have any guidance in helping me select the classes I needed or to tell me what the U of M's requirements for admission into medicine are. I also did not get an orientation or a tour of the campus. As a result my initial experience with the university was not a good one. I was not familiar with any of the services available to students and I did not know anyone on campus to help me either so I felt very alone. This adjustment from a familiar small town site to an unfamiliar big city campus almost proved to be too much to handle and I was seriously thinking of staying in [severed under FIPPA] after Christmas break ended. My Mom was very supportive. She told me I had come to far not to continue and she helped to restore my confidence. (Autobiography 55)⁵

Non-Completers

One of my weaknesses would be that I am coming from a small community and entering a large city. I don't know much a lot about big cities and the University of Manitoba has a huge campus with a large population of students. I am not used to these conditions and are a little scary for me to join in on. (Autobiography 29)

The following August I went to [severed under FIPPA] but I didn't make it through the semester because it was my first time being away from my family and friends for so long and at a long distance. I tried not to drop out but I started getting home sick. The reason [severed under FIPPA] because it was like I was in a new world that was way bigger than my hometown which has a population of about 1500 people and a lot different. I had no friends and didn't have any family there. I didn't know anyone because I was really shy then and I don't talk much with different people. I dropped out and returned to school in [severed under FIPPA] three separate times. I had a hard time staying in [severed under FIPPA] because I was lonely without my family and friends. (Autobiography 31)

The counseling will also help me adjust to will include: moving from a small community to a large city and making the transition from high school to University. (Autobiography 51)

It is the belief of this Researcher that the difference between those who completed and did not complete the program had to do with home support and their determination to succeed. Both the completers and non-completers cited lack of family and support as well as the size of the city or campus as being a deterrent but generally those who succeeded spoke about how they would get through it as opposed to just the difficulties ahead. The importance of having

⁵ This person is a late entrant into the Access Program (individuals can be accepted into the program until they have 27 credit hours). The services that are referred to in this quote are services provided by the Access Program.

language, culture and identity are critical components to education (Matheos, 1998, p. 77). For Aboriginal students moving to a mostly white, urban campus of a large university, those aspects are lost, which can be seen in the low completion rate for rural students in the 1998 to 2000 cohort.

During the course of her study, Matheos interviewed women and asked questions on their lives and feelings towards university. The responses provided were constantly in the context of the women's families and communities, which further re-enforces the importance of these issues in Aboriginal women's lives. Matheos even goes further to caution researchers working with Aboriginal people to ensure that they recognize the connection between the individual and the community.

This belief is further supported by Murguia et al. (1991) who found that an individual's ethnicity or culture is rooted both biologically (from the parents) and socio-culturally (through family and friends). This ethnicity then produces "a sense of self identity, a place in the world and pride and security" (Murguia et al., 1991, p. 436).

This could suggest that completers are more adaptable to city life or have had prior experience living in a large city setting. Another alternative is as according to Velasquez (1996) they are more bicultural than the non-completers and therefore more able to adapt and live in both cultures; therefore they do not find the concept of leaving their home community as difficult or stressful.

One other non-completer wrote that they would have to move their entire family to the city in order to complete their education goal. "For me to attend school it would mean packing up my family and moving [severed under FIPPA]. That is very stressful for me because I am a worry wart and am always trying to make sure that my children and husband are happy."

(Autobiography 21)

As quoted in Alcorn (1995), Waldram (1995) spoke of the effects of “the psychological trauma that people encounter when faced with the upheaval of [...] relocation” (p. 17) and again this could further explain why those from rural areas had such a low completion rate.

With respect to the students from an urban background 31% completed the program while 69% did not. Not surprisingly, none of the urban students cited the large campus size as a deterrent to attending the U of M, which is likely a factor of living in a large urban setting already. The main themes arising from the urban students autobiographies are a childhood dream of becoming a doctor, wanting to help people and wanting to give back to the community. All of these themes are discussed further later in the chapter.

General Demographics

To gain further perspective on this sample, the Access Program supplied this Researcher with more demographic information on the sample of students.

- 66% of the students were First Nation and 34% were Métis. Of these 39% of First Nation students completed and 61% of Métis students completed the program.
- The average age of the all students in the 1998 to 2000 cohort was 23 years old. Ages ranged from 17 to 40 years of age and 58% of students entered SPSP as mature students, i.e., over the age of 21.
- 81% of students were single, and 7% were single parents. None of the single parents completed the program, while 42% of married students and 26% of single students completed the program.
- 77% of all students entered the SPSP with a grade 12 education.

What factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the program and how did this contribute to their success in the SPSP program?

This section focuses on a set of themes that arose from the review of the autobiographies. The first theme is family history or background characteristics, followed by high school attainment, program support, financial issues, long term goals and giving back to their community. It is interesting that most of these factors are noted as indicators of post-secondary success by Tinto (1975, 1993, 2004); Bean and Metzner (1985 & 1987); and Padilla, et al. (1997) for the regular post-secondary population.

It seems that family history somewhat predicts student success for SPSP students in the 1998 to 2000 cohort based on the comments below. However they are not definite predictors, as students who came to a precipice in their lives seemed to have overcome these issues and persevered through sheer will to better their lives.

On the other hand, high school attainment does not seem to be related to success for SPSP students for the following reasons: (a) many students are enrolled as mature students⁶ and their high school grades are not regarded in the same light as a regular student (Note: 37% of Aboriginal students in SPSP are mature entry students), (b) it has been many years since these students have been in school, and (c) education in rural and northern Manitoba is not always as complete as a southern or urban education because it is more difficult to get teachers in the math and science fields to move to rural and northern Manitoba so these students either do not receive the education or receive a lower standard by the teachers who are in their community. Thus, these students begin their university studies further behind their urban counterparts.

⁶ Mature Students are defined by the U of M 2006-07 Course Calendar as “students over 21 years of age who do not meet the high school requirements and either have never attended another university/college or have completed less than 24 credit hours”.

The outliers for the general population, such as program support and giving back to the community are more directly related to the population that is being examined in this study.

Aboriginal students can see what the effects of a lack of education and educated people are in their communities. These students also realize that there are issues that they will have to face in coming to a large urban campus where Aboriginal people and their culture is definitely a minority and thus, they have different concerns coming to university than a *regular* student.

Theme: Family History

There are two issues that surfaced under family history - family support for these students education endeavors, and family issues which can include such things as health issues in their family or for themselves, divorce, growing up with alcoholic parents or running from an abusive marriage.

With respect to the non-completers, the percentages of who cited a supportive family environment and those who had family issues in the past were almost equal (34% citing family support for their education and 32% cited family issues). In contrast, 50% of completers cited family support and only 17% cited family issues.

Family Support: Completers

I always did my homework, long as it seemed. I could not have done it if my mother and grandmother had not been there to support and encourage me. (Autobiography 1)

My mother looks after my daughter while I am at school. While I don't have a lot materially (as I am living off a CSL) I am rich in support. My family is wonderful and will help in any way they can. (Autobiography 14)

I also have an excellent support system in place which is comprised of close friends and family members. (Autobiography 44)

My Mom was very helpful and supportive. She told me that I had come too far to not to continue and she helped to restore some of my confidence. She told me to find some sort of support group on my own and to keep believing in myself. I took her advice and found the [severed under FIPPA] Student Center... (Autobiography 55)

Family Support: Non-Completers

I knew I could be whatever I wanted. I had the great examples of my parents to look for support and encouragement. My mother had dropped out of high school young but went on to finish and get a Bachelor of Arts at [severed under FIPPA]. My father had also not finished school but had successfully started his own [severed under FIPPA]. It was from their pasts and accomplishments that I know I could be successful. (Autobiography 4)

That and the words of encouragement I've received from teachers, family and friends over the years. They never let me forget that they believe in me and have faith that I will make something of myself. (Autobiography 19)

My family has always been supportive with my plans to further my education. (Autobiography 24)

I am the baby of the family. I live with my sister in [severed under FIPPA]. I moved here to get to know her family better and to complete Grade 12, because I knew I could get a lot of support from her and her family. (Autobiography 31)

With respect to family support both completers and non-completers that received family support for their education goals seemed to be rich in it. This raises the question as to why students who have a good support base withdraw from post-secondary education, since it is one of the major factors cited in the retention literature as a factor that keeps students enrolled at an institution.

