THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE:
THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM
AT WINNIPEG EDUCATION CENTRE ON THE LIVES OF THE STUDENTS

BY

LAURA ANDERSON

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Social Work

Thesis Advisor: Denis Bracken

School of Social Work
University of Manitoba

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LAURA ANDERSON

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

In recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need for professional social work degree programs to be accessible to people who have traditionally been excluded from such opportunities because of social, economic and educational barriers. In Canada there have been efforts, particularly in providing social work education to native people, in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In Manitoba, a special affirmative social work program was implemented in 1981. This program was intended to respond to the need for increasing minority group access to social work education. Target groups not only included native people, who comprise more than 12% of the population of Manitoba, but also immigrants, single parents and others who are under-represented in professional ranks.

 Initially funded by three levels of government, this program operates as an off-campus extension of the university of Manitoba School of Social Work. Designed for residents of the inner city of Winnipeg, this program delivers the standard University of Manitoba Bachelor of Social Work curricula to non-traditional students. These students
are defined as non-traditional because they possess social, academic and financial characteristics that are not usually represented in the university student population. Approximately 50% of the students are of native Indian ancestry, 20-25% are recent refugees or immigrants, most do not possess the academic prerequisites for standard admission to university, all are adults, with the average age being 30 at admission. All of the students come from low income families.4

The program was modelled on a similar affirmative action thrust in the field of teacher training. Known as Winnipeg Education Centre, this program has been providing the University of Manitoba Bachelor of Education degree to people from the inner city of Winnipeg since 1978. When the social work program began in 1981, it was incorporated into the facilities at Winnipeg Education Centre where both programs continue to operate.

The program, hereafter referred to as the Social Work program at Winnipeg Education Centre, represents an innovative and unique endeavour in the field of social work education. It offers the opportunity to learn from these efforts and further the commitment to affirmative action within the profession. The research project described herein is an an attempt to provide a closer examination
of selected aspects of this program. Central to this examination is an effort to understand the experiences of the students in the program including their perceptions of the impact of the program on their lives. Relatively little is known about the experiences and needs of the non-traditional learner. Evidence from other research suggests that the characteristics of the traditional university curricula and procedures can create stresses and conflicts for the non-traditional learner.\(^5\) A source of this stress can be value examination,\(^6\) an integral part of social work education. An informal study done by the staff in the Social Work program at Winnipeg Education Centre supports the idea that stress, anxiety and changes occur in students as a result of being in the program.\(^7\) The nature of the stresses and changes and the interrelationships of program processes and impact on students has not been systematically identified. This study attempts to document student perceptions and discover the nature of the learning experience for these non-traditional students.
1.2 Overview of the Social Work Program

The inner city of Winnipeg is characterized by high numbers of welfare households and single parent families living below the Statistics Canada poverty line. It has higher than average city rates of crimes against the person and property. It is the part of the province where 75% of recent immigrants and refugees to Manitoba settle, and it is the major residential area for Winnipeg's native Indian population. Since 1972 there has been a rapid decline in employment opportunities in the area.

These disparities combined with the political benefits that could accrue to governments from a high profile development agreement, led to the signing of a Tripartite Core Area Agreement between federal, provincial and city governments in 1981. The agreement provided for major expenditures by the three levels of government in the inner city over five years. One of the sectors in the agreement was an employment and affirmative action training agency. The demographic characteristics of the inner city as well as the success of an existing program, the Winnipeg Education Centre, in providing a teacher training program to non-traditional students in the inner city, argued for the inclusion of a professional social work
program within this sector of the agreement. Funding was obtained and the social work program was started in the fall of 1981.

The program offers a four year, Bachelor of Social Work degree program to individuals from target populations that have traditionally been excluded from such opportunities because of social, academic and financial constraints. The student body reflects the population of the core area of Winnipeg with approximately 50% of the students being of native Indian ancestry and 20% of the students being recent refugees or immigrants. A high proportion of the students are single parents and all are from low income families. Academically, most of the students have not completed grade 12 in the formal school system and the average grade level of formal schooling is grade 10. As well, the majority of students have been away from formal schooling for ten years or more.

The objectives of the program are:

1) Provision of a Bachelor of Social Work degree program to people primarily from the inner city, who possess the aptitude and commitment for a career in social work but who because of social, economic, cultural or linguistic barriers, or a lack of formal education, would not likely be
admitted to or successfully complete the B.S.W. program at the University of Manitoba;

2) Selection of a student body generally reflective of the ethnic population of the inner city;

3) Development and appreciation of a sequence of personal, academic and financial supports that will tend to ensure the success of the program; and

4) Accomplishments of the above through the regular institutional structures of the University of Manitoba.

Modelled on an affirmative action Bachelor of Education degree program known as "Winnipeg Education Centre", the Social Work program at the Winnipeg Education Centre was integrated into this existing off-campus facility. The programs share space and there is some integration of administrative functions and course planning. With the arrival of the Social Work Program, Winnipeg Education Centre became known as one centre with two programs — The Social Work Program and The Education Program.

The academic staff of the Social Work program consists of both full-time faculty members located within the Centre, and part-time "parachute" staff members who are contracted
to teach selected courses.

There is a close link between the W.E.C. Social Work program and the on-campus social work program. The establishment of the Social Work program at Winnipeg Education Centre took place within the context of strong faculty support by the School of Social Work, and with a conscious commitment that the degree offered would be identical in terms of curriculum and graduating standards. The result has been a sense by the School of Social Work that the Inner City Social Work program is part of the school. A number of formal and informal mechanisms reinforce this linkage.12

Three principles guide program delivery and form the basis for program evaluation:

1) The program would recruit and attract individuals from underrepresented groups to professional social work, and provide them with a degree pathway to a career in social work. Through such efforts, the accessibility of the B.S.W. program would be enhanced.

2) Through recruitment of life experienced adults, the program would create graduates who possessed both quality education and the life experience that would enable them to make a unique contribution
to social work practice.

3) The program would deliver a B.S.W. degree equivalent to the on-campus program, and graduates of the Winnipeg Education Centre would not be regarded as inferior to those attending the on-campus program. Within this general principle, methods, content and delivery would be modified to respond to the special needs and issues facing Winnipeg Education Centre students.13

1.3 Description of Study

It is the subject of "special needs and issues" that concerns this study. There has been a commitment by program staff to evaluation of the various components of the program since inception. However, there has not yet been a systematic assessment of student needs and experiences. Questionnaires are administered to first year students in an effort to begin to compile data on relationships between student characteristics, use of program supports and success in the program. This research effort is exploratory with a primary purpose of building a data base for future analysis. This analysis will likely occur as part of an upcoming comprehensive program evaluation. For the purposes of this study, the data gathered to date is not relevant as it did not explore the nature of student experiences that led to the need for support nor the interrela-
tionship of program factors and the student experience.
Furthermore, the program has only recently (1985) reached its full capacity of students and had its first graduating class. Thus, it now offers the opportunity to explore the student experience at every year level including graduates.

While the nature of student experience has not been well documented there is the assumption by program planners and staff that the process of going to university will present personal difficulties and stresses for these students. Several program features are designed to ameliorate these conditions. An on-site staff person has 50% of work time allocated for personal counselling. All full time staff are expected to be attentive to both the academic and personal needs of the students. Documentation of the counselling interaction between students and full time staff has shown that these services are well used. An informal monitoring of the personal stresses of the students has led to the development of student support groups. These topical groups have been formed in response to rising consciousness of women's and men's issues, concerns with changing relationships with significant others in the students' lives, A.A. related issues and parenting problems.
Beyond the informal observations of the impact of program on the students, there is reason to expect that university education would create personal changes and resultant stresses for these students. While most research on the personal impact of higher education is drawn from the traditional university population, cross cultural studies indicate that there is the potential for value-related dilemmas for minority students in the university system. In examining disadvantaged students in social work education, Santa Cruz et al. notes that there is conflict between the learning orientation of the student and that reflected in the university practices. This often resulted in frustration, isolation and drop out of these students.15 Studies of native Indian students in both the United States and Canada show that the teaching methods and orientation inherent in the formal educational institutions are often in opposition to the experience and value orientation of the native student.16 A similar concern is found in studies of Southeast Asian American students in the United States.17

The nature of social work education with its emphasis on value examination and the inculcation of a particular value orientation may create particular personal dilemmas for students. It is known that the very act of value
examination often leads to stresses related to value confusion and conflict.\textsuperscript{18} It has been noted that the processes involved in social work education may lead students to experience personal psychological changes.\textsuperscript{19} The effect of these processes on the non-traditional student, who in the case of Winnipeg Education Centre students reflect a variety of minority (non-mainstream) cultural characteristics and values, is not known. These students are relatively rare in the field of social work education and this study represents an attempt to learn from them.

1.4 Objectives of Study

If the program is to respond to the "needs and salient issues" of the students, these must first be made known. The purpose of this study then is to document student perceptions of significant effects and changes that the program has created in their lives. In addressing this issue the study has the following objectives:

1) To document the personal impact of the Social Work Program at Winnipeg Education Centre on the lives of social work students.

2) To identify issues, patterns and themes that emerge from the data to characterize the student experience.
3) To share the results with program staff in order to allow for discussion of the implications of the findings for the program.

The study will use an exploratory, descriptive approach, which will draw directly from students' stated experiences and perceptions.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

A review of available research yields few directly relevant studies. The effects of university on the personal lives of students has not been widely researched. This is particularly true for the non-traditional university student, who has only been the subject of research of any kind in the last few years. The material that is presented here is drawn from the fields of Education, including Adult Education and Social Work Education, Feminist Research, and cross cultural studies.

2.1 Education and Personal Development

At a broad level, studies do indicate that college/university education does impact on the personal development of the student. Feldman and Newcomb reviewed forty years worth of data on this subject and determined that student attitudes and values did change over the course of their college/university program and that this change resulted in increases in open-mindedness, decreasing conservatism, more independence and autonomy. The authors point out, however, that the various studies
do not identify significant variables contributing to the changes or the resultant impact, if any, on the lives of the student.

Arthur Chickering presents extensive evidence that university/college education affects the personal development of the student. He describes seven major dimensions of development that occur during the college/university years. These include competence, emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose and integrity. He attempts to make the connection between these dimensions of student change and the educational policies and practices of the institution. Variables that he considers to be significant in influencing student development are those related to curriculum, teaching style, residence hall arrangements, relationships with faculty and administration, relationships with peers, and institutional size and objectives. Relevant to the current research, Chickering's findings support the idea that a small institutional setting, close interaction between staff and students and between students themselves, a feeling of community, and a discussion approach to learning all lead to significantly greater impact of the program on the student's personal development.
An early study (1957) by Philip Jacob presents results contrary to Chickering's. In his profile on the Values of American College Students, Jacob states that the college experience seemed to have little effect on students' standards of behaviour, quality of judgement, sense of social responsibility and guiding beliefs. Although there were exceptions, Jacob found the values of American college students to be quite homogeneous and there appeared to be no sharp break in the continuity of the main patterns of values which the students bring with them to college. Students learned to conform to a generally accepted set of collegiate standards and norms rather than to liberalize or individualize their values. Other authors dispute Jacob's findings both methodologically and conceptually. Allan Barton critiques Jacob's study on the basis of problems in defining and measuring values as well as weaknesses in the study design leading to inappropriate generalizations. John Smith adds to that critique by pointing out that Jacob assumed that the colleges surveyed were indeed promoting a liberalizing (in the sense of determining choices) education, a process which requires a dialectic on the discussion and examination of personal and societal values.
Smith argues that in fact, this cannot be taken as a given. In a 1972 study that examines the relationship between college experiences and attitudes of students from economically deprived backgrounds, John Jones and William Finnell found that compared to non-economically deprived students, the researched group became significantly more autonomous in their attitude toward their parents and families. They also found that in general, major changes in students will occur most often in the first two years of college. One such change, the development of social consciousness and resultant attitude change is significantly and positively related to the opportunity for the examination of moral issues as afforded by the college system.

Several other authors provide evidence that students typically become less dogmatic, less prejudiced, and more critically minded during their college years.

In assessing these changes, Kaoru Yamamota, and Charles Telford and Walter Plant, question whether the changes represent anything over and beyond superficial role playing to conform to the prevalent college norms and/or whether such changes are indeed specific to college experiences rather than the results of the general process of social development of the motivated adolescent in America. Their concerns illustrate a common problem with
many of the studies cited. They address the typical college/university student, i.e. late adolescent, and fairly homogeneous in class and ethnic background.

One study that does address the 'non-traditional student' involved an extensive research project which focused on the 'disadvantaged' student. Astin, Astin and Bisconti examined 3,200 students in 19 special university programs. Defining disadvantaged students as those from socially or economically deprived backgrounds, the sample included many students from social and ethnic minority groups and other groups viewed as high risk with respect to traditional admissions criteria. Specific research questions asked: To what extent do higher educational programs for the disadvantaged serve their clients? What types of programs or program components show the greatest promise? Which of the various college environments and experiences facilitate the educational and personal growth of disadvantaged students? This study is of limited use to the current study because many of the variables related to students' perceptions of the learning situation, such as integration of the program into the larger campus scene, do not apply to Winnipeg Education Centre. Furthermore, the one area of the study that addresses personal growth through the university experience takes a very narrow
approach by measuring the concept through close ended responses to a pre-determined list of (pre-dominantly occupational) life aspirations. However, the study yields substantial data on student and administrative attitudes towards the different programs as well as comparisons between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students.

2.2 Social Work Education and Value Change

In a 1982 University of Manitoba M.S.W. thesis, Leslie King summarizes the available literature on values and social work education.

This review shows that there is a distinctive set of values in social work which social work practitioners are expected to adhere to. The role of social work education is to inculcate appropriate attitudes as well as knowledge and skills. Howard and Flaitz note that the goal of professional social work education is to shape students' values towards a view of clients as individuals (versus stereotypes) and toward institutional arrangements that have a humanistic impact on clients. The value orientation of the profession is seen by the authors as a socio-professional ideology characterized by a positive
orientation to the adequate distribution of power, resources, services and goods; concepts of equality, civil rights, human rights and needs; and responsibility for social action and change processes leading to participatory democracy and social justice. While there is contradictory research as to the degree to which social work education does succeed in this task of value inculcation, there appears to be strong evidence that students demonstrate value change as a result of social work education. While certain personal characteristics like ethnic background, age, and sex were believed to be related to the professional socialization process, the nature of the relationships were not conclusive. The information did not address the effects of value change on the personal lives of students in either the traditional social work student or the student who is not usually reflected in the university population.

