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Program Evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the
University of Prince Edward Island

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education
in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

September 2000

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to perform a qualitative program evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). This was achieved by gathering past and present students' perceptions of how the diploma has met their needs as adult educators. Participants were selected because they shared certain characteristics relevant to this study. In total, 32 students or graduates of the diploma program were invited to participate in this research. They are primarily adult educators working in a variety of adult education situations. The rationale for this evaluation is program improvement. The program evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education is summative in nature. Multimethod strategies were used in this evaluation. These methods included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document review. Through this research, I have determined the extent to which the Diploma in Adult Education Program is meeting the perceived needs of the students. In the process more questions have come forward. I found about 70% of the participants had very similar needs such as the need to: be respected, gain knowledge, understand holistic learning, and upgrade their skills. Many of these needs were met by the program. This leads me to recommend changes in the program to make it more fully meet all students' needs. From my perspective, a comprehensive needs assessment of adult educators in Prince Edward Island would be necessary for this program to meet the needs of a more varied base of adult educators. A needs assessment would also be useful to determine how prospective students would like to see this program delivered, as well as identifying personal barriers to the current program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of my primary advisor, Dr. Graham Pike. I appreciate the many hours he spent with me in consultation, not to mention the time he spent reading, re-reading, and editing. I chose him because of his professionalism and his integrity and he did not disappoint me. Throughout the process he challenged me to do better and supported me at every step.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Anne-Louise Brookes who served as my secondary advisor. She acted as a tremendous support for me. I appreciate the challenging questions she asked and her way of pulling the answers from within me.

I also called upon other informal advisors along the way. Dr. Martha Gabriel and Dr. Robert Mahen graciously provided guidance and expertise on a moment's notice. Special mention goes to Dr. Vianne Timmons who introduced me to the field of program evaluation and who has provided me with the opportunity to "watch and learn" from her over the past 3 years.

I am thankful to my family, Mom, Dad, Sally, and Colleen, for their interest and support throughout this process. I am also grateful to my friends (a.k.a. "The Loop") and colleagues who encouraged me and supported me. A special thank you goes to my long-time friend, Joanne MacKinley Curran, who has always encouraged me and who truly believed this project would come to a successful conclusion. And to my mentor, Gail Millar, who continues to inspire me.

I would also like to acknowledge the participants in this study. Without their valuable insights I would not have been able to conduct this research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview:

The purpose of this research was to perform a qualitative program evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). This purpose was achieved by gathering past and present students' perceptions of how the Diploma has met their needs as adult educators. The product of this evaluation has a dual purpose: a) to fulfil the thesis criterion of my Master of Education degree, and; b) to produce an evaluative report for the Faculty of Education.

A summary of the conception phase of the Diploma in Adult Education and general information about the program is included. The topic, purpose, significance, potential contribution, and limitations of the study are also discussed. The first chapter provides the rationale for further study in this area. A review of related literature follows. In the design and methodology section, the overall approach and rationale, population selection, data gathering methods, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness, and human subject protection are presented. The results of the program evaluation are discussed and followed by a number of conclusions.

Background:

In 1995, a report entitled *Tough Challenges: Great Rewards - A Strategy for Adult Literacy/Education in Prince Edward Island* was commissioned by the Department of Education's Division of Adult Learning and Literacy. Many issues pertaining to literacy were addressed in this document, including strengths and weaknesses around the area of adult literacy in the province. A key recommendation developed from this document states, "That

the Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, Department of Education immediately commence a strategic planning process which will result in the establishment of a provincial policy framework to ensure delivery of quality adult literacy programs and services” (The Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, 1998, p. 6). In addition to a discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and key recommendations; a survey of existing roles, responsibilities, and organizations involved in adult education in Prince Edward Island was presented in this document. Also, possible partnerships with various community and government agencies with an interest in adult literacy were explored.