Family Issues: Completers

When I was twelve years old, I was diagnosed with [severed under FIPPA]. Ever since then, my mother has had to pay about \$1500 a year for my medications. Without these medications, I would have had no control over my [severed under FIPPA]. (Autobiography 1)

My years of school were not great and I soon found myself involved heavily in drugs and alcohol. At 13 years old I had spent a summer on the streets. By 14 I had been involved with social workers and counselors who tried to 'help me' but it only made me angrier

and feeling more alone. At 15 many of my friends began to use heroin and speed. Some turned to prostitution to support their habits. Finally a close friend of mine overdosed and died. I realized then that the game had gone too far and I needed to make a choice – clean up or end up dead. (Autobiography 61)

Family Issues: Non-Completers

I managed to complete my course work without rewrites and completed assignments, all the while contending with a [illegible] abusive ex-husband and trying to keep my home in order. (Autobiography 6)

I was referred to a [severed under FIPPA] in [severed under FIPPA] and after a battery of tests, he diagnosed me with [severed under FIPPA]. I had no idea what that meant and was upset about the label and did not know what the implications and connotations of [severed under FIPPA] were. The [severed under FIPPA] had a dramatic affect on every element of my life. I literally felt like a different person. I looked around at my confused and congested life and for the first time saw exactly how things could work for me. (Autobiography 23)

My situation at home was not conducive to getting an education. My father was an alcoholic and made life very difficult for our family. I had to leave home at a very young age, [severed under FIPPA]. I was certainly not ready for the responsibility. It was much harder to support myself than I thought it would be, I eventually had to quit school to work as much as I could. I always hoped I would be able to go back to school. (Autobiography 43)

This suggests that similar to the literature written by Bean (1985), Bean and Metzner (1985), Attinasi (1989) and Velasquez (1996) background factors can encourage or adversely affect a students' success in completing a post-secondary education program. However, it does have to be noted that there are exceptions when students make up their mind to succeed as seems to be the case with the completers noted here.

The autobiographies from the non-completers seem to show similar characteristics to the completers in this section. However, the completers speak about wanting to do this for themselves while the non-completers speak to doing this for their community, a child or a family member and it points to the need for further research into what influenced these students to withdraw from the program.

Theme: High School Academic Attainment

The second theme, high school academic attainment was noted by Tinto (1975 & 1993), as a predictor of post-secondary success. In the 1998 to 2000 cohort, completers discussed having good grades in high school more frequently than non-completers (56% as compared to 27%). Interestingly though, the non-completers who did mention good grades had similar stories to the completers.

Completers

I am doing very well in my classes and it has given me more confidence in myself and my abilities. (Autobiography 3)

Being a new student I was given an evaluation the first week of school. A good curriculum in [severed under FIPPA] had prepared me well and my parents were given the option of my staying in grade 3 or jumping to grade 4. We decided to skip grade 3 since I had to make new friends anyways. It was then that I realized that I was good at school and worked hard all the way through to grade 12. The hard work paid off as I was always at the top of my class. (Autobiography 38)

I began to work in school and soon found out I was actually quite bright. Many of my teachers over those next 2 years encouraged me and parented me. They helped me to see the good things inside myself. The harder I worked, the better I did and in my grade 10 year I won an award for academic excellence. (Autobiography 61)

Non-Completers

I have learned that you have to work hard but still give yourself time to relax and have fun so when you are studying, you are focused and clear minded. I think this is what has gotten me through the very heavy course load (37-39 credit hours) and still get on the [severed under FIPPA]. I find this a great achievement, but I know I deserved it because I always worked very hard. (Autobiography 12)

I have took such courses as Biology 40S, Chemistry 40S, Applied Mathematics 40S, and I have done very well in all of them. (Autobiography 29)

I also won a lot of awards such as best academic and perfect attendance. (Autobiography 30)

In the case of the SPSP students, high school attainment is only one possible factor in student success as these students face so many additional background factors (race, family history, geographical location, Canadian history effects on the Aboriginal people). Further research is required to determine why the non-completers in these examples did not finish the SPSP program, since their autobiographical details from their high school life would predict that they should have been successful.

These responses suggest that completers generally have more focused goals and have had them longer than the non-completers. They were also more detailed in describing their academic achievements, which could mean that they have spent more time working at them.

Moreover, the U of M offers a western education that many Aboriginal students may have never experienced in their lifetimes which could also affect their withdrawal decisions. However, this is another issue for further research as it is outside the scope of this study.

Theme: Program Supports

Reasons for applying to the SPSP program varied by autobiography, however many students (34%) cited the need for academic and social supports that are provided by the program. However only 28% of completers said they needed these supports as compared to 34% of non-completers.

Program supports is an outlier, as it is not a common predictor of student success as noted by many retention researchers. However, SPSP is not a common program. SPSP offers “academic support (a pre-university orientation held in August, individual academic advising, Introduction to University course for degree credit, tutorials and academic advisors), personal support/counseling (individual and family, housing assistance, childcare assistance,

university/urban adjustment assistance, communication and personal development workshops, career counseling, counseling support staff) and financial support (financial support staff and counselors provide consultation, some students receive a non-repayable Access bursary).”

(U of M Access Program Webpage) Many of these supports were specifically noted by SPSP students in their autobiographies as supports they were in need of.

Completers

I don't think that I would be able to attend school full-time without the help of this program. It is also reassuring to know that I would have access to some of the services provided by the SPSP program, such as tutoring and counseling support to help in my adjustment to full-time schooling. (Autobiography 38)

I thought out this program and seen the benefits it could provide. I believe the added academic support and counseling will assist me as I don't have a strong background in the Math's and Sciences. (Autobiography 50)

A program like SPSP would work really well for me. I have the determination to achieve my goals and with the tools that the SPSP program offers I'm sure that I will do well. The support unit the program offers would be especially beneficial for me. I would know other students with goals similar to mine and we would be able to help and support each other. (Autobiography 55)

Non-Completers

I first heard about the Special Premedical access program when [severed under FIPPA] the access program coordinator came to [severed under FIPPA] to explain what the program is about and what is offered through the program. I always wanted to graduate from a University or College that offers a certificate or degree in a health career. Until I heard about the access program, attending University seemed impossible for me, because I did not know of the services and programs offered for [severed under FIPPA] students. Hearing about the access program, I feel I will have the support I need in order to be successful in University. (Autobiography 27)

I have been at [severed under FIPPA] for four years. I did not do well in high school and it has affected my marks at [severed under FIPPA]. I know that I am capable of getting good grades and I know that I can do it. The resources that you offer at Special Premedical Studies Program could help me get better grades. I know you could make my goal a reality. (Autobiography 40)

I think I need this program to strengthen my math and science skills which will help me when I go into the dentistry field. I am also hoping this program will provide me with the academic and social supports that are needed in order to succeed. (Autobiography 47)

These comments focus on the necessity of the supports and services that the Access program provides and their importance to the SPSP students. The Access program provides a safe place for Aboriginal people to congregate and to support one another. This result is similar to the findings of Tinto (1993) and Padilla, et al (1997) who studied the success of visible minority students who found or used support groups to help themselves become successful in completing post-secondary education.