2.3 The Adult Learner

Research in the field of adult education sees the characteristics and needs of adult learners within the context of the salient issues of adulthood and the inevitability of role transformations. Nancy Schlossberg, a prominent writer in this field, notes that the models
of development underlying the theories of adolescent learners are inappropriate for the adult learner. She sees adult development as governed by a social, rather than biological clock with internal and external role transformations recurring and developing at different times for different people. Unlike the common view that adulthood is the time of stability and certainty, Schlossberg sees it as a time of change. These changes take place in five main areas: vocation, intimacy, family life, community and the inner self. A change in one area, such as a return to school, often leads to change in others. Moreover, any change results in some disruption and requires new adjustments, new assessments and new sets of relationships. Other authors note that there are differences between men and women in moving through the adult stages of independence, experimentation and self development. A conclusion drawn is that in later life when men become more affiliative, women show a great need for independence, becoming more outward and assertive and removing themselves somewhat from the nurturing role.

In applying the psychology of adult development to the situation of the adult learner, Schlossberg identifies the qualities which separate adult learners from the traditional college age student:
1) A wider range of individual differences - more sharply etched.
2) Multiple demands and responsibilities in terms of energy, emotions and roles.
3) More and more varied experiences.
4) A rich array of ongoing experiences and responsibilities.
5) More concern for the practical application of learning, less patience with pure theory and less trust in abstractions.
6) Greater self-determination and responsibility.
7) Greater need to cope with transactions and with existential issues of competence, emotions, autonomy, identity, relationships' purpose, and integrity.

Rather than assisting the adult learners with the difficulties brought on by development, Schlossberg believes that the university often creates problems for the student. The adult is subjected to a hierarchical structure, imposed policies of curriculum, scheduling, grading, attendance and financial aid, with the result being a regression for the adult from person to dependent. For adults to flourish, Schlossberg stresses that they need to feel
central, not marginal, competent, not childish, independent, not dependent. Thus the character of adults and the character of educational institutions are out of synchrony. 45

2.3.1 The Impact of Education on the Adult Learner

Judith Hooper, in a 1979 study, examined the functioning of families whose mothers had returned to school. 46 The intent was to assess the impact of this on certain personality variables of the adult members of the family. The women in the study were of an average age of 35 and all had at least one child. A key variable in the family's coping mechanism to the mother's return to school was the members' perception to role division in the family. In families where there was agreement on a traditional role division there was little disruption because the woman added her student role to her other duties and ensured that her family role retained priority. In egalitarian situations, there was also little disruption as the family respected the mothers' new role and worked together to accommodate changes. In families that had traditional role divisions, but the woman began to disagree with this pattern and used her student role to bring about changes, there were many disruptive situations. 47
Hazel Marcus conducted a study on factors influencing the school experience for women returning to school and found that there are no radical changes in the woman's family roles. These women expected to manage all other roles when they became students and the primary impact in this area was guilt about not having enough time to spend with her family. However, any negative feelings about the experience were embedded in an overall context of the positive aspects of going back to school. The most significant life change brought on by the educational experience was a sense of achievement and accomplishment which led to large increases in self-concept and perceived competence.

Similar findings were reported by Helen Astin in a 1974 study of women who had returned to school. Researching the changes in 649 women brought on by the school experience, as well as perceptions of family members to the new situation, Astin found that the predominant effects were increases in the women's self-awareness and self-esteem. They viewed themselves as more confident and open. Fewer than 3% of the women reported any negative effects. The reaction of family members was generally supportive and positive. While 10% of the spouses said that a definite strain had been placed on the marriage,
the majority (70%) felt that the school experience had been beneficial to the family. Children of the women felt most disrupted by the change with the majority feeling that they had more duties around home and less time with their mothers.51

Marvin Gilbert found a different result in his 1982 study of the impact of graduate school on the family.52 He concluded that compared to non-student populations, graduate families are more likely to experience dissatisfaction in the marriage based on lack of communication and lack of time. The female spouses of graduate students are likely to experience isolation and feelings of personal meaninglessness.53

2.3.2 The Cultural Context of Adult Education

In addressing the issue of the impact of a professional course of studies premised on value examination, on adult students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, one can find some evidence that this process will be stressful to the individual. Christie Kiefer, in a 1974 study of three generations of Japanese American families puts forth the idea of a non-linear model of acculturation for minority groups.54 This model sees the new culture added to the old
and people are free to choose between cultural alternatives according to the demands of the situation and as a function of social relationships or reference groups. Factors such as an educational institution force acculturation. In this process life changes for the individual:

"When a person becomes more acculturated, he begins to spend more time in inter-cultural contexts or at least to think about them differently, with the result that his environment is not the same".55

Data suggest that one of the outcomes of acculturation is value shifts and that this process can lead to recognizable periods of high stress through cultural confusion, cultural conflict and cultural alienation.56

Joseph Trimble, in an article on counselling American Indian students, notes that value conflicts do not have to be attributed to intergroup relations but may arise from measurement or assessment of values themselves.57

While acknowledging differences in values amongst native American Indians, he says that a core group of native values can be abstracted. When categorized according to the Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck model of man-nature orientation, time orientation, and relational orientation, these values are quite different from the mainstream American values.58
The requirements of the learning situation, especially those demanded in social work education may provide value dilemmas for students from different cultural backgrounds. Donald Atkinson points out that self-disclosure is contrary to the basic cultural values of many American Indians.\(^5^9\) Derald Wing Sue, in a study of Chinese students in American universities, makes the same point with respect to self-disclosure and southeast Asians.\(^6^0\) San Duy Nguyen examines psychiatric problems of Southeast Asian refugees and notes that value suppression, repression and denial is a cultural method of handling negative feelings.\(^6^1\)

In the Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guide created by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, the authors state that conventional academic, subject oriented curriculum is not necessarily appropriate for organizing the reality of a minority student.\(^6^2\) This is because the way we segment, classify and perceive the world is highly cultural in nature. Even culturally oriented subjects such as Native Studies or bilingual education can fail because the content is still cast in the structural and procedural framework of the institution.\(^6^3\) They stress that the cultural learning style of native people which emphasizes observation, manipulation and experimentation along with a cooperative atmosphere and non-hierarchical
teacher-pupil relationship, is in opposition to the usual main stream learning institution. This can be a source of confusion and frustration for the student.

Santa Cruz et al., noted differences between the learning styles of disadvantaged students and traditional students in social work education. The disadvantaged students, primarily from minority groups, had problems with deduction and analysis, and abstract thinking, skills which were valued by the institution.

2.4 Summary

The material reviewed shows that there is evidence that college/university does impact on the attitudes and values of students. This may be especially true in social work education where inculcation of professional values is an integral part of the curriculum. Adult learners would seem to be particularly open to change in the learning situation. They are seeking identity and purpose. The overall effect of university on these students appear to be significant increases in self-esteem and confidence. A caution, worthy of note, concerning the material on adult psychology, adult learners, and college students in general is that it is middle class in orientation with relatively little reference to the experiences of minority
group or disadvantaged students. 65

Value conflict and confusion, a source of stress and change, can occur both through an examination of values themselves, and through the acculturation experience of the university situation. As well, the mainstream norms and values reflected in the programs and procedures of the university may conflict with the cultural values and learning style of the non-traditional student.

There were no studies found that attempted to describe the nature of the student experiences and changes, in personal lives, if any, for students in non-traditional programs similar to Winnipeg Education Centre. The current study is one effort in this area.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Orientation

The research project has been guided by the use of qualitative methodology. Operating within a phenomenological perspective, a qualitative approach seeks to understand human behavior from the actor's own frame of reference and to understand the meaning that is constructed around events in the individual's daily life. As a philosophy phenomenology attempts to suspend presuppositions while looking at consciousness itself. The concern is with describing essences of phenomena and examining interrelationships thereof.

A qualitative approach to research can be guided by the perspective of symbolic interactionism which sees human beings as acting toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them. The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of the social interaction one has with others. These meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters. Thus, a situation has meaning only through people's interpretations and definitions of it. Their actions in
turn stem from this meaning. Qualitative researchers seek understanding of human behaviour using such methods as participant observation, open-ended interviews and personal documents. 69

3.2 Rationale

Debate among researchers as to the appropriateness of qualitative vs. quantitative methods usually centers on the supposed paradigmatic characteristics of each approach. Accordingly, the quantitative paradigm subscribes to a positivistic, hypothetical-deductive, particularistic, objective, outcome oriented and natural science world view. In contrast, the qualitative paradigm is presented as phenomenological, inductive, holistic, subjective, process oriented and anthropological in orientation. The two approaches are said to be associated with different research objectives, namely, verification in one, discovery in the other. 70

This writer is not entering into the discussion on which research method is more correct or scientific, believing that the choice of research method should depend at least partly on the demands of the research situation. In the context of the current study, the research objectives of describing and interpreting the impact of a course of
studies from the student participants' point of view suggests an approach which allows the researcher to use as reference points that which the participants know, see and understand. Further support for a qualitative approach to this type of research comes from the field of education program evaluation. Here, the appropriateness of a quantitative paradigm as the model for evaluation research has been seriously questioned. The quantitative approach tends to infer that:

Treatments in educational research are usually some type of new hardware, or specific curriculum innovation, variation in class size, or some specific type of teaching style. One of the main problems in experimental educational research is clear specification of what the treatment actually is, which infers controlling all other possible causal variables and the corresponding problem of multiple treatment interference and interactive effects. It is the constraints posed by controlling the specific treatment under study that necessitates simplifying and breaking down the totality of reality into small component parts. A great deal of scientific enterprise revolves around this process of simplifying the complexity of reality.

As William Filstead points out, it is precisely this fragmentation style of evaluation that leads to distortions of reality and necessitates a new, more contextual model of research.
It is in the area of experimental education and/or affirmative action educational endeavours that the use of a quantitative model of evaluation has been most severely critiqued. The move away from this paradigm came about as a result of two developments in the United States in the 1960s. First, there was the shift from analyzing the individual as learner to the program as teacher. Affirmative action programs were widespread and evaluation of one of these major efforts, the Head Start Program, was contracted to the Westinghouse Learning Corporation. Massive criticisms of their evaluations ensued centering around their use of standardized testing of students from which conclusions of program (in)effectiveness were drawn. The evaluators had neglected to explore the numerous beneficial social impacts of the program which have continued to make it an accepted and popular program to date.\textsuperscript{75}

Second, during this time there was an allocation of billions of dollars to social action programs including inner city education programs. This demanded evaluation designs which incorporated the effects of such characteristics as culture, race, ethnicity and other features of the community which interact in the learning process. The established procedures of close experimental control,
control groups, and the logico-deductive style were seen as inadequate to an understanding of the new educational concerns. The laboratory-oriented style of research which was part of the tradition of educational research was not satisfactory for the evaluation of either ethnic studies programs or educational programs that are based on affirmative action principles. The need was for a more contextual understanding of the program and qualitative methodology was seen as more appropriate to this end. It was premised on an exploratory and open-ended approach to the problem, intensive involvement of the researcher in the social setting being studied and an explicit attempt to understand events in terms of meaning held by those in the social setting.

Thus, for the purposes of this research project, both the objectives of the study and evidence from the field of education evaluation point to the appropriateness of a qualitative approach.

3.3 Data Gathering

Consistent with the intent of the research to discover perceptions, sentiments, opinions that students have about themselves and their experiences in the program, an open-ended interview format seemed the most appropriate method
of data gathering. It was decided to develop a semi-structured interview guide. The guide would be based on the general research questions and would be revised as needed during the data collection phase. A consideration was the previous involvement of the researcher with the Social Work Program at Winnipeg Education Centre. As an instructor/counsellor in the program, the researcher had close knowledge of the setting and the students. The researcher therefore, was entering into the research project with both preestablished roles and relationships with the participants. For the researcher to best carry out the project, a leave of absence was taken from Winnipeg Education Centre for the duration of the research. All interviews were held away from that educational setting.

Drawing on the objectives of the study the following three general research questions were developed to provide parameters for data gathering:

1) How does the Social Work Program at Winnipeg Education Centre impact on the lives of the students in the program?

2) What program factors can be identified which contribute to these impacts?

3) What are the ways in which the students deal with any changes in their lives that are brought about by the program?
In focusing these general questions both the researcher's experience as a staff person at Winnipeg Education Centre and the review of other research were influential. Through these the researcher was sensitized to a number of issues that could be relevant to the investigation at hand. A central issue seemed to be values and the potential for value examination to be an influential process in contributing to both personal stress and personal growth. As well, there was the interactive nature of education and personal change and the idea that changes in the student would be interrelated to changes in the students' relationships with significant others. There was also the context of this learning environment to consider and the way in which the institution itself, as a relatively closed, cross cultural setting, impacted on the students. While there was the anticipation that these issues would be relevant and of use in the initial ordering of the research concepts, the intent of the data gathering was to discover the issues through the experiences of the students. The research instrument was designed accordingly.

3.3.1 Interview Guide

Part I Basic Data

Age, current family situation (marital status, children).
Changes in family situation since entering program.
Year in program or graduate.
Ethnicity.

Part II Description of Student Role

1. Would you describe an ordinary day as a student?
   a) How does this compare to before you entered the program?
   b) How, if at all, has this changed over time in the program?

2. What difficulties have you experienced as a student?
   a) How have you managed these difficulties?
   b) Have the kinds of difficulties changed over time?

3. With respect to what you have learned as a student, can you describe the most significant things you have learned?
   a) What effects did this learning have on you?
   b) How did you deal with these effects?

4. What are the most significant things that you have experienced as a result of being a student?
Impact on Significant Relationships

1. Can you describe any effect that you, being a student, have had on relationships with people that are important to you?
   a) Has this changed over time?
   b) What do you think caused these changes?
   c) How did you deal with these changes?

2. What do you think that people important to you think about the fact that you entered the program?
   a) Has this changed over time?
   b) Has your involvement in the program brought changes to them?
   c) How did they deal with these changes?

3. Have there been changes in your community involvement since you become a student (graduate)?
   a) What was the nature of your involvement before you entered the program?
   b) What were the perceptions of community members to you becoming a student?
      Did this change over time?
   c) How did you deal with any changes in your community relationships brought
Impact on Self

1. How do you think you have changed from being in the program?
   a) How would you describe yourself as you were just before you entered the Social Work program?
   b) How would you describe yourself now?
2. Can you identify the reasons for these changes?
3. How have you dealt with any changes that have occurred?