In 1996, there were no formal educational programs available to adult educators in Prince Edward Island. Objective 5 in *Tough Challenges: Great Rewards - A Strategy for Adult Literacy/Education in PEI* (Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, 1998) states, “The Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, Department of Education, will work with the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, and the P.E.I. Association for Adult Education to develop a process for adult educator certification that will be adopted by Government and enforced provincially” (p. 31). The purpose of this objective was “to recognize adult education as a distinct profession with specific requirements of the practitioner, to ensure the pursuit of excellence in the application of the profession, and to recognize the contribution of adult literacy/education as a positive and powerful force in economic development” (p. 31). The Diploma Program in Adult Education at the Faculty of Education at UPEI was established in the fall of 1996 to address this purpose. “The Diploma Program in Adult Education is designed for educators working in a variety of adult education situations, including post secondary institutions, community learning centres, and government agencies” (Faculty of Education, n.d., p. 1). The premise of this program is the

recognition that adult education is a unique profession and therefore has specialized requirements for members of the profession. Students in the diploma program are exposed to a comprehensive professional experience that enables them to gain additional specialized training in planning and implementing programs for adult learners. The admission requirements state that, "Normally, students are expected to have a university degree from any discipline; exceptions to this should be directed to the Dean of Education" (p. 1).

According to an informational pamphlet produced by the Faculty of Education (n.d.), the diploma program includes the following ten core courses that were specifically designed for this program: ED 561 The Adult Learner, ED 562 Sociology of Adult Education, ED 563 Program Development and Implementation, ED 564 Issues in Adult Education, ED 565 Educational Technology and the Adult Learner, ED 566 Assessment of Adult Learning, ED 567 Entrepreneurial Education, ED 568 Counseling the Adult Learner, ED 569 Principles of Adult Education, and ED 595 Special Topics in Adult Education (p. 1). In order to graduate, students must complete all courses with an overall average of at least 70%. These courses are accredited by UPEI and count as 3 semester hours each. It is designed as a part-time program and the courses are open to other university students. This diploma program remains the only means by which adult educators are locally educated or trained. Educational institutions such as Holland College-Learning Management Program, Workplace PEI, and the Provincial and Federal Learning Centres offer very limited training options for adult educators. The program is currently in the fourth year of operation, and produced two graduates in the spring of 1999.

Topic:

While taking my Bachelor of Education degree, I took a course in adult education.

I found that I could readily align my personal views about education with the principles and practices of adult education. I truly felt as though I had found my niche in the field of education and became very interested in program evaluation after being involved as a research assistant in several evaluations. In addition, I plan to pursue this type of work professionally upon completion of my Master of Education degree. I felt as though I would have the opportunity to learn more about both program evaluation and adult education through this research.

As with any qualitative research, the researcher can influence the outcome of the research. There are two possible perceived areas of concern for my study. Firstly, I have worked for the Dean of Education, Dr. Vianne Timmons, as a research assistant for 3 years, and felt that this could be a potentially relevant factor in influencing some of the prospective participants for this proposed study. Due to this relationship, I was concerned that participants might think I would share the findings with Dr. Timmons. If they thought this was a possibility, they may have felt uncomfortable disclosing any information that was negative, given that they might encounter her as their instructor. In an effort to eliminate concerns of this nature, I guaranteed each participant confidentiality and anonymity in both the written consent form (see Appendix A) and verbally at the beginning of his/her interview. I feel that this alleviated any concerns. Participants seemed to be comfortable enough to speak freely.

Secondly, the program evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education was initially introduced to me by Dr. Timmons as a potential project. We discussed the evaluation even before I chose to pursue a Master of Education degree at UPEI. Dr. Timmons tried unsuccessfully to obtain funding for an evaluation of this program from the National Literacy

Secretariat in January 1999. When I began to deliberate a choice of topic for my master's thesis in September 2000, I chose to pursue this topic, as I find both program evaluation and adult education interesting.

In April 2000, Dr. Timmons was successful in securing \$6,000 in funding from UPEI to hire someone to conduct an evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at UPEI. The job was advertised through Human Resources at UPEI. I applied and was the successful candidate. The UPEI report has several components that my thesis does not have. These components include a marketing plan for the program and the exploration of the feasibility of setting up a 4-year degree program. Notwithstanding, the thesis and the UPEI report share commonalities; namely the participants, data collection, and findings. I will use this information for my final report in the UPEI evaluation and in the discussion section of my thesis. I am assured by Dr. Timmons that I have unconditional authority to carry out the evaluation in the manner that I deem most appropriate. We will not discuss the evaluation until after my thesis has been successfully defended. Additionally, I believe the validity of the evaluation is increased by performing the program evaluation as a master's thesis. The framework of a thesis provides greater rigor and objectivity than a standard internal evaluation.