The responses could also suggest that completers may be in more stable environments before ever starting the SPSP program, which seems to hold true given that fewer completers (17% as compared to 32%) reported disruptive family histories in their pre-post-secondary education lives.

Theme: Financial Issues

Financial issues came up as a fourth theme from the autobiographical review. Under normal circumstances financial need is considered to be a deterrent to post-secondary education attendance; however since few students mentioned that financial need 'was not an issue' in their autobiographies it is assumed that in most cases financial need is an issue for SPSP students. Thus, financial issues are one of those common factors of student success or failure that again does not apply to SPSP students.

An interesting point is that of those students who did cite finances as being an issue, only 18% of non-completers made this declaration compared to 50% of completers. This could suggest that the completers have put more thought and planning into the implications of long

term study while non-completers are less organized as to their long term plans or maybe do not have solid long term plans to begin with.

Completers

...currently reside with my parents. The reason we moved back home is financial. My mother looks after my daughter while I am at school. While I don't have a lot materially (as I am living off a CSL) I am rich in support. (Autobiography 14)

My parents are turning fifty now, and we still have a young brother at home. My sister and I realize that we are unable to rely on our parents for extended financial support. I have reached a point in time where I am asking, and desperately hoping for the direction, encouragement and support that I believe your program offers. (Autobiography 15)

Considering my mother has two young boys, many bills and expenses. The only hindrance in pursuing my dreams, as a Doctor has been the financial position. Finances are the only obstacle holding me back from achieving my one and only dream of attending University, and becoming a doctor. (Autobiography 17)

Non-Completers

I need the program because of the financial support will help so I can spend time with my family and not be working 'all' the time like I have to now. (Autobiography 43)

No obstacles have been in my way to keep me from pursuing my education. The only obstacle I would face is if I am not accepted by any agency or sponsorship. [...] The financial support will offer a lot since I come from a single-parent family. The counseling will also help me adjust to the change I will experience. (Autobiography 51)

Both of my [parents injuries are stopping them, from being able to help myself pay for the high costs of Universities, therefore I may not be able to attend. (Autobiography 57)

After completing grade twelve I wanted to attend university but because my parents did not have the money to help with my education and I could not get any help from [severed under FIPPA] I was forced to abandon my plans. I began to work for a mobile vending company in hopes of saving for my education. Due to unforeseeable circumstances, I was not able to save money for university and therefore could not attend. Every year since, I've applied at both the university and [severed under FIPPA]. I still can not financially afford to attend university, and my parents are still not in a position to help me. (Autobiography 62)

Another interpretation of the differences in considering financial issues of completers and non-completers could be whether or not the student has received financial assistance through an access bursary, band funding or a student loan. This support could be a motivating factor in completing the program showing that these students know the value of money and the value of an education as a means to move them out of their current circumstances.

Theme: Long Term Goals

Long term goals and dreams also surfaced as a theme from the autobiographical review. While goals are definitely considered an indicator of student success, childhood dreams are rarely mentioned, which in this case could definitely be a factor of the population that is being studied. Over half (55%) of the SPSP students cited that 'being in the health care profession was a childhood dream' or 'that they always wanted to be in the health care field'. Broken down, this means that 72% of completers and 50% of non-completers said it was their dream to work in the health care field.

Completers

Ever since I have been a child, I have wanted to go into the field of medicine. My grandmother was once a nurse's-aid for many years. I am extremely close to my mother and Aunt [severed under FIPPA] who work at the [severed under FIPPA] Hospital. (Autobiography 1)

It has been my dream since I was around 12 to be a doctor. I love to help people and it is in my nature to take care of them. For a long time I thought I could not do this because of the financial cost. Since hearing about your program my hopes have come alive. (Autobiography 14)

My childhood play to everyone's horror was always as a doctor, or dying patient. Through high school the desire to become a doctor intensified. (Autobiography 15)

In high school I really focused intensely on my studies and always thought of becoming a doctor. Whenever someone would ask me what I wanted to do with my life I replied, 'I want to be a doctor.' At the time of this writing, I cannot see myself doing anything else. My happiness lies in helping people through the medical profession. I feel my desire to become a doctor is rooted in God's call for my life... (Autobiography 33)

Non-Completers

In the back of my mind, I had always wanted to become a doctor. I didn't know anything or what path to follow. I had always loved the sciences and wanted to do something along those lines. (Autobiography 4)

I became interested in my career choice ever since I was a little girl. I became interested in it by playing doctor all the time with my friends and cousins. My family relatives used to ask me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I always replied, 'I'm going to be a doctor.' I noticed myself getting more and more interested in medicine as I grew up. (Autobiography 30)

I became interested with the health profession when I was in high school. I always wanted to apply to the College of Medicine, but I knew I did not have the academic requirements necessary for admission. (Autobiography 36)

These responses suggest that completers generally have stronger dreams and are more positive about how they will attain them. With the exception of Autobiography 30, the Autobiographies from the non-completers seem to show a tendency towards medicine or the sciences but not a positive feeling that this is the direction they have to take. Autobiography 30 is an anomaly amongst the other non-completers and it points to the need for a further look into where these students ended up after completing or not completing the SPSP program.

Theme: Giving back to their Community

As a final theme, this section refers to students wanting to give back to their community, 47% of students cited wanting to help people or wanting to give back to community as their main

reasons for applying to SPSP to get into a health related field (39% of completers and 30% of non-completers).

Completers

I would like to help those people who are not as strong as me, to over come their problems and challenges in life. I want to leave this world knowing I have made a difference in at least one person's life. (Autobiography 9)

After I completed my nursing degree, I went back to work at the nursing station and it was the nursing experience that really sparked an interest in a medical career. [...] I had a lot of responsibility in terms of providing health care to people. I was expected to do an accurate assessment and make an accurate diagnosis. I was then expected to provide treatment for the illness. [...] I felt that I did not have the physiological, biological and chemistry related background as one would get in medicine to provide this type of expected nursing care. So I decided to go back to university to pursue a career in medicine. (Autobiography 59)

Non-Completers

I became interested in this career choice by observing the hospital care in my small northern community. There is a acute need for more doctors in my community. I believe that if I can achieve my goal of becoming a doctor, than I will be able to help out in my community. (Autobiography 13)

This program when I success will help me be one of the first [severed under FIPPA] doctors in my community. It will give me an opportunity to help and look after my own people. (Autobiography 35)

I think I should be chosen for this program because I think I could make a difference in somebody else's future to help me understand more of the diseases that consume our bodies when we least expect it. (Autobiography 54)

I wanted to do something different, something meaningful, something I can give to my people. [...] My community of [severed under FIPPA] does not have its own doctor. Therefore, I thought this was the best way of contributing to my community. (Autobiography 56)

Many SPSP students have grown up on reserves or in small isolated communities. For those who have not, they may have family members who have, and they become aware of the lack of trained Aboriginal professionals in their community or more specifically, the lack of

trained Aboriginal professionals overall. In many cases these students are being or have been sponsored or supported by their communities and many feel the need to re-pay that support in some way. Furthermore, the Aboriginal culture is built upon community, which is definitely evidenced in the SPSP student's autobiographies, and this also reinforces the *giving back* mentality.

What factors did a personal life changing event play in a student's decision to apply and in their success in the SPSP program?

In this section, I was looking to examine the theme of life changing events that seemed to be included in many of the SPSP student's autobiographies. In some cases the life changing event was a positive one where a student had a role model that told them to chase their dreams and in others the students hit rock bottom and realized that they would have to change as they could not continue to live in their current state.

Over 55% of non-completers said they had experienced a life-changing event, generally one which made them realize that they needed to change the course of their lives by bettering themselves. The majority, (78%) of completers cited a life-changing event in their autobiographies.