The instrument was pretested on three students. It became apparent that a few modifications were necessary. The questions regarding community involvement assumed that "the community" and "community members" were significant in the lives of each student. This was not the case and the question was only used where relevant. As well, the questions regarding the ways in which changes were dealt with proved difficult to answer unless applied to a specific situation. It was used accordingly. Finally, the students' qualitative assessment of any changes that occurred appeared to be an important component of the
student experience. The interview guide was amended to ensure that this aspect was explored.

Within these core questions many probes and other questions were used to get descriptions of the phenomena, perceptions of the nature and timing of any changes that took place and some assessment of the perceived positive or negative effects of the phenomena. As the researcher became more sensitive to emergent themes, it became easier to draw from an expanded list of standard questions. By the third interview, issues related to ethnic or cultural identity, problems related to learning styles, and cross cultural interacting in the Centre became common issues. It appeared that underlying these issues were value differences and/or dilemmas. In an effort to clarify the nature of these issues several new questions developed and were frequently used:

In your background how were you taught to learn things?
Is this different from the way you are expected to learn at the Centre?
Have these differences presented any difficulties for you?
Have differences in the way people learn ever been discussed at the Centre?
Did you have a strong sense of personal, cultural/ethnic identity when you came to the Centre? What was this identity?
Did this change while you were a student at the Centre? If so, how?
Did you experience any value dilemmas as a result of being a student at the Centre? If so, what?
What did you learn from other students at Winnipeg Education Centre?

The question pertaining to value dilemmas has obvious risks as a research tool. It is a broad question that necessitates participant understanding of the meaning of values and definitions thereof. It also requires a level of trust between the researcher and the participants as it can involve very personal disclosure. It did not present problems in this study and in fact yielded informative data.

3.3.2 Nature and Number of Participants

The participants in the study were drawn from the entire social work student body of the Social Work program at the Winnipeg Education Centre, including graduates. The total number in this group is 80. For the research
population a minimum figure of 20 participants, representing 25% of the entire population, was chosen. Consistent with the principles of qualitative methodology, provision was made to expand the sub-group as needed to pursue research issues that emerged from the data. Three more students were subsequently added during data collection for a total of 23 participants. These students were chosen from the 4th year group and graduates and were added because these year group seemed to provide rich sources of data and more developed perspectives on the process of their education.

3.3.3 Criteria of Selection

The intent in selecting participants to the study was to present a range of experiences and situations that were present in the student population. Demographic characteristics of ethnicity, sex, marital/family situation, year in program were all considered in selection. As previously noted, the program maintains a clear and consistent admission policy of selecting students according to proportional ethnic/racial groups (50% native, 25% immigrant refugee and 25% other). It was decided that adhering to these proportional grouping within this study would better enhance the ability to draw from the breadth
of experiences reflected in the student population. Care was taken to ensure that each sub-group reflected a range of the other demographic characteristics.

Table I presents the demographic characteristics of the students in the Social Work program as a whole and of the students in the study. Another criterion for selection was willingness to discuss the issues raised in the research and to disclose personal experiences to the researcher. All participants were given the option to refuse participation and one student chose this option. Another student from that criterion group was selected as a replacement.

3.3.4 Interview Process

The interview phase of the research process was carried out over a three month period. All interviews were held away from Winnipeg Education Centre at a location chosen by the participant. The majority of interviews were held in the home of the researcher. At the onset of each interview participants were given written explanations of the nature of the research, an outline of the rights of participants, and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity (Appendix A).

The average interview was two hours in duration. Permission to tape interviews was given by all participants,
### TABLE I

**INNER CITY SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**  
**STUDENT PROFILE (INCLUDING GRADUATES)**  
**1985/86**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NATIVE sample total</th>
<th>IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE sample total</th>
<th>OTHER sample total</th>
<th>TOTAL sample total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of students:</strong></td>
<td>NATIVE</td>
<td>IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE</td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Single Parent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Year I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Year II</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Year III</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Year IV</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                          | 35                  | 15                             | 30                 | 80                 |
however in four cases the researcher either elected not to tape or stopped the tape in response to discomfort on the part of the participant. The taping process was useful in helping the researcher improve interview style which initially tended to be too closed and directive.

All of the participants seemed comfortable during the interview process and appeared not to have any difficulty in self disclosures. From information gathered, (the content of the interviews) it can be inferred that the process of obtaining social work education facilitated the students' ability to self disclose. There also appeared to be a level of trust between the researcher and participants that transferred over from previous contact. These factors enhanced the depth of the interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this research, data gathering and analysis were interrelated. As issues arose in the interviews, questions in that and subsequent interviews were added, and/or modified to reflect the analysis of information given. In addition to the taping of most interviews, detailed notes were taken of the information being presented as well as insights for analysis and any relevant comments about the dynamics of the interview. Following each interview a summary was
written which outlined the issues, possible themes and areas for future investigation (Appendix B).

At the completion of data collection, tapes were transcribed in preparation for coding and presentation of data. From each interview a list of issues that arose relevant to the research questions was developed. From all interviews there were 79 issues that were identified. Some of these issues or ideas could quite easily be seen to fall into categories with the issues being indicators or examples of the category. Arranging the data in this way resulted in the 79 indicators being placed into twelve categories (Appendix B). The indicators were then assigned a code symbol and all data were accordingly coded.

To facilitate organization of data a matrix was developed that charted the presence of indicators for each student in the study. While analysis was drawn from the descriptions, the matrix was useful in collapsing the data into easily recognizable patterns (Appendix B).

For purposes of analysis and presentation all data was then re-recorded onto cards and grouped according to the coding categories. In presentation some categories were incorporated into others as appropriate to analysis.
The use of the matrix facilitates an assessment of the commonality of the issue among the participants. As well, it highlights differences, if any, between ethnic groups.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Changes in Self Confidence

A predominant effect of the inner city social work program on the lives of students is significant increases in individual self-confidence and self-esteem. The students were unanimous in expressing enhanced perceptions of self as a result of being in the program. Some changes were dramatic:

The most significant thing that has happened to me has been in my feelings about myself. I feel like I have worth. Getting into the program made me feel like someone believed in me. This was new. Before I got into the program I was depressed and scared. I wondered how I could handle one more knock. I was afraid I wouldn't get in, that when compared to all the other applicants I wasn't as good. I didn't feel secure. Now everything is different. I'm not afraid of failing anymore. Even if I had to drop out right now it wouldn't destroy me because I know I'm worth something now. That just changes everything. (2nd year student, non-native).

For many students perceptions of self before Winnipeg Education Centre were characterized by fear and insecurity. A new measure of self worth came from overcoming those.
I feel good about myself now. For the first time I'm not afraid about the future. It's really a good feeling not to be scared anymore ... to know that I don't have to live like I did before, afraid of my husband leaving, afraid of being blamed for things at work. I've learned that I have some control over my life now and I like that. (2nd year student, native).

Before I was unsure of myself. I had a history of failing at things. I was my own worst enemy. Now, well I'm excited about life. I've taken something and am following through on it. It feels like I'm in control of my life, before I was just going along and things were controlling me. (1st year student, native).

This issue of control over one's life is one of the main reasons why students feel more confident. Learning to evaluate one's behaviour according to self, as opposed to others', standards has led to internal strength and satisfaction.

I can say that I am much happier now because I have learned not to let other people's opinions of me bother me, that what I thought of myself was more important than what other people thought of me. (Graduate, native).

Before, my identity was caught up in what other people thought of me, as a parent, a wife, person, and I was perceiving from them that I was failing. I was thinking of killing myself. I had no worth. Now I'm really enjoying my life. I'm so excited about myself.
and the way I feel about myself. (2nd year student, non-native).

Before, I had low self confidence and was very much defined from outside myself. I had an identity that was passive and accepting. Now I'm an adult woman with her own identity and vision of where I want to go. I'm feeling a lot more solid about how I'm going to get there and about knowing what I need to get where I want to go. (Graduate, non-native).

Related to the idea of control over one's life is the lessening of fear of the future that was characteristic of many students before they entered the program. Perceptions of being more in control of life has created optimism and excitement about the future.

My attitude toward life has changed. Education led to that, where before I didn't care whether I was alive, now I want to stay alive until I'm at least 70 so that I can accomplish something. I've developed some initiative to help my own people and to try the best I can. (Native student, 3rd year)

Before coming in (to the Centre), I had a strong fear of the unknown. Now the unknown is still scary but exciting. Something positive will happen. There is always change now and it is exciting. I like that. (3rd year student, non-native)

One of the important things I've learned is that life is o.k. I have the ability to find out things for myself. I can be my own person and can do things because
I want to - not because I have to.
(4th year student, non-native).

Along with increased perceptions of self worth and self control came the recognition that one has rights and the insistence on exercising those rights. For those who had previously viewed themselves as having limited choices and being relatively powerless there was a sense of satisfaction at taking on new roles in old situations.

The way I deal with people is entirely different now. Before I had no rights. Now I do. I'm a human being. Before there were times I just didn't know what to do because I didn't think I had choices. I was caught ... a victim. I literally didn't have choices. I was at the mercy of other people like the low income housing authorities. They could make me feel terrible. Now I question them on what they say. I tell them they are wrong to try and make us feel powerless. They may mean well but they are perpetuating something that is wrong. They actually listen to me now. Before I was a woman on welfare. To them being a university student is different. Even though I'm just as poor and live in the same place, they treat me like I have rights and that I known something. The difference is me. I feel better about myself and about being alone and being a woman. (2nd year student, non-native).

Several women see their enhanced perception of themselves as associated with their recognition of, and assertion, their rights as women.
I was talking to my brother about the native situation in society and he told me that women didn't know anything about politics, that I didn't know anything about politics and that I therefore didn't have the right to express my opinion on the matter. I told him that I have the right to express my opinion regardless of what I know. I would have never said that before. All the things I learned about being a woman in this society really helped me. It's usually men who are the leaders, who are allowed to have opinions and make decisions. I realized that it didn't have to be that way and that women have the right to express themselves, make their own decisions and not have to get the o.k. from their husband, brother, father or any man. (Graduate, non-native).

For parents of school-age children the manifestation of new found rights often became an intervention into the child's school environment: a native woman speaks of her experience.

Since my involvement in the centre I challenge things that I would let go before. Like my kids' school. It's nothing for me to go down there and tell the principal what I don't like. Now I realize that I have that right, that I'm as smart as they are about my kids' education. (4th year student, native).

An immigrant tells of getting reports from school that her children were doing as well as could be expected being that they are coping with two languages. Since entering the Centre both her knowledge of societal attitudes and her expectations for her family have increased:
Another significant thing is the way I can go to my children's school and question what is happening. I explained to my children's teacher that they are not really ESL students. They grew up in Canada and even though we speak a different language at home, they are fluent in both languages. I ask the teachers not to treat them differently. I know that often ESL students are looked at as slow. I have higher expectations of the educational system for them now and I will work to see that they get those. Now I know that I have right to know what is happening in school. The right to challenge the teacher and ask questions. I didn't know that before. (Graduate, immigrant).

Not only do students realize their own rights but also pass this knowledge onto others:

Before I got in I was intimidated by my kids' teachers. Now I bring my kids up to know that they have rights and just because a person of authority says something it isn't necessarily right. This has really been good for my kids. (3rd year student, non-native).

To over half of the students who participated in the research, a measure of self confidence and self esteem is the newly developed desire to spend time alone, away from family and friends. There is a sense that they like themselves more now and they are not only o.k. alone but need to have time to themselves. This is a change from previous periods and this phenomenon cuts across
cultural boundaries.

I learned to enjoy my own company and be happy with myself. I don't need other people to make me happy anymore. That is a change from before when I was always calling up somebody and getting together with people. (Graduate native).

I learned that it is important for me to spend time alone now. I'm worth it. (2nd year student, native).

The significant thing about going back to school is a change in my attitude and my emotions toward myself. I feel comfortable alone with myself now. (2nd year student, immigrant).

I learned that it's important to have time to myself. That is a change. Before I was always with someone, my wife, the guys I work with, my friends. A real social animal. Now I feel good about spending time alone and time alone with my daughter. I feel comfortable with myself. (3rd year student, non-native).

4.2 Changes in Self Identity

The positive changes in self confidence and self esteem seem to parallel an existentialistic examination of "who am I?" and "where do I fit?" emerging ultimately into a strong sense of, and acceptance of, self - the "I'm o.k." attribute reflected in the previous descriptions for the students in this research project. This examination
and resolution stems directly from the learning situation. Courses which emphasized personal and societal value identification were influential in precipitating change. Particular significant to most of these students were the first level social policy course, the Human Behavior course, Interpersonal Communication Skills, Women's Studies and Native Studies courses. Students also mentioned that nearly all the courses that they take at Winnipeg Education Centre creates social and political awareness that leads to personal awareness and change. As well, most students felt that the setting itself, with a close interaction with people of diverse background reinforces this process of personal awareness.

The "who am I" syndrome is accompanied by value examination, usually led by anxiety and resulting in personal growth.

In first year we learned a lot about values and about different ways of looking at the world. This caused me a lot of stress because I really had to look at myself and come to terms with what I am. I think this was like a process of becoming a person. Making me more aware, certain courses for sure helped me do this. Communications course, Human Behavior, Social Welfare I, we examined ordinary behavior and all of a sudden I saw myself and the things that made me feel so negative about myself. (2nd year student, non-native).
Both the application of the social work learning to the personal situation and the ordinary 'reexperienced' are common themes amongst these students. A woman in fourth year notes:

In my first year I started questioning everything, the classes, the reading material; we learned about the issues—women's issues. It caused me to question my relationship with my family, with me, with other women. I went into crisis in second year and the hardest part was I felt like I had no one to tell it to, no one would understand. I was starting to look at myself, my behaviour, who I was; all the behaviour theories I started applying to my life. I discovered something very significant about my past that explained a lot of things about how I am now in my adulthood. All this happened because going into social work we were forced to look at social problems and I started using myself as someone to relate it to. I had to relate my existence to what I was learning. (4th year student, native).

In Intro to Social Work I found something out that opened the door to my own personal growth. I learned that I was carrying around something I wasn't even aware of. It explains a great deal about what one of my big hangups was. It allowed me to see this and begin to make some changes in my life. (1st year student, non-native).

Anger and/or learning to express anger appears to be a common phase in the process of emotional growth especially for the women:
The hardest part has been what I've had to take in and deal with ... the emotional growth. I was on an emotional roller coaster in the first year. Then in summer I had time to reflect and examine myself and the things I learned about myself. I learned that I could deal with emotion, especially anger. I learned it was o.k. to be angry. Before I didn't let anger out because I was afraid of getting hurt. Now I'm strong enough to be hurt. (2nd year student, non-native).

In the first year I was like a time bomb. I was angry about everything I was learning, especially Social Welfare I, it put things into perspective for me ... the realization that "It wasn't just me". There was a reason for the problems I had. I dropped out of Women's Studies because I was so afraid of letting the anger show. 2nd year was better. I was learning to get rid of some of the anger through my papers - instead of yelling at people. The anger just covered the hurt and I had to allow the hurt to surface. It's been a gradual process. I had to realize how I react to things, and why. (3rd year student, non-native).

For one man in the Social Work program, emotional growth and a stronger sense of self as a man was nearly the opposite in form than the women. He learned to set aside anger, a heretofore common response, and open up to the other emotions that had been suppressed before:

Being in the program showed me a lot of important things like values and the way we are socialized. The courses made me realize that you don't have to prove who you are. I'm learning how to deal with myself, my inner self. In learning how to express my feelings, show my
emotions. Before I kept them hidden, except anger, I was a macho man, tough, always fighting. Now I know that if you can't feel, you can't be an effective social worker. I can get closer to people now. Because I'm more open emotionally, I can get hurt easier. Comments penetrate. Now I am learning to stand up and say "hey, that hurts". It took a lot of courage to do that. (3rd year student, non-native).

For nearly all of the students the sense of self, the answer to "who am I" has more than the individualistic searching noted above. It has a group component, an identification with others - women, Indians, Metis, men, people in general. For these students the centre either reaffirmed a group identity or allowed one to emerge.

When coming into the Centre, many of the women in the program had not been exposed to an examination of women's issues, or the social and political realities which can create a personal self image. This examination led to a strong sense of identity as a woman for many of the students, from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

It was through the school that I met feminists and people struggling with feminism and struggling with life, and making it alone, not having to depend on a husband to survive. The highlight was the Woman's Studies course in third year. I had always been working through some of those issues without being conscious of it and it all came together for me here.
I couldn't have handled it earlier. I was too angry and bitter, learning about the oppression and inequality brought out lots of feelings. At the Centre I was part of other women, who were talking about these things, sharing. (Graduate, native).

I had an awareness of women's issues from a personal perspective before coming to W.E.C. but I had never been exposed to anything feminist and to an ideology which put it into a political perspective. When I first read and talked about women's issues in classes I became aware that it wasn't just me, that there was a whole body of knowledge, books, people who thought the same way as me. It helped me out of a sense of isolation. I started to feel that there was a community of women out there that I could identify with and wanted to be part of. These are role models, politically aware people doing things to change society. (Graduate, non-native).

For some of the women, group identity is not a discrete category. They have one or more affiliations:

I chose to work with women in my job. The impact of the courses helped this - the whole issue of women and policies, it's not fair. It's a male dominated world. There's not much for women. These feelings have caused me some problems with my family. My relatives (especially the males) think I'm too independent for thinking I can survive without a man. Besides being a woman, I'm an Indian. I always had a strong sense of being an Indian. There was always this underlying thing "my people", always a struggle to be who I am. Some saw me as going to the other side, while I was in the Centre. Learning and growing strong as a person and a woman. I had to
make sure I didn't leave my people behind. (Graduate, native).

Another graduate identifies with three groups:

I still have the same philosophy and values as before I started the program. What I learned at the Centre reinforced some things and made me see myself better. My native identity was strengthened through my peers and through a lot of what I was learning. The whole idea of colonialization. The oppression of native people. It's really funny, when I started school I didn't know what oppression meant. I lived it but I didn't know the term. When I learned what it meant I knew I was oppressed in three ways: as a woman, as a Metis and as being poor. I turned oppression around and thought, o.k. I'm going to have to struggle three times as hard. (Graduate, native).

A first year student is achieving a beginning awareness of group identities:

I said to somebody one day, "I am a unique person". I was being stupid when I said it but afterwards I thought that there was some truth to this. Not only am I native, I am a woman and I'm disabled. How much more than that can you be? I don't really have strong feelings about being identified with one group or the other. Up til now there were certain realizations I had, I'm still working them out. (1st year student, native).

The native students all felt that the program reinforced their native identity. For some of the Metis
students this stronger identity was the culmination of a struggle to reconcile several world views:

My father is Ojibway and my mother is German and Irish. There were lots of problems over being 'Indian' in my family. All my life I have been struggling with "Am I white?, Am I Indian? Am I nothing?, Where do I fit?", and not realizing until I went to school that this not knowing where I fit was part of my unhappiness in the past. When I read April Raintree in 1st year I could identify so strongly with the book and I knew that that had been my problem - where do I fit? The Centre changed that for the good. Being able to look at me and understand the whole thing of stigma and prejudice and then feeling much more comfortable with myself. Now I'm proud of what I am, my native identity. I know who I am and there I find myself appreciated and respected for what I am. (Graduate, native).

Another Metis student reports a similar outcome but a different process:

My Metis identity changed while in the program then went back to the way it was. When I first came in I knew I was Metis, who I was, where I came from, who my parents were. I then over-identified with the other native students because I felt that we were all the same. Then I learned that we weren't. There was some discrimination by the other students. I was Metis, there was a split between people who were Metis and the full native people. So, for a long time, the first two years, I tried to see the same issues but our approach was different. I went back to being the way I was and accepting
myself for what I was. I know who I am and where I fit. (4th year student, native).

For the immigrant students the process of value examination, and social and political awareness is not such an integrating experience. Unlike the other students interviewed, there does not seem to be either a reinforcing of previous group identity or alignment with a newly emerged sense of group identity. Rather, the program creates value dilemmas that threaten the previously held cultural values. The process of social work education forces an individualistic examination of "who one is" similar to that of the non-immigrant students, but the outcome is that of a person who is "inbetween" groups, in this case, in between their ethnic communities and cultural values and those that they identify as being 'Canadian' or 'social work values'.

In spite of the difficulties related to acculturation process (taking attributes and values from different cultures), the students all agreed that the outcome was positive in terms of personal growth.

My values changed at the Centre. Before I understood only one perspective on people. Now I see different perspectives. Individuals must be looked at. You can't say "in general" anymore. I thought there was only one right view before, the view of people of my community. You learn here
that your values aren't absolutely right and others are wrong. Different people think different ways. I can see others values now, and I can see my own and I can combine some things. If it is good for me I will take it as my value. It doesn't cause a problem, no conflict anymore. I think about why I've changed to different values and I know why. (3rd year student, immigrant).

Another student describes a process of acculturation which wasn't quite as smooth:

I went through hell in first year. Partly because of the courses. They forced me to look at problems in my life that I had been avoiding - especially Human Behaviour and now Social Welfare. These triggered anger in me. I came from a country where values are so strongly religious. Everyone is the same and everyone must conform. I was never a conformer in my heart but I took it as my place. I had to be a nice lady. I was angry but I covered it up. When I had to look at these values and ideologies of society, I was emotionally broken. All the anger at my socialization came pouring out. When you take the values you grew up with and the values that are given to you in school, it's like putting them into a mixing machine and turning me up. Some values I will keep, others I feel angry about and reject. I'm picking up the pieces of myself and putting them together like a puzzle. There are still pieces missing but things are getting much clearer. (2nd year student, immigrant).

Another student describes the situation of being part of two different value sets:

I feel a strong sense of identity with my people and culture, but I have double identity now. At home I feel a strong
sense of the immigrant part although there is conflict. For example, if I am with friends from my community and they discipline a child in our traditional ways, I argue with them. My changing values makes me argue with them. I see their values but I have also taken on others that are more social work. I feel o.k. but at times this is confusing. My cultural values and social work values can be different. (4th year, student immigrant).

4.3 Transitions

Change does not come easily. The positive outcome of increased self-confidence and self-esteem was not gained without struggles, in some cases severe crises. All students noted a transition period from the insecurities of the past to the characteristics of today. For these people the critical time was in first or second year. For some, academic success allayed anxieties and stresses, for others personal introspection created emotional growth that led to enhanced perceptions of self. For all, this transition period was painful:

There was a process of change. In the first year and one-half I was almost destroyed. I had such high expectations of myself to excel ... to get good marks, to achieve something. This led to many problems and I ended up in hospital. There was so much pain. I didn't know why, I don't have all the answers and maybe never will. By third year now I am much more comfortable. I finally
realized that you don't have to be perfect - just good. (3rd year student, non-native).

There was a period in 1st year when I just did what I had to do to get good marks, to make it. I put the staff on a pedestal. I was evaluating myself in their eyes. Talk about pressure! But by the end of 1st year I knew that some of the things I was learning just didn't fit for me. By second year I started going with my gut feelings. I listened to the profs and others' points of view but I did what I felt was right. I started trusting myself. This led to a totally chaotic year. My base of security and the safe road wasn't there anymore. It was scary. My role as a person and how I did things was starting to surface. This year is good. I'm trusting myself much more. (3rd year student, non-native).

For the following student the transition to more confidence was facilitated by seeing W.E. C. profs as 'human':

When I came into the Centre I wanted to be sure of things but deep down I didn't know that much. I was worried about school. I had been out of school for so long and I was afraid of big fancy words floating by me ... of professors standing up there thinking I was dumb ... of other students who would all be smarter than me. It's crazy but those are the things I thought of. Now I know I'm going to make it. The profs aren't aloof. You can sit and talk to them. I can take any of them aside, even the Director and ask as many questions as I want. It feels good, I'm not worried any more. When you first come in it's like coming to the city from the reserve. You think they are way
down here. You think the profs don't have any problems, but they do, they're human too. (Second year student, native).

For some of the 1st year students the transition has not yet been made. Final marks, that indicator of success, are still a few months away.

I guess one of the things that I found is that I don't have too much confidence in myself. Learning to write, trying to master grammar, essays, exams, it's a real struggle. Everyone's stressed out. I'm trying to get into a pattern of studying, learning now to pace myself. In every course I think "how am I going to do?" There is a lot of anxiety. Part of me has a need for security and there is no security here yet. (1st year student, non-native).

For the immigrant students, it is only when confidence in handling language emerges that self confidence can begin. For the average immigrant student this means at least three hours a day on studies in the first year, trying to master English skills, as well as the specialized 'jargon' of the social work profession:

The language was a real problem, I was always handicapped. I would never dare speak in groups and each paper took a very long time. I had studied English before I came to Canada but this was different, we just learned grammar and I didn't have a chance to practise. I also took English at the International Centre but I didn't feel confident in English. I would have never dared to go to a large place like campus. Now I feel I can cope. (3rd year student, Immigrant).
The language was, and is still a problem. So much depends on the quality of the lectures and the speaking ability of the prof. Social work is a highly specialized language. I cry a lot, sweat a lot and carry my dictionary everywhere. (3rd year student, Immigrant).

My self esteem and confidence has grown, especially since my English has gotten better when I first started I thought I might not be able to make it. I studied English 3-4 hours a day at home. By second year I learned some informal skills like how to read a book or article without having to absorb every word. (4th year student, Immigrant).

The use of personal support is mentioned as an integral factor in handling the stressful times. All students indicated that they had someone they could count on to provide help and understanding at critical times in this phase of their lives. For most students there were more than one resource available and it was often noted that these resources met different needs:

I used all the old supports - A.A. and Alanon but I needed more, once I was in school. I needed a different kind of support there, I needed both. I found that students and staff really understood what I was going through and I needed that understanding in order to change. (Graduate, Native).

My family felt really good about me being in the program. They supported me a lot especially when I needed time away from my daughter. At times I would have to reach out and say I can't cope and they would take her to the country for the weekend. (Graduate, Native).
4.4 Impact on Personal Relationships

Not surprisingly, the extensive changes that students identified in themselves as a result of the program did create changes in their personal relationships. Nearly all the students felt that the people who were close to them, whether spouses or other family members, were threatened by the changes that were taking place.

He didn't want me to go to school and for the past two years he hasn't helped me with anything. He thought I couldn't do it and would come out with nothing. He is very frightened because he sees me growing beyond him. (2nd year student, Immigrant).

My husband knew I was getting more aware of things I wasn't aware of before and he felt threatened. He was brought up to expect the woman to do everything around home. I neglected a lot of things once school started. You have a lot of stress at school without having to worry about the things you used to do or should do at home. I thought he would understand but I guess he felt too threatened. (3rd year student, Native).

I had problems with my husband. Every person changes. I wasn't an exception. I was learning, growing, analyzing and he wasn't. That was hard on him to deal with and to understand. He was scared to think that I had these opportunities and that I would leave him. (Graduate, Immigrant).
He thinks that since I've started school, I started analyzing everything too much and that I think I'm o.k. and everyone else isn't. (4th year student, Native).

The threatening aspect of perceived change of the student carried beyond the nuclear family to other relatives. Where there was a commitment on the part of the student to maintain these relationships, the threat was overcome:

My relationships with my brothers and sisters have changed because they haven't changed and I have. They see the changes I've gone through but they don't understand. I'm different to them. Going to university has a mystic for them so they think because I went there, I'm different—or that we don't have anything to talk about except old things. Those old things are important because they will always keep us together. (4th year student, Native).

In some ways my parents and brothers and sisters could feel like they were in a different position because I was getting a degree. I'm not sure if they saw changes in me and in my relationships with them. I don't want that so I tried to be very careful. It was like another task for me not to change away from my family. (Graduate, Immigrant).

In other cases, where the student did not have a strong commitment to the family relationship, there was a loosening of the ties. In these cases each student felt that the relationship hadn't been that positive for the student before entering the program, that they were viewed
as "different" from the rest of the family and indeed saw themselves as different:

My brothers and sisters etc. think I've changed and see me as being different. I'm not around that much any more partly because they think I'm studying all the time and when I do see them, we don't agree on anything anyway. (2nd year student, non-native).

I don't see my family as much. I have very different political views from them. The program has affirmed me as a person instead of them making me feel like an "odd ball", I have a stronger personal identity and feel good about it. (Graduate, non-native).

For seven of the students in this study, relationships with spouses did end while the student was in the program. In all cases the student felt that the program contributed to the demise of the relationship but only by exacerbating problems that were already inherent in the relationship.