Completers

One of the hardest moments of my life was when my grandfather died in [severed under FIPPA]. I vowed then and there that I would never stop pursuing medicine, so that I could try and discover a way to prevent [severed under FIPPA]. I will help heal people anyway I can to alleviate their pain. (Autobiography 1)

I kept pursuing an education because, after my parents divorced I knew that I would have to depend on myself. (Autobiography 33)

He was successful and definitely a role model. Well, what he told me that day changed my life. All he said was 'All you have to do is figure out what you want to do with your life, it's all about setting goals and taking the hurdles as they come. All you need is a vision, a dream.' Suddenly, things began to click. (Autobiography 11)

Non-Completers

I fell in with the wrong crowd and began my road to self destruction. Alcohol played a major role. During these futile year I gave birth to a daughter at [severed under FIPPA], and still being quite young, felt like I had no purpose in life, therefore I carried on with my destructive lifestyle never giving a second thought to the damage I may be causing to my young child. This was the only life I had ever known up until I was pregnant years later, at which time I sobered up long enough to realize that my life needed to change otherwise I was destined to ruin not only my own life but the lives of my children. Thus I began my journey to self-healing and also to find my purpose in life. (Autobiography 22)

My grandparents died when I was [severed under FIPPA] and it had a drastic affect on me. They were my entire world and even though I was a young man out on my own, I loved them more than anyone else. To be completely helpless in their treatment, to have no skill or ability to save their lives, lit a fire inside me. (Autobiography 23)

I was interested in my career choice because of the condition my daughter was born in. I absorbed everything about her condition and compared it to her symptoms. I discovered too late how severe her condition was because her condition killed her when she was [severed under FIPPA] years old. I never want that to happen again so I wanted to become a doctor. (Autobiography 54)

These responses suggest that although life-changing events are a factor in SPSP student's enrollment decision, they are not necessarily a factor in their success as other issues, such as their family or health can impact these students during their course of study and influence their withdrawal decision. There is also the added stress that these students have placed upon themselves because they want to be role models, or to be the doctor/lawyer/dentist for the entire community. These are issues, which could also affect the withdrawal decision when these students find the switch to university life more than they had anticipated.

How much did personal goals and determination play in their success?

It should be noted that the tone of the autobiographies of both completers and non-completers was very similar, which can be evidenced by the fact that almost all applicants (90%) said that further post-secondary education was their goal (95% of completers and 84% of non-completers). However, once this Researcher delved further into the stories the differences emerged.

Most of the completers (83%) gave a strong indication of being determined to succeed in their post-secondary goal whereas only 50% of non-completers gave an indication of this sentiment.

Completers

I am doing very well in my classes and it has given me a lot more confidence in myself and my abilities. I am even more determined to continue with my education and pursue a career in physical therapy. (Autobiography 3)

Then in [severed under FIPPA] I sold the house I grew up in and moved to [severed under FIPPA] to fulfill my next dream of going to university. It's a little challenging and I have to learn how it's best for me to learn new materials, but I have noticed improvements in my grades since the beginning of the year. I know university is a challenge, but I had many challenges in my life and I have always overcome them. I feel I am a strong person, and can do anything I set my mind to. (Autobiography 9)

I am very serious about university and I know I will be an asset in the field of nursing. (Autobiography 32)

I have a strong desire to attain my goals, to hold them in my hands. I will persevere, I will overcome all obstacles in my path through grace, determination, hard work and will power. (Autobiography 33)

Non-Completers

More than anything I want to be able to remain in [severed under FIPPA] and contribute to making health care conditions better. I realize that I may not have the youthful energy that many of the other younger applicants may have, but I am a determined person, I have

always achieved my personal goals, and I feel that my experiences and maturity could be an asset. (Autobiography 18)

My biggest strength comes from an outside source. This outside power tells my soul, my being, what needs to be done. It gets me up in the morning. It gives me a reason to want more and give more than anything ever has. It's all the reason I really need. My daughter is that strength, that power. She is why I need school. (Autobiography 19)

I know that people like me are needed in the medical profession of the future. I have a lot of determination and have come to believe in myself. (Autobiography 25)

These responses suggest that completers generally have stronger goals and determination.

Those goals are for themselves as evidenced by the 'I' references in their autobiographies. The non-completers referred to outside reasons for their goals and determination, such as a child, staying in their community, or the fact that the skills they hope to gain will be needed in the future. This could be an indication that they are not completely determined to succeed in post-secondary education as the success is not for them, they do not own the goal, and it is not internal. However, external factors (such as a child) cannot be completely ignored as a variable of determination because the affects of a parent attending university is an important consideration that must be taken into account when looking at the possible success of a student.

Summary

This chapter provided some insight into why participants chose to enter the program and why some were successful. In doing so we looked at many themes that arose from the autobiographical review. In short, educational attainment and personal belief in themselves seems to indicate success whereas wanting to give back to the community, experiencing a life-changing events and goals and determination seemed to be more of a factor in enrolling than in success.

CHAPTER V - DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Despite the proliferation of support programs in Canada over the past 20 years, few Aboriginal students have successfully completed post-secondary education. Part of the reason behind these low rates is within the institutions themselves. Being the new student on campus in a large university is terrifying for many young adults, but for Aboriginal students university life is different from anything they have ever experienced. It is larger, louder, more impersonal and faster paced than anything most Aboriginal students have seen previously, especially in terms of the loss of family, friends and community.

Then there is the additional barrier of history. Aboriginal people's fear of formal education dates back to the assimilation policies of the Canadian government in the 1870s. "These assimilationist methods were failures but [also] resulted in low educational attainment and resulting poverty" (Hampton and Roy, 2002, p. 3) of Aboriginal people.

Furthermore, the Aboriginal population is increasing at a high rate in Manitoba and this population is not receiving the education that it needs which is further adding to the low educational attainment of the Aboriginal people in the province. The response by most post-secondary institutions in Canada is to assist Aboriginal students in adapting and becoming more integrated into the culture and fabric of the current institution so that they can be retained until graduation. This response often results in Access programs, which offer special counseling and support services to assist Aboriginal students in their transition to university life. Despite the Access programs having increased the retention rates of Aboriginal students, their efforts alone do not create the desired results of full and equal participation.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to look at the factors that influence Aboriginal students to apply to and be successful in the U of M's SPSP program, their initial motivation to apply to the program and which supports they believe they will need the most to keep them enrolled. The secondary purpose of this study was to add to the current literature on retention of non-traditional students in a university setting.

Based on the findings from the literature review the Researcher looked at a variety of reasons why Aboriginal students either completed or did not complete their study. Aboriginal students were chosen because they have lower high school and post-secondary completion rates as well as lower labour market participation rates. SPSP was chosen as it is a pre-professional program which requires specific skills in math and science, which are common programs for Aboriginal students to have difficulty in because of the lack of qualified teachers at the secondary level in northern Manitoba.

After reviewing the autobiographies, this Researcher found that the autobiographical data showed many commonalities for both completers and non-completers which follows as all of the applications had to pass certain criteria. However the differences in the data emerged once the Researcher looked into how things were being written.

In the end of the research, all three-research questions seemed to merge into the first question 'What factors influenced/motivated SPSP students to apply for the program and how did this contribute to their success in the SPSP program?' as all of the data pointed to one major conclusion - some themes seemed to be indicators of the tendency to apply to the program while others seemed to be indicators of student success. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the factors that influenced SPSP students to apply for the program seemed to be community based, while those

that influenced student success seemed to be based inside the person and in their skills and abilities.

More specifically, this study showed that when SPSP students initially applied to the program the factors that seemed to be important were: having a life-changing event, wanting to give back to their community, wanting to do more with their lives, being successful, being a role model, the realization that education was the key to changing the current course of their lives, and having goals and determination. It also showed that personal goals and beliefs in themselves were the factors which seemed to help students succeed in their program.