All felt that the termination had been a positive phenomenon in spite of the difficulties related to it:

The significant change for me was that I became a single mother. I separated from my husband in my first year. He abused me and I had tried separating from him before, many times, but people in the community always convinced me I should go back. In my culture a woman who leaves her husband is looked down on. I was able to separate this time because of the support of students and staff. They really supported me and isolated me from the pressure of the community. (3rd year student, Immigrant).
My marriage broke up in the 1st year. It had something to do with school, all the time it took and my wife being so threatened. I was analyzing the relationship and realized we were in parent-child roles. It wasn't the school's fault. The problems had already been there. School made them bigger. Now I know I need a relationship that is more equal, more sharing. (3rd year student, non-native).

After 1st year I was very unhappy, I was struggling, and all of a sudden it hit me that my personal life was not what I wanted. I was starting to feel better about myself. My mind was opening up and the relationship just wasn't for me. (Graduate, Native).

For the students that remained committed to their relationships with significant others, there was an ongoing effort to improve these relationships. Several factors were mentioned as contributing to positive changes within the relationship. First, there was the clear expectation on the part of the student that the relationship would parallel the positive growth that the student was experiencing:

I had to tell him how important the family was to me and at the same time that I was growing and changing. I wanted him to understand that I wanted a more equal relationship. I always wanted this but it wasn't until I went to school that I knew the marriage wouldn't allow it. It became a conflict because I wasn't doing anything wrong but he didn't want me going out at night to study. Also there was all the learning and growing and you can't live a
double life. In school you challenge something, criticize something and try to bring about change. Then at home I had to be a completely different person and I said no, I can't do that. Whatever I'm doing outside the family, they have to know about that. This was the big challenge to let them know what I was now. (Graduate, Immigrant).

I expect to have an equal share in the decision making now and he knows it. He seems glad that I'm this way now. He knows that he has to accept me now for the way I am. Sometimes he gets resentful of school and we sit and talk. I reassure him that as long as we don't live like we did in the past that I'm willing to continue the relationship. As long as he keeps pulling himself up things will be o.k. (2nd year student, Native).

As I've changed and become more aware I wasn't content to let things be. This put a strain on the relationship with my husband. Things like the way men treat women; and accepting that all there is to life is coming home and watching T.V.. (4th year student, Native).

Along with the expectations for growth in the relationships, the students felt that skills and insights that they were gaining in the program were allowing them to bring about positive changes in their personal relationships. The process was applicable to a range of significant relationships - spouses, where relevant, children and members of the extended family.
The predominant skill that has been acquired in the program that enhances personal relationships is the art of communicating, particularly the ability to express deeper feelings:

Being in the program affected my relationship with my wife in many ways. I respect her contribution to the family more than I did. I respect her decisions more than I did. Now if I want to visit a friend I ask her. Communication is different now. It is more sensitive, more directed, when I was mad before I didn't say anything. Now I tell her why I got mad and she tells me why she got mad. This came from socialization through the courses and staff at the Centre. I evaluated my personal life and existing communication. (4th year student, Immigrant).

Our communication is better. At one time in our life my husband and I couldn't even talk without getting into a fight. Now we can sit down and give each other constructive criticism. We had severe problems before. Now we can get angry but have learned to leave each other alone and be considerate about it. (2nd year student, Native).

We (student and her children) deal with problems now by talking about it. Before I would have just told them that this is the way it is and they have to accept it. Now we discuss their feelings and my feelings. The best thing is being able to talk to them about problems. (2nd year student, non-native).

The impact on my family has been really positive. Through the school, the courses, the people, I've learned so many different ways of doing things. I've learned to express feelings which has really helped
my kids, helped me. Before I came in if something was bothering them, it came out in violent acts - like throwing a lunch box. They never talked about it. Now they don't keep it inside because I've learned to talk and say things. By going through this I could say to my kids it's o.k. to get angry at people, to say you've had a bad day. Because I was learning to verbalize my point of view, and I didn't have to agree with something at school, I could pass this on to them. Ways of communicating, getting things out. I was sharing how I learned and what I learned. (3rd year student, non-native).

The biggest thing is I got really close to my daughter. This came from being in the program because I was, and would have continued to be, a typical male. I'm learning now how to express my feelings. I.P.C.S. courses and the other students had a lot to do with this. (3rd year student, non-native).

It wasn't only improved communication skills but as the next students note, more insight into the behaviour of others that led to better relationships:

The relationship with my husband changed. I have much more understanding of him and this creates more peace and understanding. The understanding came from learning about people in my courses, knowing how socialization affects men. I learned to listen to him and observe what is happening. I can see the pain of men. By my understanding him, it helps to avoid conflict. (2nd year student, Immigrant).
School and all the insights and personal growth have really had a calming effect on me and my relationships. This has been really positive in my relationships with my children. Before I learned about child development and human behaviour, I was a very traditional parent. Now I see my children as people with rights. They like the changes in me. Home life is more relaxed. (2nd year student, non-native).

As well, students transfer other social work skills and attitudes such as acceptance of the other, the right of the others to grow and change at their own rate, and the ability to "hang in there" in relationships:

So there are struggles in the relationship but it's o.k. I won't throw up my hands and give up. Before I would have walked away but in school I've learned how to stick to something - assignments, projects, papers, having to make a commitment for four years. At times I still struggle with my expectations, judgements, acceptance. To allow him to grow himself. Sometimes I want to jump in and tell him how to do it or fix it up for him but at the Centre I was given a lot of support and direction and encouragement to be myself. I try and let him be himself. (Graduate, Native).

Because I have less time I make a real effort to listen. My son moved in with me after being with his father for the last few years. Through social work education, the program and learning a worker/client relationship, I have learned to hang in there in relationships. Now I can hang in there with my son. (3rd year student, non-native).
Another factor that is related to the students' perceptions of improved relationships is demonstrated changes in the significant other. This outcome was noted by most students and seemed to accompany the increased expectations for change and new skills to precipitate change:

My husband started taking courses. I encouraged him to do something in that way. Now he's taking courses at Red River. We can study together. It's been good. (4th year student, Native).

I've had some major conflicts with my mother. I've gone through a lot of anger toward her, towards stuff that happened when I was growing up. I've written a lot of papers around women's issues. And it's interesting because she types all my papers for me. She has gone through a lot of awareness too this way. At first she disagreed with everything I write, and would argue about it. She has changed, now she comes back saying to me some of the things I wrote, I felt. It's nice. It's a miraculous change! (3rd year student, non-native).

Before I got into this program my husband had a view about women. Now he thinks differently. I'm in school, working, making more money than him. He likes what is happening though. Some of his acquaintances from work rib him about his wife in school, a social worker being stomped on by a woman. Sometimes they sort of put him down and it's difficult for him to deal with it. In his all male world of construction workers, they don't understand. These men would never understand why he's working his butt off to put me through four years of school. But now he's growing and we
can talk about these things. (2nd year student, Native).

For the following woman, there is a realistic awareness on how much change is possible within the relationship and a dedication to bringing about more change for her children in their future:

I'm fighting now for my children. My three daughters will see that they have to fight for an equal relationship. I don't pretend to change my personal life completely. There may be some changes that will make life easier, but my children are the ones who have to learn now so that when they get into relationships they will know what respect and equality is. (Graduate, Immigrant).

The majority of students felt that they had lost contact with their old friends. This was of their choosing and was associated with a range of explanations - no time, nothing in common anymore, new priorities. For all but one student, this phenomenon was viewed positively. Personal changes, new friends, closer interactions with family had filled the void of the old relationships:

I hardly ever see my old friends. No time and we have gone in different directions. My friends from the past were part of my work scene. Now the common element is gone. (3rd year student, non-native).

I have had to leave a lot of friends. They were in a different space. They couldn't understand my changes. They saw me as taking Canadian values and
leaving my culture. I ended up isolating myself to be able to grow and deal with them. I feel great about this. At first I doubted myself but I have one friend and my son who have really supported my changes and have been at my side all along. My son said, "Mom, just be yourself and don't worry about any criticisms. It's about time that you thought of yourself instead of others." (2nd year student, immigrant).

For at least one student this separation from previous friends has been regrettable:

There are negative parts of going to school though. In life I've lost some things. I had to give up my old friends. I'm not sure what happened or why. We don't have anything in common anymore. I've had to make new friends at school. (3rd year student, Native).

For all the immigrant students, the concept of "significant other" relationships included relationships with members of their ethnic community. It was important to all of these students to maintain positive ties with the community and to continue to be accepted by the community. In cases where the student felt that time pressures had prevented an active participation in the community, the desire was to re-establish this role when school ended. For students whose status in the community was threatened, they managed to either retain old connections or establish new linkages. The high regard by which education is viewed in these ethnic communities clearly helped this process.
When I first started the program, people in the community had a low opinion of me because they thought I wanted to be a Canadian, to have a new culture and that is why I wanted to get a divorce. Now they support me because they understand why I left my husband. He has made trouble in the community. Also there is a very high value on education in my culture. Now I sit on an advisory board and am active in the community student association. Before I wasn't involved in this way in the community. I have a lot of contact with the community now. They give me a lot of respect now because of my education. (3rd year student, Immigrant).

I feel attached to my community and I love them, but I'm in a different space. In one way I'm not as accepted now because I'm not the perfect wife and mother. I'm not close to anyone except my relatives but there is still no sense of being separated from the community. Before coming into the Centre, I was a friend to many of the people in the community who were in need of help. I still play this role and I think people look up to me because I have more education and skill now. (2nd year student, Immigrant).

The recognition of the value of education and the high esteem which others place on the student because of this is common to students from all different cultural backgrounds:

My father is so proud of me. He says it's the most wonderful thing that could happen to a father to have one child out of eight get a university degree. (Graduate, Native).
My father and mother are really proud of me. I'm the first one in our family who made it to university. (3rd year student, non-native).

Not only is the student held in higher status by family and community but most are "models" by which others are already emulating:

It was really positive concerning my brother. He used to be very unstable. After I started school he took a close look at his own life and tried to accomplish something more than he was. I guess I was a kind of model to him. Now he has a good job that he has stuck to for more than two years and he is taking night courses at Red River. (3rd year student, Native).

People in my community see me as an example for them. They see if I can make it, with my level of English, other people in the community can make it. Several of them have dared to apply to the Centre now. (Graduate, Immigrant).

My son thought it was great that I went back to school at my age. It encouraged him to stay in school. (Graduate, Native).

My sister-in-law and my friends also have a positive effect from me going to school. She models me. She was working, quit her job and went back to school. (4th year student, Immigrant).

My daughter wasn't planning on going to university before. She is now. It all started about three years into the program. She started talking about it, making plans. She is encouraging me to get my master's degree. The influence
of me going to school has really been good in this way. (Graduate, Native).

4.5 Dilemmas of the Student Role

4.5.1 Interaction With Other Roles

Most of the students in the Inner City Social Work program add their student role to existing family roles of marital partner and/or parent. For these students role adjustment and accommodation are major features of the process of going to school:

Sometimes you don't know which way to turn. My husband's not working right now. He gets down. He's been going through a difficult time. I'm trying to pick him up and give him encouragement. I'm a wife, mother, student. I don't wish that on anyone. You have to be really strong. The kids will argue and you have to straighten them out. My daughter will want to talk and you really need the time for yourself. When I started school I didn't know how much time I had to commit to school and to my family. I had to learn how to balance this and most importantly, have some time to myself. You also have to squeeze in a lot of studying, time for essays, a part-time job since my husband is out of work, travelling by bus to school, one hour each way, trying to catch up on reading between everything else. It's hard. You just can't say I'll forget about one of these things. You have to do them all. (2nd year student, Native).
The process of adjustment often involves the whole family:

There was a problem with my husband. If I had to study or go to the library, he had to take care of the children. This was new for him and a difficult adjustment. He didn't like me going out in the evening to do these things. He was very much socialized that after 6:30 women should be home with the family. My children also at first complained about mommy going out. They weren't used to being alone with daddy. I tried to have everything ready for them so they won't notice I'm gone. I really over work. (Graduate, Immigrant).

Sometimes the acquisition of the student role is concurrent with changes in other roles. For these students, there are numerous stresses while transitions are being made:

In first year I was in a state of shock. I was going through a lot of changes. Going back to school. Becoming a single parent. Raising a small child alone. I had been a man in a laboring job then went into social work, which my friends saw as a "feminine" job. I turned 30. In other words, I started all over again. It was a real financial strain. I had to find babysitters, there was the strain of the separation, scheduling problems, studying, putting my daughter to bed, and then doing homework, being tired and forgetful. (3rd year student, non-native).

For students with children there was an ongoing process of role assessment and prioritization according to the demands...
of the situation:

A big problem was having to be away from my daughter so much. I learned to be at every class so I could keep up on what's going on. This meant I could spend more time with her in the evening. I didn't have to read so much. I never stopped to think about which role was most important. I had to do them all. They were simultaneous. If my daughter was sick she was priority. I would stay home with her. (Graduate, Native).

Sometimes the student and mother roles conflicted for me. Sometimes I ask "What is priority". If I have a paper or something for school due then I think this is priority and I have to make time for my children after that. In myself I sometimes feel like I'm putting school ahead of them because I have to but I will make time for them later. (3rd year student, Immigrant).

I think this is very important to share with you. I was a wife and mother. I had to organize my life and find a way to dedicate myself to both. Children get sick, what comes first when you want both? (Graduate, Immigrant).

For the above student and for several other students, some program staff were not sensitive enough to the dilemmas of the parent role for the student. When a child was sick, there would be a prioritization of roles and the parent role took precedence. This created problems for the student with Winnipeg Education Centre:
It's very hard because the Centre expects the student role to be first. My family expects the wife and mother role to come first. I think the Centre has to be more sensitive to this issue. Some in the Centre supported me in this struggle, others said you have to be the same as at the university. I don't have parents or other family here so when my children are sick, I couldn't ask any of them to care for the children. My husband works. I was the only one. (Graduate, Immigrant).

The most important role is being a father. The school isn't sensitive to that. The needs of single fathers are really unrecognized. I have a lot of pressure trying to be both parents. She wants to spend time with daddy. I stay home with her when she's sick. But I hate missing school, you miss out on that lecture and you're behind. I get the feeling that the profs just don't understand these things. (3rd year student, non-native).

The following student resolved this difficulty by "educating" the Centre staff:

I had a hard time to take on the student role and study when you have other responsibilities. You're a mother. The role of mother is the most important role. The mother role came first. If my son was sick I stayed home. I had to straighten people at the Centre out so they would understand this. My role as mother came first because my home life was my main role. Anything else was outside of that. Being a student became a second role. I got flack about this the first time I stayed home because my son was sick. I wanted to be honest about why I didn't come in. After I straightened this person out, it was o.k.. (Graduate, Native).
4.5.2 Contradictions Between "Centre Philosophies and Practices

A major theme that emerges from the discussions on the nature of the student role is the perception of students that some of the practices and policies of the program are contradictory to the principles of social work that are being taught.

Feelings of being placed in a vulnerable position are fostered early, through the nature of the admissions process to the social work program. In order for the student to enter (s)he must demonstrate high 'need' as one component of admission criteria. For the following student this creates a situation where the student is an 'object', less than the staff:

To get into the program you have to tell all your problems, expose yourself. So we come in like puppy dogs with our tails between our legs. You are vulnerable. You become the object of discussion. One prof took advantage of my naivete. When I told this person something in confidence, he later used it in public. This person destroyed the concept of trust. (4th year student, Native).

The student role brings a reality in which the individual has few choices and action is often directed by others in the environment. The frustration and anger
at this situation is apparent;

I had been very competent in my job before I cam to W.E.C. I felt good about my ability. But being a student changed that in one way. You lose your control and independence. You have to depend on others for your sense of worth. The whole grading system does that. The school milieu contributes to the students' sense of powerlessness. The professors and administrators have all the power and you have to measure up. This is implicit in their expectations. (3rd year student, non-native).

Having to answer to other adults, not being treated as an adult. I felt I wasn't as independent going back to school. The whole money system. First year was the worst. I had earned my money before. I didn't have to give information about my family in order to get it. So there was that financial difficulty. The other thing is if you were late or missed school, there was the attitude that I should be there. I'm an adult and I feel responsible enough to monitor myself. (4th year student, Native).

Nowhere does this sense of frustration and anger come through so clearly as in the area of the students' financial allowance. Identified by a majority of students as a violation of their human rights, this system of 'support' is very negatively viewed. The allowance system is based on family income so that the amount a student receives will increase or decrease as there are changes
in the family finances. In the past students were responsible for notifying administration in any changes in family situation that would require an adjustment in the financial allowance. As well, family income was rather loosely interpreted so students would usually not report living partner allowance unless it was a stable common-law or marital relationship. This meant that most students received some financial support from the Centre regardless of the family situation. A change brought forward this year, to more carefully monitor the allowance system, requires that all students submit quarterly statements of their family financial situation. As noted below, this and other aspects of the student allowance system are the sources of critical and widespread attack:

The financial allowance system is really bad. It's just another form of social assistance and for those of us who were on social assistance, it's not good to be in that system again. Before, when I was on welfare I bought the whole image of what everyone else saw - a welfare recipient. I didn't think that when I came to W.E.C. that I would be stigmatized again. It would be much better if there wasn't a stigma attached to the allowance. The whole reporting system is just another form of welfare. You really aren't entitled to the money if it is left at the discretion of those holding the purse strings. (2nd year student, non-native).
I would like everyone to get an allowance so they can count on a contribution. It keeps your morale up. Everyone should get a check regardless of whether they are married, or not, regardless of their personal situation. I always have to ask for more, money for clothes for field, money when my husband is laid off. I have to work part-time or we wouldn't make it. We don't have any income to depend on. If I had a steady income from the Centre, I wouldn't always be in downer, worried about my husband being laid off. He would work one day, then be laid off the next. I don't like running to the school, like a welfare office, when something changes in the family. It's more trouble than it's worth. It's easier to take a job myself. (2nd year student, Native).

The following student received a small, but consistent allowance throughout her years at the Centre. She lists the benefits of this to her family and to her personally, as a woman:

For me, the student allowance issue is very important. The allowance I got was very important support. Even though I was married and my husband was working, my income was needed. It was important to them and me to have me contributing to the family income. It took pressure off the whole family because if I hadn't been going to school I would have been working. Now students don't automatically get an allowance. You have to be very careful if you take that away. It's a contradiction because we always hear that means testing is unfair. The best thing would be to have a minimum income. My income was steady and this was the main benefit because I could do some planning and feel like part of the family. I was contributing something. This was very
important. Without it you are dependent in your relationship. (Graduate, Immigrant).

For the students below, and others in the study, the financial support system was seen as a part of a reciprocal agreement between themselves and W.E.C. Each side has rights and obligations and the current financial policies rescind or undermine their rights and their dignity:

The financial system is very bad. When I first started I was under the impression that this was a contract. I would be a student and I would be given an allowance. Now I don't have that right. It is humiliating to have to account for my income and family situation and know that at any time the right to receive my own allowance can be taken away. I feel like I have to justify receiving this money that I was previously led to believe I was earning and had a right to. They said, "This is like a job, and you are being paid to go to school". There is a dignity about that. Now we feel as if we have to beg for the allowance. Yet we are still expected to fulfil our part of the contract. This makes us powerless. In our classes we are told to go out and fight for what we believe in, then at the Centre we are told what to do and when to do it. The rules are given to us and we must follow them. This is a conflict from what we are taught. It's like saying, "Do what I say and not what I do". (2nd year student, Immigrant).

Finally, in addition to restating this theme, the following student points out that with these financial
policies, the Centre is demonstrating an insensitivity toward, and ignorance of, the context of the lives of these adult students:

The whole financial allowance system makes me feel like I'm begging. When I came in I thought it was like a wage, something I was earning. I won't ask for help. I'll do it some other way. And they can't understand that it's not just one person, a student, that they deal with. If someone in my family needs help, regardless if they live with me or not, I will help. We are a unit. A lot of people will just go with the system here rather than fighting it. It makes no sense to fight it. You get the third degree. I even got a loan from a finance company at 25% interest rather than beg from the Centre. (4th year student, Native).

Other financial practices are seen as limiting rights and choices. The following student comments on the Centre's policy of referring students to free dental clinics rather than subsidizing other dental care.

I don't like to be told what I should do and not do. Like telling us to go to Mt. Carmel Clinic for dental work rather than allowing us to have choices. I understand the budget is tight but the Centre needs to understand the type of people they are working with. Most of us had to struggle all our lives to get where we are. To say "why do you want to see your own dentist?" is an insult. I'm not going to Mt. Carmel Clinic to hear those racist bastards say "why don't you brush your teeth". Your dignity is taken away from you. (4th year student, Native).
4.6 Differences In Learning Styles

As students these individuals bring with them patterns of learning and expectations of the teacher/learner situation based on previous experience and cultural backgrounds. For nearly all of the native students, and for every immigrant student in this study, there were dilemmas based on these differences in the students' previous models of learning and the situation as found in the learning institution of Winnipeg Education Centre.

For the native students previous learning in the family and cultural contexts had involved a shared, non-hierarchical interaction between teacher and learner and an expectation that the learner observe and listen rather than question and articulate. At the Centre there was a more formal teaching structure, a highly verbally based curriculum and an expectation that most learning would be abstracted from direct experience. This created both value and practical dilemmas for the native students. Furthermore, the dilemmas were often made worse by the fact that the differences were never acknowledged and their model never validated in the program.

There is a big difference between the way I was taught to learn and the way we do things at the Centre. My way of learning is to listen and observe.
People were bothered by that at the Centre. We were expected to do a lot of discussing. I don't think I could learn if I had to comment on every little thing that is tossed my way, always listening to what was being said and to what wasn't said. My way of learning was never talked about there. We never discussed how people learn or the differences between us. (Graduate, Native).

The difference in the learning style of the above student is indicative of a value base that carries forth into an articulation of a social work practice value:

People get impatient and want things to happen. They talk a lot and think this is causing things to happen. I take my learning slowly. I have to integrate it in my own way, fit it into my value base. Only then can learning be real to me. The same with change. You can't force it. It happens when it is right. It happens gradually, so we don't have to be so anxious about it. (Graduate, Native).

Another native student emphasizes the struggle to adapt to a new model:

Before, all my learning was practical. I had a difficult time expressing myself and my feelings. I was taught to be quiet, don't say too much. My grandmother taught me a lot. She talked and I was to listen. Here, there are all the big fancy words. I had a terrible time with that. I was stubborn and I wanted to write in my own way, but I couldn't pass if I did that. I was angry a lot that I had to do it their way. I learned to
write for the profs because I was tired of fighting it. (Graduate, Native).

A third graduate repeats the theme:

The way I was taught growing up, I lived what I was taught. There was no such thing as writing stuff down. I was told things that I'm just now starting to understand. The experience at school was totally different. That was so hard. It was a teacher-student relationship and it's kind of late in life for me to try and relate to that. Before it wasn't a teacher-student relationship, that's for sure. The people that were teaching you didn't come on as teachers, you were treated like an equal but still expected to learn. I'm still learning from my elders. I got indoctrinated at school though. I went to see an elder about two years ago and I brought pencil and paper. She laughed at me and said, "What are you doing? Are you going to write everything down?" I said, "No, I just wanted to take a few notes". She took my paper and pencil away and said, "You cannot learn and write at the same time. For you to learn, you listen". I think that's why I didn't take too many notes at school. (Graduate, Native).

A current student felt that his way of learning was not only different but devalued at the Centre:

I was taught to learn things by watching and not saying anything. We weren't allowed to talk while being shown something. This presented difficulties all through school. At the Centre you are supposed to tell everything, talk a lot, do your learning from books and words. This underplayed and devalued the way I was taught. To me it was an insult to my parents. (4th year student, Native).
The sensitivity of one instructor provided a significant learning experience for the last student:

The time I learned the most at the Centre was when an instructor sat down with me and showed me step by step how to write a critique. He didn't tell me, he showed me. He did it with me and this is how I was brought up to learn. Now I can write critiques myself. (4th year student, native)

The immigrant students also had problems related to incongruencies in the teaching style and learning expectations at W.E.C. and practices in their home countries. Generalizations cannot be made on the basis of immigrant status alone as each cultural background varied widely from another. One consistency, however, in the observations of the immigrant students in the study is that W.E.C. had a much less formal pattern of student/professor interaction than those of previous 'home' experiences. All of the students eventually adapted to this and enjoyed the more informal contact but the initial adjustment was hard for some. A southeast Asian student comments:

I took my learning style from my home country. There you had many questions but you couldn't ask the professor. Here you can ask freely and if you don't understand the professor is willing to give you help. At first I didn't feel comfortable expressing myself like that in class, then I saw many other students doing it and I learned. (3rd year student, immigrant)
Another southeast Asian further explains the differences and the difficulties involved in adjustment:

Education has a very high value back home. The instructor has high status. Whatever a professor says you should acknowledge and learn. In general everything was memorized. We depended on everything the teacher said in a lecture. We had to remember details. We did not challenge the teacher. Here we get conflicting ideologies from different professors and there is confusion about which to learn. At first I didn't want to ask questions of the professors because it didn't seem like the thing to do. Then I would ask the prof a question, very respectfully outside of class and he would try and get me to think about it, he would say, "what do you think?" This was confusing to me because in my country, the instructors told us the answers. I got comfortable in a couple of months. Calling each other by first names helped and profs were very comfortable to accept mistakes and to respect students' answers. (4th year student, immigrant)

This same student discusses the dilemma of having cultural norms which constrain verbal articulations of one's personal feelings and the expectation in social work education that the student will participate in that way:

Putting forth yourself in discussion in a group was very hard. We tended to be quiet. Because our academic training wasn't in logic or critical thinking we couldn't put our ideas in logical form on the spot. We had to learn new ways of thinking and learning. It felt like I should
participate, say something, in order to say it. I would hear people talking and making no sense. At first I felt pressure then I felt the expectations were ridiculous. Most people were involved in the discussion and I would feel terrible if I didn't say anything and felt funny if I did. (4th year student, immigrant)

For two of the immigrant students, the rigors of academia of Winnipeg Education Centre were less than those experienced in their home countries. Although this places less demand on them as students, they feel that this situation has drawbacks:

In my country academic demands were very rigid and you have no choices. Here you have choices. This is a big plus. Over there they expect students to work independently and be creative; to work not only on the few books that were in the lecture but others, to propose our own topics and themes and work independently. Here I see a wasting of human ability. If I felt more pressure on me to be creative I would find energy and time to do it. Because it isn't expected, I don't, and many others don't. (3rd year student, immigrant)

Another immigrant feels that the academic demands on students in the Social Work program are low, seeming to reflect staff expectations of lower student ability:

The students are not expected to do more than the minimum. We often don't get extra book lists beyond the few books required for the courses. We should be challenged to do more reading and
investigating of topics. It seems like the staff view us as disadvantaged and this sets lower standards for us. (2nd year student, immigrant)

Contrast that with the following perception of two non-immigrants students on the same topic and one can see that there is a wide range of experiences and viewpoints that somehow must be accommodated within the social work program:

I have felt a lot of pressure to live up to 'the campus' standards. This meant that the students at the Centre had to be three times better than campus students to be as good. This really put stigma on us. It was like because we were 'disadvantaged' we had to measure up. It was a subtle kind of pressure - more work in the classes, a longer academic year, expectations of the staff that we would be 'the same' as the campus students. It seemed like we had to do more. I have talked to campus students and comparing it I think we do have higher expectations placed on us. (3rd year student, non-native)

There is so much academic pressure at the Centre for myself the pressure is just to pass, not to do well. I have been down and struggling to get up the last couple months. Especially in my social policy course. There seems to be so much emphasis on it, the profs and students saying its such an important course. I don't understand the lectures, the reading material, it's all new, so much to understand. (1st year student, native)
4.7 Winnipeg Education Centre as a "Practice" Environment

From the perspective of the students in this study, there is unanimity in the feeling that Winnipeg Education Centre offers a unique educational opportunity. The small closed setting and the presence of students from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds provide opportunities for social work learning that they feel would not have happened at the main university campus. Particularly evident to these students are the acquisition of group skills and the cross cultural knowledge that comes from the learning setting. These insights and skills at working with other people are seen as paralleling the significant personal growth that occurred, and furthermore, were recognized as a valuable assets to carry forth as social work professionals. The meshing together of these people from different backgrounds resulted in a program where each felt that their and others' contributions were significant and valued. In a word, they felt part of a group:

At the Centre it's really good because it's an affirmative action program but not just for native people so nobody is 'targeted'. We are just part of a group - neither here or there. That helps me. I feel like I'm on an equal basis with everyone else. I've met immigrants, your basic white people, there isn't that extra burden of being on the outside. There are so many
different types of people there. It brings everyone together because people share different things. (1st year student, Native).