Additions to the Literature

One of the first goals of this Researcher was to add a Canadian perspective to retention theory as well as a focus on Aboriginal people. Almost all available literature was written in the United States or in Australia with very little pertaining to visible minorities and even less pertaining to Aboriginal people. It is the belief of this Researcher that I have succeeded in providing a small amount of insight into the beliefs, goals and motivation of Aboriginal students who enrolled at the U of M. It is my hope that the work of this study will spur further research in the area in order to further understand of why Aboriginal students are not completing their studies and how to help them do so.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this Researcher held a belief that goals and determination are more of an indicator than background characteristics because if the goal/determination are real than background characteristics can be overcome at all costs. However, the data used in this study did not support this hypothesis as almost all of the autobiographies (86%) stated that

further post-secondary education was their goal (95% of completers and 82% of non-completers).

With respect to determination a difference did arise as most of the completers (75%) gave a strong indication of being determined to succeed in their post-secondary goal whereas only 48% of non-completers gave an indication of this sentiment. Being determined to complete their studies fits very well with the finding that completers were more focused on the end result and had their own best interests in mind when pursuing their post-secondary education, while the non-completers generally had someone else's interests in mind when pursuing their goal.

Although goals are noted as being a part of retention theory, they are often mentioned as an afterthought, while determination is rarely mentioned at all. Background characteristics, environmental factors and academic and social integration generally constitute the major themes of retention theory. The Researcher believes that the addition of 'determination to succeed' as a variable to be analyzed in applying retention theory to Aboriginal students is the beginning of an understanding of the factors that affect Aboriginal students decision to complete or not complete their studies. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Aboriginal students come from a different set of background characteristics from the average student on campus and therefore it makes sense that the factors influencing their withdrawal decision would also be different.

Recommendations

Looking at data from many of the autobiographies, the Researcher found that it was evident that many of these students were not participating in education for themselves but rather for their children, families and communities. As noted in Matheos (1998) women seem to see "the most important value of [their] education as being role models for [their] children and

[their] community, and being able to better help [their] own children achieve their education goals” (p. 240). However, when looking at completers as compared to non-completers it was the non-completers that had those goals and the completers who were in education for themselves.

It is suggested by this Researcher that during the interview process for admittance to the Access program, questions should be asked as to why the student wants to be there. If the student cites an external reason it may be appropriate for the Access counselors to spend more time with the individual to help them see that they have to want the education for themselves first and for their family, community or people second in order to succeed.

Furthermore, as the major finding of this paper is that determination is a real factor in student success, it is the belief of this Researcher that a student’s determination to succeed also be assessed as part of the application process. As many students articulated their determination in the autobiographies, simple follow up questions during the interview process should be all that is required to view the level of determination of each student. If the determination factor is not noted during either the autobiographical review or the interview process it may be prudent for the Access Program counselors to speak to the student to find out what is really driving them to enroll at the U of M.

Below are some examples on how to measure the determination of a student.

1. How has the student prepared themselves for a career in a health related field? Have they done internet research, spoken to people working in the field that they are interested in? Worked in a hospital, dentist’s office, doctor’s office? Do they have a concept of what their hours will be while in school? How long they will be in school? What their working hours will be after school is over?

2. What are their short term goals for their family or themselves in terms of finances? Health related careers have education requirements of 4 years plus. Do the students have a plan on how they will support themselves or their family for that time period?
3. Has the student examined how full or part time studies will affect their family life?
4. Has the student taken some other training in a health care related field? (i.e., St. John's First Aid Certificate, Dental Assistant, Paramedic.)
5. Does the student have any family/friends in a health care field that could help them (tutoring, counseling, etc.) outside of school?
6. Look at their prior schooling in sciences, where possible, was it a favorite subject?
7. Speak to high school teachers, where possible, what were their opinions on the student's determination?
8. Look at the goals of the individual; are they realistic (want to make \$30,000 as opposed to \$10,000) or idealistic (want to save the world)?

Further Research

Many themes noted in Chapter 4 pointed to the need for further research. If it were possible to contact the students for follow up interviews the following suggestions would be possible and allow for a more complete understanding of Aboriginal students completion/withdrawal decisions.

1. What caused the non-completers to leave the program?
2. What helped the successful students to complete the program?
3. Are there life-changing events that occur while students are enrolled in SPSP that cause them to withdraw?

4. Where do the SPSP students 'end up' after completing or not completing the SPSP program?
5. Have completers actually placed more thought and organization into their plans for returning to school with respect to financing their education?
6. Does the geographical location of the student's family support system in relation to the U of M make a difference in student success?
7. How does the lack of math and science teachers in northern Manitoba impact students when they reach post-secondary education? Many students in this study cited the need for academic tutoring but few actually listed the subjects in which they required this tutoring, so it was impossible to ascertain whether a lack of a skilled math and science teacher was a reason for non-completion.
8. Do students who can function well in both an Aboriginal and western culture fair better in post-secondary education as opposed to those who cannot?
9. Does the fact that the U of M offers a western education affect Aboriginal student's withdrawal decisions?

Conclusion

In closing, this Researcher would like to comment that increasing the number of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education is one goal, but the second is to retain them to completion of their studies is another and possibly more important goal. It is the belief of this Researcher that goal two is an important issue for the future economic security of the Aboriginal community and for the province and country as a whole.

LITERATURE CITED

- Access Program Web page. Available: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/extended/access/info/faqs.shtml#how>. Accessed: October, 2006.
- Almander, M. (2000). Characteristics of Successful Mexican American Junior and Senior Students at Northern Arizona University. *Proquest Digital Dissertations AAA 9989705*.
- Alcorn, W.J. (1995). *A Community-Based Post-Secondary Transition Year Program for Northern Manitoba: The Past, The Present, The Future*. Ph. D Dissertation. University of British Columbia.
- Anderson, C. A. (1972). *Where colleges are and who attends; effects of accessibility on college attendance*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Andres, L. & Carpenter, S. (1997). *Today's Higher education Students: Issues of Admission, Retention, Transfer and Attrition in Relation to Changing Student Demographics*. Center for Policy Studies in Education & University of British Columbia. 12-28.
- Aragon, S. (2000). Beyond Access: methods and models for increasing retention and learning among minority students. *New Directions for Community Colleges*. 112.
- Attinasi, Jr., L. (1989). Getting in: Mexican Americans' Perceptions of University Attendance and the Implications for Freshman Year Persistence. *Journal of Higher Education*, 60(3), May/June, 247-277.

Astin, A. (1982). *Minorities in American Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Astin, A. (2001). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Barr-Telford, L., Cartwright, F., Prasil, S., & Shimmons, K. (2004). Access, persistence and financing : First results from the Postsecondary Education Participation Survey. *Education, Skills and Learning - Research Papers*. Statistics Canada. Catalogue No.: 81-595-MIE – No. 007.

Bean, J.P. (1983). *Interaction Effects Based on Class Level in an Exploratory Model of College Student Dropout Syndrome*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Bean, J.P. (1985). Interaction effects based on class level in an explanatory model of student attrition. *Research in Higher Education*. 12(2), 155-187.

Bean, J.P. (1990). Using Retention Research in Enrollment Management. *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 179.

Bean, J.P. (1991). The Application of a Model of Turnover in Work Organizations to the Student Attrition Process. *The Review of Higher Education*, 6: 129-148.

Bean, J.P. & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A Conceptual Model of nontraditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 485-540.

Bean, J.P. & Metzner, B. S. (1987). The Estimation of a Conceptual Model of Non-Traditional Undergraduate Student Attrition. *Research in Higher Education*, 27(1), 15-38.

Braxton, J.M. & Brier, E.M. (1991). Melding Organizational and Interactional Theories of Student Attrition: A Path Analytic Study. *The Review of Higher Education*, 13, 47-61.