4.7.1 Development of Group Skills

One of the major adjustments and ultimately skills that students learn, is how to get along in a group. The intensive and significant amount of time the students spend with a relatively small number of students forces their 'survival' and 'practice' skill:

For myself I learned from the Centre that not everyone's going to like everybody. I've learned to try and get along with people. Each one has something to offer. You can take it or leave it. You make the most of it. If you are there to learn, you find something good about that person. If you talk to someone you don't think you get along with, you talk to them and find something you like. I've learned how to get along with people. It's going to be that way on the job. That's the reality. You will run into people you don't like. A smart person will learn it like a lesson. Work with it and around it. You can't change every bad situation. We have the opportunity to practice this at the Centre. Look again, you can dig out the good if you try. Instead of concentrating on the negative, look for the positive. I feel like I've been able to do this with other students. (2nd year student, Native).
Before I was very passive, not able
to speak in groups. Now I can express
myself in groups. I have had a chance
to get comfortable in my year group.
Now I can speak in different groups,
do presentations. This happened both
in class and informally. Like when
you go to the student lounge, you feel
free to talk to any student even if
they are not in your year group. (3rd
year student, Immigrant).

In that place there virtually is no
privacy. You are forced to get along.
You are confined with the same people
each day. One thing is for sure, you
learn to get along with others. (2nd
year student, Immigrant).

For first year students this 'learning to get along'
is one of the characteristics that define the first few
months. This is not always a smooth process especially
if the student has expectations that things would be
different:

We were told that we were going to be
like a family. This really didn't
happen. There are a lot of different
personalities there. A great deal of
the time was spent trying to find a
balance and figure out how I was going
to work with those people. Getting
to know them, understanding that I
wouldn't and couldn't be close to some
of them and making the adjustment.
(1st year student, non-native).

Once the adjustment occurs the students find that
learning from one another can and does occur. Close in-
teraction with people who have experiences that are the
focus of social work curricula make the learning both personal and real to these students:

I found an acceptance in school. For the first time people were listening to me so in turn I listened to the other people there. And what they were saying I took to be the truth. This was real, not in a book. So I thought "why did I think differently about this before". That's how I examined such things as prejudice. (3rd year student, non-native).

Being around people who are in difficult situations and have experienced discrimination affirmed what I was being taught and how to dispel the prejudices you read in the media. (Graduate, non-native).

You can't escape the issues there. The social work issues are lived out in that place. You have to take it in, everyone's experience, pain, growth. You realize that it all comes from working through the issues in the classroom, in the coffee room. The requirement to spend so much time together forces interaction. (3rd year student, non-native).

4.7.2 Cross Cultural Learning

Through close interaction with others from different backgrounds the students felt that a great deal of cross-culture knowledge was obtained. Most of this knowledge was acquired outside the classroom. Several students noted that there was little formal content in courses on value orientation in a cross cultural perspective, or
discussion of personal culture, traditions, mores that shaped student experiences. While there was an emphasis placed within the curriculum on native issues, this generally involved an analysis of socio-political factors rather than cultural identities with respect to immigrant issues. There was an absence of either the socio-political realities or the cultural phenomena:

Cross cultural issues are not stressed in the courses. I learned things on my own because of my own interest in this. But what I would like to say is it's strange to me that in one small place with so many different groups, people don't know more about each other's background. (3rd year student, Immigrant).

The following student agrees that cross cultural knowledge isn't shared in the classroom but feels that informal contact is the best way of learning:

I learned from other students - to respect their differences, learned about different cultures. Instructors need to reinforce the fact that some cultural values can't be expressed. It goes against the culture to articulate it. You learn by being with them. (4th year student, Native).

A third student felt that there was an attempt to bring out cultural differences in some classes but instructors were not necessarily knowledgeable or sensitive to these issues:
Cultural differences and cultural values were talked about in classes, especially in comparison to campus. But cultural sensitivity in the learning process varied. Among students there was sensitivity but from profs to students, it really depended on the prof. Some are naive or ignore cultural values. (4th year student, Immigrant).

An example of this insensitivity is the following value dilemma that was presented for an immigrant student through the courses. Fortunately, he was able to resolve the dilemma through his own creative resources:

A few courses led me to sense that women should get out of the house. Should is the key. My wife stays home and this perception made me feel guilty. A cultural value was part of this. I used another cultural value to deal with it. Internal affairs were our business. (4th year student, Immigrant).

Despite the lack of formal emphasis on cross cultural knowledge most students felt that informally they acquired a heightened awareness of people from different backgrounds and they established relationships that broke down cross cultural barriers:

I learned about different cultures and students' backgrounds so that when I go out into my community, I can share these things and others will be able to be with others who have different backgrounds. (3rd year student, Immigrant).
A very good thing about W.E.C. is that we can challenge those things that keep us apart in the wider community - like discrimination. (Graduate, Immigrant).

I've learned not to be critical or judgemental and to respect other people's lives. I guess I've learned this by watching and observing other people at school. We as students have a lot in common, regardless of colour and that when people have problems, like most of us at the Centre, we need friends, not enemies. (3rd year student, Native).

This transcendence from seeing group differences to a recognition and identification of similarities is a common theme with the students. There appears to be stages in the development of the students that mentioned this phenomenon from seeing the individual, then group differences, to a perspective which sees more commonalities and identifications based on humanness rather than subgroups.

The most valuable thing I've learned is dealing with other people and learning their values. Going through the Centre I learned we are all human beings and I've learned why we are like we are. (Graduate, Native).

Before I only saw the wrongs of people, now I see the beauty. The opportunities at school to be mixed with so many different people has taught me to be objective rather than judgemental. I am just now beginning to be able to open up to students at the Centre. Last year I was isolated both from my community and the other students because I
kept seeing the differences between us so I didn't think I had anything in common with them. Later I learned my experiences are similar to them, just in a different country. I was able to see the similarities. That took time because I don't mingle or interact too much. By listening and observing, I can see that we are all human, all similar. I came to love and respect them for their struggles because I was having the same struggles. (2nd year student, Immigrant).

I have learned respect and acceptance of others. A genuine respect for people. In a place like W.E.C. where you are exposed to people from such different backgrounds and cultures, you learn to see both sides. You come out learning that people see the world differently and we respond to the world differently but really these are all just ways of surviving. When you are confronted with this range of values, views, all the time like at the Centre, at some point you realize that 'yes' we are different, but also we are all the same. (3rd year student, non-native).
A central theme that tends to characterize the experience of being a student in the social work program at Winnipeg Education Centre is the development of a strongly positive sense of the self. This process is in turn related to other identified phenomena including stress and anxiety as self perceptions change, re-definition of personal relationships, a recognition and assertion of rights and a stronger understanding and acceptance of others.

Two major influences on the above processes appear throughout the data. First is the curricula of the social work program, specifically the components which foster personal and societal value identification, and those which develop analyses of the socio-economic roots of social problems. Second are factors related to this particular educational setting, namely close contact with other students and staff who provide both understanding of and support for personal changes the student experiences. As well, the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds who are living out the social work situations discussed in the classroom affords an integration
of the curriculum and an appreciation and respect for differences and similarities in people.

A more detailed summary of the components of the student experience follows.

5.1 Changes in the Self

It is very clear that outcomes of the process of social work education for these students are positive changes in self-confidence and self-esteem. Indicative of these changes are recognition and assertion of one's rights, feelings of having more internal control over one's life and excitement and optimism about the future. Along with these perceptions are higher expectations for self and others, and a striving to change situations that do not meet the new standards of quality. Integral to this emergence of a more positive sense of self is an indepth examination of the self and of others. This examination was promoted through "awareness" developed through the social work courses. This awareness encompassed both personal and societal value and ideological analyses, and socio-political consciousness of the nature of social problems.

Several courses proved to be very influential in this process. Interpersonal Communication Skills and Human
Behavior fostered awareness of personal values and the influence of values on own and other's behaviors. Social Welfare (Policy) I provided a framework for analyzing social problems and societal responses to those problems. Also important to these students, were both the Native Studies and Women's Studies courses which raised consciousness of the existence and reasons for the systemic discrimination of these groups in society. It was noted by many that the issues raised in the before mentioned courses were repeated and integrated into most of the social work courses and many of the electives.

The results of this "not being able to escape the issues" was an application of the knowledge to the personal situation - "a relating of the personal existence to what was being learned". Previous experiences were examined through new socio-political frameworks and there was an increasing awareness that personal problems and destructive past experiences had social connections. The personal thus became the political and while this freed the student from many previously internalized negative self perceptions, the process was stressful and called forth a range of strong emotions. Related to this process, especially for the women, was release of anger at learning "there were reasons for the problems I had" and "that it wasn't
just me". There was a period of transition from being in the throes of anxiety and stress and working through these and other student issues to feeling more confident and self assured. At the end of the transition, which took up to two years, the student had a strong sense of who and what self was and a strongly positive value toward self.

It can be surmised that the fact that there were such positive outcomes of this process of self-examination is at least partly related to the affirmative action characteristics of the students chosen to be in the social work program at Winnipeg Education Centre. Much of the awareness that is created in social work education concerns individual and group situations that these students have experienced or have known directly. The consciousness raised around social problems was not an abstract experience for these students. They lived out these realities and could strongly identify with both the issues and the processes of discrimination, racism, sexism and classism. In effect this awareness became a direct understanding of personal life experiences, and accordingly, a reframing of self identity. For many of the students self identity also has a group component. This is especially true for the women and the natives. It appears that consciousness
or awareness of oneself as a member of a discriminated group fosters an identity with other discriminated peoples. Many students had strong group identities with both native people and women. Here the influence of the program with the foci on native and women's issues can clearly be seen.

In addition to the influences of the curricula on the process of positive self identity, is the environment of the program. Students were able to apply the awareness and knowledge raised in the classroom: "Being around people who lived out social situations and were the victims of discrimination affirmed what was learned in the classroom". There was also a great deal of support for the struggle that the student was experiencing as a result of the processes described above: "There was always someone, either staff or another student to talk to ... who would understand what was happening". For many students, the Centre was the place to try out new ideas and new behaviours consistent with a new self image. It became a base of support to transfer the changes to other parts of their lives:

At school I was growing and changing ... then at home I had to be a completely different person. I said "no" I can't do that ... that was the big challenge to let them know what I was now.
5.2 Impact on Significant Relationships

Changes in self-perception and higher expectations for self and others affected the students' personal relationships. In all cases there was the expectation that personal relationships would accommodate to some degree the more positive self image that the student was acquiring. This was particularly evident in many of the women who, having had consciousness raised around women's issues, now expected to have more equal relationships with men. Consistent with this were expectations that the partner and/or other significant people would change and parallel to some degree the growth of the student. For several students this did not happen and ties were loosened or severed. In all cases the student felt that s(he) had precipitated this action and the outcome was favourable for her/him. For all of these students there were positive changes in relationships that were maintained. In these relationships higher expectations by the student were accompanied by newly developed skills by which to facilitate change. These skills were seen as having been taken directly from the social work learning situation. They included communication and group skills, attitudinal skills of tolerance, acceptance and belief in change, and the
skill of "hanging in there" in relationships. Once again the Interpersonal Communications course and the Human Behaviour course were cited as being especially influential in developing the skill and insight necessary to create changes in personal relationships.

There appeared to be a balance of higher expectations and assertion of newly found rights, with a realistic understanding and empathy for the significant others in these students' lives. The student maintained a sense of identity with the situation of the other: "I could feel the pain of men ... and the way they were socialized" or "I had to make sure I didn't grow away from my people". But, the predominant effect noted earlier, increased positive self image, determined that new standards of quality in relationships were expected and must be lived out. "I reassure him that as long as we don't live like we did in the past I'm willing to continue the relationship".

A high proportion of students in the study were women and their relationships with men had previously been "unequal" in their views. All of these women were now living out expectations of more equality. For those who continued to be involved with the same partners, there was considerable adjustment and redefinition in those relationships. Yet, the stronger sense of self was evident
in the determination of these women to continue to assert their rights.

Once again the setting appears to be a key factor in supporting changes for the student. Several women noted the support from other women who were also struggling with personal relationships. "At the Centre I was part of other women who were talking about these things, sharing"; "It was through school that I met feminists and people struggling with feminism and with life ... not having to depend on a husband to survive".

Student support is not only to be found among women for relationship issues, men also found support for changes. "I got really close to my daughter ... I'm learning how to express my feelings. Other students had a lot to do with this".

As people change and their self identities change, there is the risk that they will become isolated or alienated from their former reference groups. A programmatic hope is for these students to return to inner city reference groups as professional social workers. Thus, it is interesting to speculate on whether or not estrangement is occurring. Nearly all of the students felt that they had lost contact with former friends. All but one viewed this as positive as they felt they did not have same common
interests and/or time to socialize with those people. As noted earlier for native people the sense of native identity is strengthened while in the program. The immigrants and refugees feel that both self and community perceptions of the student now view the student as being "different", primarily because there has been the inculcation of "Canadian" values. In spite of this the student has managed to maintain close ties to the ethnic community.

A final common theme that concerns the student and her/his social networks is the "modelling effect".

Most students could cite examples of other people being influenced to improve their life situations as a result of seeing the student in the social work program. Common occurrences were the return to school of a family member or friend, job entry or changes, incentive and confidence for others to apply to similar programs and higher academic aspirations for children. The "spin off" effects of this program are numerous and tangible. As one student noted "it's not just one person, the student, that the Centre deals with". Most students have extensive and strong family and community ties and it appears that many people in addition to the students are benefiting from the program.
5.3 Dilemmas of the Student Role

Students who enter the social work program at Winnipeg Education Centre are adults with a variety of adult roles and responsibilities. The acquisition of the student role with its many demands put great strain on the other roles. The impact on personal relationships has been described. Another area where the student role clearly impinged on existing roles was parenthood. Most students in the study were parents and for them the parent role had equal or higher status than the student role. This meant that the needs of children were constantly being prioritized and accommodated. Guilt at not spending enough time with children was a common theme. The dilemma of parent/student role adjustment was exacerbated by the feeling that "The Centre" emphasized the primacy of the student role. This attitude by the staff was seen as being insensitive to the adult status of these students and to the other responsibilities that demanded their attention.

Certain policies and practices of the program were seen by students as contradictory to the principles of social work that were being taught. This was especially noted in the financial allowance system called "discretionary",
"means testing" "dehumanizing" and "stigmatizing". This system was seen as violating basic rights of dignity and autonomy. Principles of economic control, concepts emphasized in the social work curricula, were seen as being violated by financial practices within the program. This was particularly offensive as most had had very negative experiences with social assistance programs and had hoped that entering the Centre would change such conditions for themselves and others.

Once again it is apparent that the positive self-esteem and confidence that has developed in the program is a dominant feature of the student experience. There was awareness of the discrepancies between program philosophy and practice and a strong articulation of individual rights. The problem source was identified as being external to the students and they were not allowing the process to reflect negatively on them.

5.4 Value Dilemmas Related to the Student Role

Several value dilemmas were posed for the students in the study as a result of being in the program. Some were directly related to the inculcation of social work values and the individual weighing these against personal
values. Other dilemmas however were a result of cultural factors that conflicted with the learning situation. The expectation in social work education that the student should be willing and able to disclose personal values, emotions and opinions was contrary to the cultural beliefs and experiences of many of the native and immigrant students. Related to this are differences between the culturally based values and experiences around learning as an activity and the realities of the university institution and program of studies.

For several native students, previous culturally valued models of learning stressed observation and listening for the learner and direct modelling of a teacher in a non-hierarchical relationship. These were incongruent with the program expectations of power differential between teacher and learner, verbal articulations of opinions and ideas and wordy and abstract written presentations.

The immigrant students were also presented with value dilemmas because of culturally based experiences. While it is difficult to generalize because there were several cultural groups represented, common to these students was a pattern of learning that was formal, hierarchical and not conducive to questioning or challenging an instructor. For different reasons therefore, they found the system of
teaching and learning incongruent with past experiences.

The result of the dilemmas was a general sense by these students that their cultural experiences and realities were devalued. This occurred because there was not a forum to discuss the differences nor a recognition on the part of staff of the validity of the students' perspectives and experiences.

5.5 The "Centre" As a Practice Environment

The unique characteristics of this social work program provided opportunities for these students to acquire social work skills that may not usually be developed in an educational setting. The small, closed setting and the forced interaction with people from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds created an awareness of "the other". As the student was re-defining the self, it was done in an environment that taught and then integrated a comparison of the self with others who had different life experiences. This fostered a sense of I'm o.k. Therefore you are o.k. "People were listening to me so in turn I listened to the others there and what they were saying I took to be the truth" and "the opportunities to be mixed with so many other people has taught me to be objective rather than
judgemental".

For many, a survival skill in the Centre was learning to get along with others whom one may not personally like - a useful social work skill: "I learned to get along with people... it's going to be that way on the job... that's the reality. You will run into people you don't like".

Besides the development of group skills, there was the acquisition of a very valuable social work characteristic - an understanding and respect for the differences between people and a movement toward understanding the similarities that unite people:

In a place like W.E.C. where you are exposed to people from such different backgrounds and cultures ... you realize that yes we are different but also we are all the same.

Clearly cross-cultural, social work skills were lived out in this program. The opportunities for cross cultural experiences combined with the development of positive self images fostered an environment where "we can challenge those things that keep us apart in the wider community".

5.6 Relevance of Findings to Other Research

There are consistencies in these findings with other research cited herein. The program impacted significantly
on the personal development of the students. As in Chickering's studies variables that appeared to contribute to this process were small institutional setting with close interaction between students and between staff and students. Consistent with the study by Jones and Finnell, were the ideas that attitudinal change is positively related to the opportunity afforded by the institution to examine moral issues, and that in general, major changes occur in the first two years of university.

There appears to be support for the idea that social work education inculcates a particular value base. To these students this meant a belief and acting on humanistic institutional arrangements, more equal power distribution and assertion of human rights.

As in Schlossberg's research, these adult students are in a process of change and growth. They have problems with the hierarchical structure of the university institution and imposed policies of grading, attendance and financial aid. The result of these practices is a feeling by the student that the adult status is not recognized or valued.

Also consistent with other studies is the idea that value dilemmas are created through value examination and that this process is both stressful and growth producing.
As noted by Trimble and others, in a cross cultural situation value dilemmas can arise for the minority student when previous learning patterns clash with the practices of the institution.

Finally, consistent with several studies, the predominant effects of the educational experience for those who successfully accomplish this challenge are increases in self confidence, self awareness and self esteem.
A full understanding of the experiences of the students in the Social Work program at Winnipeg Education Centre is impossible without a sense of the life histories and phenomena that shaped these individuals. The following student provides this context in a far more insightful way than the researcher has been able to do.

Sometimes I feel sorry that my sisters and their kids back home won't be able to make it. They don't have this chance. I'm really lucky. Once when I was sitting out back of the agency with some clients, I asked them what they saw when they walked down Main Street. Did they just see the buildings and the people that were in trouble, or did they look underneath all that. I pointed to some flowers, I guess they were really weeds, that were growing up in the parking lot. I said to compare those to the flowers at city hall. The flowers at city hall are cared for, watered all the time, sheltered. The flowers in the parking lot came up through the sand. The only water they got was rain. To me the flowers at city hall, the ones cared for are like most people in society. The rest of us grow up in the parking lot. Many of us don't make it. My sisters aren't making it. But somehow I'm one of the sturdy ones, one of those flowers who grew up through the sand. (2nd year student, Native).
APPENDIX A

Letters of Information and Consent

Dear Research Participants:

As part of my Master of Social Work degree program I am doing research on the personal and social effects of going to university on students in the Social Work Program at Winnipeg Education Centre. The objectives of this research are:

1. To document the personal and social impact of the Inner City Social Work program on the lives of selected students.

2. To identify salient issues, patterns, and themes that emerge from the data collection.

3. To draw general conclusions about the findings and to share the results with program staff in order to allow discussion of the implications of the findings for the program.

I am asking participants to commit themselves to a total of from 2-4 hours of time to be spent with me. This time will be spent in one, or possibly two, interviews in which we will explore the ways in which the program has impacted on your lives.

During this research project I will be on leave of absence from my job at Winnipeg Education Centre. Interviews will be held away from W.E.C. at my home or any other mutually agreeable location. An individual's participation will be kept entirely confidential.

The results of this research will be presented in my M.S.W. thesis which will then be on file in the University of Manitoba library available to interested people. Names of participants will not be used in this research and every effort will be made to ensure that no one can be identified in the presentation.

........ continued
It must be mentioned, however, that because W.E.C. is a small setting it could happen that people who are acquainted with the students may make assumptions about the identity of the participants. If, following the interviews, a participant is not comfortable with the inclusion of a particular piece of information, the researcher should be notified thereof. The participant should also know that he/she has the right to withdraw from this research project at any time.

I want to thank you for your interest in this research endeavour.

Sincerely,

Laura Anderson
Researcher
Participation Consent

This is to indicate that I have read the information concerning this research and understand the nature of my involvement in this project. I realize that the results of the research will be included in the researcher's M.S.W. thesis.

I have been assured that my participation will be kept confidential by the researcher and that no names will be used in the presentation of results.

My right to withdraw from this research at anytime without penalty is assured by the researcher.

By signing this form below I give my consent to be interviewed and have this material included in the research project.

Signature of Participant: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________
APPENDIX B

DATA ANALYSIS – SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

I. Contact Summary Forms

Interviewee
Date of Interview
Today's Date
Interviewer

1. What were the main issues or themes that you noticed in this interview?

2. Summarize the information you got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions.
   a) What are the ways in which the program impacts on the personal and social lives of the students?
   b) What program factors can be identified that contributed to these impacts?
   c) What are the ways in which students deal with any changes in their personal and social lives brought about by the program?

3. Anything else that struck you a salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?

4. What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next contact with this person?
Coding System

A. Changes in Self Confidence
   1. Increased self confidence
   2. Fear of failure gone
   3. Internal control (vs. external control)
   4. From isolation to community
   5. Emotional growth
   6. Excitement re future
   7. Increased optimism
   8. Higher expectations for self
   9. 'I have rights'
  10. More assertive
  12. More awareness of social issues
  13. Trust self more
  14. More self control - self discipline
  15. Feel comfortable alone
  16. Fear of future gone
  17. O.K. to be self

B. Self Identity
   1. Ident as a woman
   2. Ident as a native
   3. Ident as an immigrant
4. Ident as a whole person
5. Ident as a man
6. Ident of own and others values
7. Not knowing who am

C. Role Dilemmas
1. Stress in handling all roles
2. Priorization of parent role
3. Diff. family adjust to student role
4. Problem with moving from adult to student
5. Academic difficulties caused stress (English)
6. Previous expectations not met
7. Change in status problems

D. Effect on Significant Relationships
1. Children and spouse have higher educational aspirations
2. Family threatened
3. Student is positive role model in common
4. Separation from friends/relatives
5. Enhanced status in views of S.O.
6. Always been seen as different
7. New priorities
8. Better relationships in spite of difficulties
9. Family changed and developed in response to new situation
E. Sources of Support
1. Centre staff
2. Other students
3. Family and friends
4. Had to learn to use supports
5. Needed to develop new supports

F. Transference of social work skills to personal life
1. Better communication skills
2. More accepting/less judgemental
3. More change oriented
4. 'Learned to hang in there'
5. Now educates rather than fights
6. Insight into own and others' behaviour
7. Allows others to change themselves.

G. Centre as a "practice" environment
1. Gained cross cultural knowledge
2. Developed group skills
3. Awareness of own and other's prejudices
4. Seeing and analyzing own and other's behaviour
5. Changing own behaviours
6. Learned to accept others to what they are
7. Centre offered formal and informal interaction
8. Learned to respect differences
9. Learned that all people are similar
H. Difficulties with W.E.C.

1a. Trust violated between student and staff
1b. Student in dependent role
1c. Financial allowance system demeaning
2. Students treated as 'less than' campus students
3. 'Everything is too serious'
4. Importance of family role minimized
5. Cross cultural insensitivity
5a. Lack of cultural values on part of staff
5b. Lack of sensitivity to previous learning background
5c. Success measured in traditional academic terms
6. Lack of sensitivity to students in A.A.
7. Not high enough academic expectations of students

I. Suggestions for change

1. More equitable, less stigmatizing allowance system
2. Detailed orientation for 1st year students
3. Build in "Fun"
4. Workshops on A.A.
5. More cross cultural value orientation

J. Value issues

1. Stressful examination process
2. Learned that there are many ways of seeing the same thing
3. Incorporated new values/changed values
K. Professional Role (Graduate)
   1. Adopted an educative role
   2. Valued theory behind practice
   3. Stress from challenging system

L. 1st to 2nd year critical transition
INCREASED CONFIDENCE/SELF PERCEPTION

More Confidence
More Control Over Life
From Isolation To Community
Grew Emotionally
Excited About Future
More Optimistic
Higher Expectations For Self
"I Have Rights"
More Assertive
Better In Relationships
More Awareness of Self/Others
Trust Self More
More Self Discipline
Like To Be Alone Now
Fear of Future Gone
O.K. To Be What I Am

IDENTITY

Identity as Woman
Identity as Native
Identity as Immigrant
Identity as Human Being
Identity as Man
Identity of Own/Others Values
"I Know Who I Am Now"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT ROLE</th>
<th>Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress With Other Roles</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritization of Parent Role</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult For Family To Adjust</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Adult&quot; Status Threatened</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress With Academic Role</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Expectations Not Met</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status Changed</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFECT ON SIGNIFICANT OTHERS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.O. Have Higher Educ. Aspir.</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Threatened</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Model For Others</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Old Friends</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Personal Status</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Always Been Different&quot;</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have New Priorities</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Personal Relations</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Developed and Changed Positively</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCES OF SUPPORT</td>
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</tr>
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<td>W.E.C. Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.E.C. Students</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had To Learn To Use Supports</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to Develop New Supports</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Transfer S.W. Skills to Personal Life

|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|

### Centre' as Practice Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gained Cross Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>Developed Group Skills</th>
<th>Awareness of Own/Others Prejudices</th>
<th>See and Analyze Own/Others Behaviour</th>
<th>Opportunity to Change Own Behaviour</th>
<th>Learned To Accept Others</th>
<th>Learned To Respect Differences</th>
<th>Opportunity for Formal and Informal Learning</th>
<th>Learned People Are Similar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>Non-Native</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PROBLEMS WITH PROGRAM**
- Trust Violated by Staff
- Made To Feel Less Than "Adult"
- Financial Allowance System is Bad
- Treated as "Less Than" Campus Student
- Everything Too Serious
- Parent/Family Role Minimized by Staff
- Staff Not Sensitive To Cross Culture
- Lack of Awareness/Sensitivity To Students Previous Learning Model
- Success Measured Through Grades
- Lack of Sensitivity To A.A. - Issues
- Low Acad. Expect. of Students by Staff

**VALUE ISSUES**
- "Stress" Through Examining
- More Awareness of Values/Ideologies
- Need More Cross Cultural Orientation

**PROFESSIONAL ROLE**
- "Educative" Role as Professional
- How Values Theory For Practice
- Hard To Challenge The System

**TRANSITION**
- Things Change For Better in 1st or 2nd ye
Notes

1. Miriam Hutton, "Report on the Accessibility Project:, School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982


5. Refer to Chapter II herein - Review of Related Research, for a discussion of the findings.

6. Refer to Donald Atkinson, George Morton and Derald Sue Wing, Counselling American Minorities, cited in Chapter II herein.


10. Anderson and McKenzie.


14. "Summary of Counselling Tasks". This document notes frequency of counselling contacts with students however, there was no attempt to gather information on either the nature of the presenting problem or the characteristics of students who use this service.


22. Chickering.

24. Jacob.


28. Jones and Fennell.

29. See Peter Madison, Personality Development In College, Reading Mass: Addison Wesley Co., 1969 and Lawrence H. Stewart "Change in Personality Test Scores During College" and Irvin J. Lehman "Changes from Freshman to Senior Years" in The College Student and His Culture, edited by K. Yamamota, 1968.

30. Yamamota.


33. Astin, Astin et al. Appendix A.


40. Schlossberg, p. 77.

41. Schlossberg, p. 80.


45. Schlossberg, ERIC ED 245 181.


47. Hooper.


49. Markus.


53. Gilbert.


55. Keifer, p. 90.

56. Keifer, p. 132.


60. Atkinson, p. 98.


63. Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines.


67. Stewart.


74. Filstead, p. 41.


76. Lianni and Orr, p. 88.

77. Lianni and Orr.

78. Lianni and Orr.
Bibliography


Astin, Helen, "Continuing Education and the Development of Adult Women". Counselling Adults. Edited by Nancy Schlossberg and Alan Entine.


Schedule "B" to the Agreement Between the Province of Manitoba and the University of Manitoba, regarding Winnipeg Education Centre, 1986.