Butterworth, R. & Tarling, N. (1994). *A Shakeup Anyway: Government and the Universities in New Zealand in a Decade of Reform*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Cabrera, A.F., Castaneda, M.B., Nora, A. and Hengstler, D. (1992). The convergence between two theories of college persistence. *Journal of Higher Education*, 63, 143-164. As noted in Tinto, 1993.

Clark, W. (1997). School Leavers Revisited. *Canadian Social Trends*, Spring.

Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training. (2002). *Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes: Indigenous Australians in Higher Education*.

Corman, J., Barr, L. & Caputo, T. (1992). Unpacking attrition: A change of emphasis. The Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 22(3), 14-27

Council on Post-secondary Education. (2004). *Statistical Compendium 2004*. Available:

<http://www.copse.mb.ca/en/documents/compendium2004/>

Chapter1_ Universities_eng_part1.pdf. p.13. Accessed: July, 2005.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research Design – Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D.L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3). 124-130. In: Creswell, J.W. (2003).

Darder, A. (1992). *The Struggle for Cultural Democracy in Higher Education*. Paper Presented at the University of Southern California.

DeBellefeuille, B. & Abrami, P. (1986). Academic Perceptions of Immigrant and Minority Postsecondary Studies. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 16(3), 51-63.

Dietche, P. (1990). Freshman attrition in a College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 20(3), 65-84.

Doerksen, L.J. (1991). *A Longitudinal Study of the Attrition Rate and Demographic Factors Related to Attrition of Non-sequential Adult Students at Brandon University*. Dissertation. University of Manitoba.

Durkheim, E. (1966). *Suicide, a study in sociology*. Translated by: J.A. Spaulding and G. Simpson (Eds.) New York: Free Press.

Friesen, M.R. (2003). *A Qualitative Analysis of Engineering Design Education in a Biosystems Engineering Department at a Canadian University*. Unpublished Dissertation Paper: University of Manitoba.

Gallagher, K.S. & Hossler, D. (1991). Graduation Rates in Programs of Higher Education: Trends and Policy Considerations. *The Review of Higher Education*, 10, 369-372.

Gale, P. (1998). *Indigenous Rights and Tertiary Education in Australia*. Presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference. Adelaide, South Australia. Available: <http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap>. Accessed: January, 2002.

Gaither, G.H. (Ed). (1999). Promising Practices in Recruitment, Remediation and Retention. *New Directions in Higher Education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 108 Winter.

Gilbert, S. (1991). *Attrition in Canadian Universities*. Ottawa: Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education.

Gonzales A., de la Torre, A., & Garcia, J. (1998). *Minority Student Achievement Workforce Success in Arizona*. Tucson: University of Arizona. In: Almader, M. (2000).

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

In: Friesen, M.R. (2003).

Guppy, N. and Bednarski, V. (1993). *Enhancing student retention in higher education: a literature review*. Report for British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfers: Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia.

Hampton, M. and Roy, J. (2002). Strategies for Facilitating Success of First Nations Students'. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 32(3), 1-28.

Horner, M.S. (1972). Toward an understanding of achievement-related conflicts in women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 28, 157-176. In: DeBellefeuille B. & Abrami P. (1986).

Hossler, D., Bean, J.P. & Associates. (1990). *The Strategic Management of College Enrollments*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2002). *Registered Indian Population Projections for Canada and Regions 2000-2021*. Available: http://www.aincnac.gc.ca/index_e.html. Accessed: February, 2003

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Gathering Strength*. Vol. 3. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. 161.

- Johnson, D.R. (1991). *Formulating a conceptual model of nontraditional student attrition and persistence in post-secondary vocational education programs*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education (ERIC No. ED 332 012).
- Johnson, G. & Buck, G. (1995). Students' Personal and Academic Attributions of University Withdrawal. *The Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 25(2), 74-75.
- Jones, L. (2001). Creating an Affirming Culture to Retain African-American Students During the Postaffirmative Action Era in Higher Education. *Retaining African Americans in Higher Education – Challenging Paradigms for Retaining Students, Faculty and Administrators*. Sterling, Virginia: 8-13.
- Kirkness, V., & Barnhardt, R. (1991). First Nations and higher education: The four R's – respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 30(3), May, 1-15.
- Lambert, M., Zeman, K., Allen, M., & Bussière, P. (2004). Who pursues postsecondary education, who leaves and why: Results from the Youth in Transition Survey. *Culture, Tourism and Centre for Education Statistics*. Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Catalogue No.: 81-595-MIE- No. 026.
- Levin, B. & Unruh, D. (1990). Equality of Access and Equality of Condition. *Second Chance in Education an Interdisciplinary and International Perspective*. New York: Falmer Press. 257.

Locke, F.L., Spirduso, W.W., & Silverman, S.J. (1987). *Proposals that Work. A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. 28.

In: Creswell (2003).

Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat & Human Resource Development Canada (2002).

Aboriginal People in Manitoba. Cat # RH34-19/2002E. Canada. 28.

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. (2007). *Who are Manitoba's Aboriginal People?*

Available: http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/community/mb_community.html. Accessed:

February, 2007.

Manitoba Department of Advanced Education (2002). Unpublished data.

Manitoba Department of Education and Training – Labour Market Support Services (1998).

Manitoba's Aboriginal Population: A Statistical Profile and Compendium of Aboriginal Labour Market Information. Section 1B.

Matheos, K. (1998). *Community-Controlled Education: Putting Education Back into the Culture*.

University of Kent at Canterbury.

May, S. (1994). *Making Multicultural Education Work*. Great Briton: Longdunn Press.

Mayo J., Murguia G., & Padilla R. (1995). Social Integration and Academic Performance among Minority University Students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 36(6), Nov/Dec: 542-552.

McGinty Stodt, M., & Klepper, W.M., (1987). Retention: Academic and Student Affairs Administrators in Partnership. *New Directions in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers. Winter: 60.

Metzner, B.S. & Bean, J.P. (1987). The Estimation of a Conceptual Model of Non-Traditional Undergraduate Student Attrition. *Research in Higher Education*, 27(1), 15-38.

Miller, D. (1992). *The experiences of a first-year college president: An ethnography*. Unpublished dissertation proposal, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In: Creswell, J.W. (2003).

Monture-Angus, P. (1995). *Thunder in my soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Murguia, E. Padilla, R. & Pavel, M. (1991). Ethnicity and the concept of social integration in Tinto's model of institutional departure. *Journal of College Student Development*, 32, 434.

Nora, A. (1987). Determinants of Retention Among Chicano College Students: A Structural Model. *Research in Higher Education*, 26: 31-59.

- Noel, L., Levitz, R., Saluri, D. and Associates. (1985). *Increasing Student Retention*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco. 85.
- Odell, M., & Mock, J.J. (1989). *A Crucial Agenda: Making Colleges and Universities Work Better for Minority Students*. Boulder: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. 28-48.
- Orozco, C.D. (1995). *Factors contributing to the psychological adjustment of Mexican American college students*. In: Almander, M. (2000).
- Padilla, R., Treviño, J., Gonzalez, K., & Treviño, J. (1997). Developing local models of minority student success. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38, 125-135. In: Almader, M. (2000).
- Pascarella, E.T. (1991). Freshman Attrition and the Residential Context. *The Review of Higher Education*, 7, 111-124.
- Pascarella, E.T. (1982). Studying Student Attrition. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 36, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Pascarella, E.T. & Chapman, D.W. (1983). Validation of a theoretical model of college withdrawal: Interaction effects in a multi-institutional sample. *Research in Higher Education*, 19(1), 25-48.

Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (1987). The influence of college on self-concept: a consideration of race and gender differences. *American Educational Research Journal*, 24(1), 49-77.

Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T. (1998). Studying College Students in the 21st Century. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(2), 151-166.

Price, J.L. (1977). *The study of turnover*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (2004). *Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education*. Montreal: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Ramirez, M. & Castaneda, A. (1974). *Cultural democracy, bicultural development and education*. New York: Academic Press.

Ramirez, G. & Thayer, P. (1989). Minority Students on Campus. *A Crucial Agenda: Making colleges and universities work better for minority students*. Boulder, Colorado: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. 28.

Research Center for Vocational Education and Training (1996). *Culture Matters: Factors Affecting the Outcomes of Participation in Vocational Education and Training by Australian Indigenous Peoples*. (ERIC No: ED 419 985).

Sanders, L. & Burton, J.D. (1996). From Retention to Satisfaction: New Outcomes for Assessing the Freshman Experience. *Research in Higher Education*, 37(5), 555-567.

Sheldon, M. (1992). *How contemporary Native American women authors view the education of their people*. Heritage of the Great Plains. 25, 2: summer. In: Matheos, K. (1998).

Spady, W. G. (1971). Dropouts from Higher Education: Toward an Empirical Model. *Interchange*, 2(3), 38-62.

Stahl, V., & Pavel, M. (1992). *Assessing the Bean and Metzner model with community college student data*. Dissertation presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (ERIC No. 344 639).

Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. In: Creswell, J.W. (2003).

Stanley, O. & Hansen, G. (1998). *ABSTUDY: An Investment for Tomorrow's Employment, A Review of ABSTUDY for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission*. Available: <http://www.atsic.gov.au/issues/Disadvantage/Education/ABSTUDY/Default.asp>. Accessed: June, 2002.

Statistics Canada (1996). Unpublished 1996 Census data.

Statistics Canada (1996). *1996 Community Profiles* Available: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>. Accessed: June, 2001.

Statistics Canada (2000). University and College Leavers. *Education Quarterly Review*, 6(4).

Statistics Canada. (2004, Spring). Well-being of the non-reserve Aboriginal Population. *Canadian Social Trends*. 19-23.

Statistics Canada (2001). Census data. Available: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/>. Accessed: July, 2005.

Statistics Canada (2001). *Census 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey Population Profiles*. Available: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil01ab/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>. Accessed: July, 2005.

Statistics Canada (2001). *2001 Community Profiles*. Available: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>. Accessed: July, 2005.

St. John, E.P., M.B. Paulsen and J.B. Starkey. (1996). The Nexus between College Choice and Persistence. *Research in Higher Education*, 37(2), 175 – 220.

Terenzini, P.T. (1991). A Replication of Path Analytic Validation of Tinto's Theory of College Student Attrition. *The Review of Higher Education*, 8, 319-340.

Tierney, W.G. (1991). *The college experience of Native Americans: A critical analysis*. In: (eds.)

L. Weir, M. Fine *Silenced Voices: Issues of Class, Race and Gender in Today's Schools*.

Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Tierney, W.G. (1992). An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. *Journal of*

Higher Education, 63(6), 603-618.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropouts from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research.

Review of Educational Research, 45, 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1989). Colleges as Communities: Taking Research on Student Persistence Seriously.

The Review of Higher Education, 21(2), 167-178.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, Second

Edition. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Revised.

Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as Communities: Taking Research on Student Persistence Seriously.

The Review of Higher Education, 21(2), 167-178.

Tinto, V. (2004). *Student Retention and Graduation: Facing the Truth, Living with the*

Consequences. The Pell Institute Occasional Paper 1.

Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New

York and London: Zed Books Ltd. 137-142.

University of Manitoba (2006). *2006-2007 Course Calendar*. Available:

<http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/calendar07/admissions/mature.asp>. Accessed: September, 2006.

Valverde, L. A. (1985). Low income students. In (ed) Noel L, R. Levitz, D. Saluri and Associates. (1985). *Increasing Student Retention*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers. 85.

Velasquez, P. (1996). *The Integration and Persistence of Chicano Students in Higher Education: Student and Institutional Characteristics*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

White, N. & O'Neill, H. (2002). *Making higher education work for Indigenous community people: Australian Catholic University's response*. Available: <http://www.cqu.edu.au/eaconf98/papers/white.htm>. Accessed: October, 2003.

APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH NON-COMPLETERS

Individual interviews will use the following script and questions as closely as possible, though slight modifications of wording may be necessary at the time of the interview depending on how participants respond to individual questions.

Investigator (Harper): This is a study about your experiences with the Access program. It concerns the following:

1. personal experiences at the U of M,
2. whether the individual would recommend the program to others even after leaving,
3. personal reasons for leaving the program and,
4. what does the individual feel they have gained from the time they spent in the program.

If you choose to participate, I will interview you about these questions for 40-60 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded so that I can transcribe and analyze it later. Whether you participate is entirely voluntary, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I will keep your identity and comments completely confidential throughout the project. If you wish, I will send you a copy of the general results of the study, but not until the study is complete. In addition, in order to insure confidentiality in any written account of the study, I will assign you a pseudonym for any written or oral summary, analysis or interpretation of the results.

You can indicate that you understand the nature of the study and the conditions for participating by reading and signing the letter of consent that I will show you. [*show letters*] Please read over the letter to make sure that you understand them, and feel free to ask me any questions that you may have. When you are ready, you can sign the letter and we can begin.

When the participant has signed the letter, the researcher will proceed.

Investigator (Harper): First, am I right that you have actually withdrawn from the University of Manitoba?

Now I am going to pose 19 more questions, please provide as much information as you can and give examples. Don't worry about going on too long, I'll stop you if the time gets on.

Investigators poses each of the following questions:

1. What session were you last registered in?

Reasons for Leaving Program:

2. Why did you leave the U of M? (Prompts: medical, academic, financial, personal, etc) Please describe what led you to make that decision. What outside factors affected you decision to leave. Did you have support from your friends and family in going to university? Were they happy for you?
3. Did you see a counselor or professor here at the University before deciding to leave? Why/why not?

4. What, if anything, could the University or Access Program have done to keep you there? The Professors?
5. Did you ever experience any cultural barriers or feel discriminated against while enrolled at the U of M?
6. There is a concept called biculturalism in retention theory, at the bare bones it states that students who are able to function well in two cultures, their own and the mainstream do better in university. Do you feel that this applies to you? Explain?

Satisfaction with the program:

7. How satisfied were you with your educational experience in the program, please explain?
8. Would you recommend this program to others? Why or Why not?
9. Are you interested in returning to the U of M? Why or Why not?

Financial

10. What was the primary source(s) of your funding while you were enrolled at the U of M?
11. Were finances a factor in deciding to withdraw?
12. Did you incur any financial debt to date from your program? If yes, how much?

Education

13. Since leaving the program, have you taken any other education or training?
14. If yes, what other education or training have you taken, or are you taking? (Prompts: List education and training types, i.e. institutions or programs)

Employment

15. Are you currently employed? (*If no, go to question 13, if yes skip to 14*)
16. If unemployed, what do you believe is that main reason you are not employed?
17. What is your employment status? (FT, PT, Self Employed) What is your current title or position? How long have you had your current job? What geographic area do you work in?

Relationship to Field of Study

18. Did the education that you received from the U of M help you to get this position? If yes, to what extent are the skills and knowledge acquired in your program so far related to your job? Give examples. If job not related to program, why not?
19. Are you satisfied with your new position?

Demographics

20. Where did you grow up? (City, Town, etc)
21. What is your marital status?
22. Do you have any dependents?

APPENDIX B - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH COMPLETERS

Individual interviews will use the following script and questions as closely as possible, though slight modifications of wording may be necessary at the time of the interview depending on how participants respond to individual questions.

Investigator (Harper): This is a study about your experiences with at the U of M. It concerns the following:

1. personal experiences at the U of M,
2. whether the individual would recommend the program to others even after graduating,
3. goals while in the program and,
4. what does the individual feel they have gained from the time they spent in the program

If you choose to participate, I will interview you about these questions for 40-60 minutes. The interview will be tape recorded so that I can transcribe and analyze it later. Whether you participate is entirely voluntary, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I will keep your identity and comments completely confidential throughout the project. If you wish, I will send you a copy of the general results of the study, but not until the study is complete. In addition, in order to insure confidentiality in any written account of the study, I will assign you a pseudonym for any written or oral summary, analysis or interpretation of the results.

You can indicate that you understand the nature of the study and the conditions for participating by reading and signing the letter of consent that I will show you. [*show letters*] Please read over the letter to make sure that you understand them, and feel free to ask me any questions that you may have. When you are ready, you can sign the letter and we can begin.

When the participant has signed the letter, the researcher will proceed.

Investigator (Harper): First, am I right that you have actually graduated from the University of Manitoba? When did you graduate? Did you have any breaks in your education, meaning did you ever stop going to classes for a period of time?

Now I am going to pose 22 more questions, please provide as much information as you can and give examples. Don't worry about going on too long, I'll stop you if the time gets on.

Investigators poses each of the following questions:

Background Characteristics:

1. Did you experience any difficulties with enrolling at the U of M or with student assistance, etc?
2. Upon enrolling in the U of M did you have specific goals for your education?
3. What was your field of study?
4. Did you see ever experience any stresses (family, health, money) that made you think about dropping out? What made you stay?
5. Describe for me your study habits? Were you organized, studying regularly or were you more of a 'crammer'?

6. How were your grades?
7. Did you ever experience any cultural barriers or feel discriminated against while enrolled at the U of M?
8. There is a concept called biculturalism in retention theory, at the bare bones it states that students who are able to function well in two cultures, their own and the mainstream do better in university. Do you feel that this applies to you? Explain?

Satisfaction with the program:

9. How satisfied were you with your educational experience in at the University, please explain?
10. Would you recommend this program to others? Why or Why not?

Financial

11. What was the primary source(s) of your funding while you were enrolled at the U of M?
12. Did finances cause you any problems while enrolled in the program? If yes, how did you overcome these?
13. Did you incur any financial debt to date from your program? If yes, how much?

Education

14. Since graduating, have you taken any other education or training? If yes, what other education or training have you taken, or are you taking? (Prompts: List education and training types, ie institutions or programs)

Employment

15. Are you currently employed? *(If no, go to question 13, if yes skip to 14)*
16. If unemployed, what do you believe is that main reason you are not employed?
17. What is your employment status? (FT, PT, Self Employed) What is your current title or position? How long have you had your current job? What geographic area do you work in?

Relationship to Field of Study

18. Did your degree from the U of M help you to get this position? If yes, to what extent are the skills and knowledge acquired from your program related to your job? Give examples. If job not related to program, why not?
19. Are you satisfied with your new position?

Demographics

20. Where did you grow up? (City, Town, etc)
21. What is your marital status?
22. Do you have any dependents?

APPENDIX C - LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATING EDUCATION STUDENTS

Research Project Title: Reasons why Aboriginal students in the Special Pre-Medical Studies Program (COMPLETE or DO NOT COMPLETE) their studies at the University of Manitoba

Researcher: Tammy Harper

Sponsor: n/a

This letter describes a research project that I am conducting, and describes how you might participate in the project if you choose. It also includes a request for you to participate and a way for you to indicate your willingness to participate. I have organized the letter around the following topics:

1. a brief description of the research and the procedures that would involve you,
2. comments about how your privacy will be protected,
3. how your freedom to participate will be respected, and
4. comments about how you can find out more about the results of the study once it is complete.

Purpose of the Research:

My study explores the experience of previous Access students in post-secondary education at the U of M. Specifically, I am looking into reasons why students (LEAVE THEIR STUDY BEFORE GRADUATION OR COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES), and how individual experiences at home and at school influence this decision. Participants in this study will be (COMPLETERS or EARLY LEAVERS) from the Special Pre-Medical Studies Program (SPSP).

I am an M.Ed. Student and this study is being done as part of my Thesis work. My Advisor is Dr. David Kirby, he will supervise my work, and read the transcript. If you have any questions, Dr. Kirby may be reached at 474-8951, Faculty of Education.

Procedures Involving Participants:

If you participate in this study, you will be interviewed by myself (Tammy Harper) on one occasion for about 40 minutes, but not more than 60 minutes. The time and place of the interview will be arranged at your convenience.

In the interview, I will inquire about your experiences in SPSP, whether you would recommend the program to others, (YOUR REASONS FOR LEAVING OR COMPLETING), and what you feel you have gained from your time in the program.

Recording and Transcription:

I will tape record the interview and then transcribe it for later analysis. The only person who will hear the original tape recording will be myself, and these tapes will be destroyed once the transcribing is complete. The transcriptions will be read by myself and Dr. Kirby.

Confidentiality of Information:

I will make every effort to make your participation in this study confidential. A primary way of doing so will be through the use of a pseudonym on all transcripts, or written reports of this project. I will also suppress any information that would enable another individual to identify you,

if or when it would occur in the transcripts or report. The only person who will hear the original tape recording will be myself, and these tapes will be destroyed once the transcribing is complete.

Feedback About the Study:

If you wish, I will send you a copy of the summary of the results of the study. This will be done after the completion of the study (approximately mid October 2006). The summary will be approximately 2 to 3 pages in length, and it will be comprised of general trends of all of the interviews as opposed to specific comments of individuals. If you would like to receive the summary, please include your mailing address at the bottom of this letter.

General Comments:

I will provide you with a copy of this consent letter for your records. It is only part of the process of informed consent, as it provides basic information about this study and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail on anything mentioned in this letter, please feel free to ask. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so feel free to ask questions whenever you feel the need.

Your signature at the bottom of this letter indicates that you understand the information about participation in the research study to your satisfaction, and that you agree to participate. In no way does this letter or your signature waive your legal rights, nor release me as the researcher from my legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to refrain from answering any particular questions without prejudice or consequence.

How to Contact the Researcher, Tammy Harper:

Telephone: (204) 889-1548

E-mail address: tharper@leg.gov.mb.ca

This study has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about the project, you may contact the above-named person or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or by e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D - LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION IN INTERVIEWS



UNIVERSITY
of MANITOBA

Continuing Education Division

January 27, 2006

«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Address»
«CityProvince» «Postal_Code»

Dear «First_Name»:

I have been working with a graduate student named Tammy Harper who is in the process of doing her thesis on the reasons why First Nations students in the Special Pre-Medical Program (COMPLETE or DO NOT COMPLETE) their studies at the University of Manitoba. This is exciting work and the results of her thesis could help us change the way we offer our programs and services. To complete her research, Tammy needs to interview eight students who first enrolled in the program between 1997 and 1999.

Specifically, Tammy is looking into reasons why students (LEAVE THEIR STUDY BEFORE GRADUATION OR COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES), and how individual experiences at home and at school influence this decision.

Tammy's Advisor is Dr. David Kirby and he will supervise her work. If you have any questions, Dr. Kirby can be reached at 474-8951, Faculty of Education.

In the interview, Tammy will inquire about your experiences in the Special Pre-Medical Program, whether you would recommend the program to others, your reasons for leaving, and what you feel you have gained from your time spent in the program.

If you participate in this study, Tammy will interview you for approximately 60 minutes. The time and place of the interview will be arranged at your convenience.

If you are willing to participate please contact Tammy at tharper@gov.mb.ca or by e-mail

Thank you,

Peter Nunoda, Director and Associate Professor
Access Programs



ACCESS Programs
505 University Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone: (204) 474-8000
1-800-432-1960, ext. 8000
Fax: (204) 375-6489