After conducting an extensive literature review, I have found that there is limited literature published about program evaluation in adult educator training programs overall, and no published research relating to a diploma program in a university. There are *Standards for Graduate Programs in Adult Education* (n.d.) which deal specifically with adult education at a master and doctorate level. There is an abundance of evaluative information regarding the programs that adult educators teach or facilitate, but inadequate research on

evaluation of the programs which adult educators pursue in order to prepare for a career in teaching adults. I am not the only researcher who has found a gap in adult educator literature. Imel (1999) writes about a similar gap in the literature surrounding the role of adult educators. She states, "Surprisingly, the literature that speaks directly to adult educator role [sic] is scanty because 'considerably more attention [has] been paid in adult education to the learner than to the teacher' " (p. 1). She suggests that a large body of literature exists but that it does not clearly define the role of adult educators. I experienced a similar problem when searching for program evaluations of adult educator training programs.

Due to the lack of literature in this area, I assume this research will not only add to knowledge regarding the Diploma of Adult Education at UPEI, but will also contribute to the much needed research in the area of program evaluation in adult educator training programs in general.

Many questions surfaced after I conducted the preliminary literature review. I found the infrequent mention of training for adult educators curious. In the public school system, Grades 1-12, there are provincial standards that teachers must meet before they are licenced; the same is not true for adult educators in this province. In addition, there does not seem to be any standard by which programs are developed for adult educators at a diploma level. This led me to more questions such as: Are programs developed based on the needs of particular students? How are the courses chosen in adult educator training programs? Are there general needs for every adult educator? How did the developers of the program at UPEI develop the curriculum? I eventually narrowed my general focus to the Diploma in Adult Education program at UPEI. I wanted to know if the program was meeting the needs of the students--Island Adult Educators. My research question is: Does the Diploma in Adult

Education at UPEI meet the perceived needs of the students? By studying this small group of current students and program graduates I would be able to determine if the program was providing sufficient training according to participants' perceived needs. Students in this program came from various adult education work situations and backgrounds. Therefore, I will be able to determine if the program is meeting the needs of a variety of adult educators.

Potential Significance of the Study:

In general, this research will contribute to the area of diploma programs in adult education. It may contribute to knowledge about general needs among adult educators working in a variety of adult education settings. Considering the scarcity of literature in this area, perhaps other institutions with similar programs could consult this research when developing or amending their programs. I found an abundance of literature in the area of adult education and evaluation as it relates to programs which adult educators administer; however, I found a large gap when considering my specific topic. According to the literature, there are no guidelines on how to best educate adult educators in diploma programs.

Taking a more narrow focus, the significance of conducting a program evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education is that the findings may be of benefit to developers of the diploma program. The research may also be of interest to the Division of Adult Learning and Literacy, Department of Education, as it was the catalyst for initiating the diploma program.

In addition, the Faculty of Education may consider the findings when planning future courses within the diploma program. This evaluation will provide the administrators of the program with pertinent information to either change or maintain the program.

Limitations:

There are several limitations of this study. Firstly, this study focuses on the

perceptions of graduates and students currently enrolled in the Diploma in Adult Education at UPEI about their perceived and felt needs as adult educators. Therefore, the findings are based on their perceptions of what they need and not real needs, that is, what research states they need as adult educators.

After conducting the interviews, I realized 3 of the participants completed this program over one year ago, and many of the graduates or near graduates have been involved in this program for over 3 years. Some of the details about courses have probably been forgotten. It is difficult to remember specific instances after a period of time has elapsed. I feel that the specifics are not as pertinent as their general responses of how the program has met their needs. I found participants did not hesitate when asked what they would change and they were able to clearly identify their needs as adult educators.

Another limitation was that I did not ask participants specifically if they felt that their pedagogical background was insufficient for teaching adults. I did not ask this specifically as the issue of inadequate educational preparation surfaced while the interviews were being conducted. Also, it would have been interesting to inquire about their perspectives regarding the two philosophies--pedagogy and andragogy. I think this would have provided valuable insight to this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of the literature review was to examine the current literature in the area of program evaluation of adult educator training programs. A description of how the literature review was conducted, alternative sources I considered, questions that emerged during the literature search, and information I found is discussed. I broadened my search to include literature on a variety of related topics including: andragogy, pedagogy, the role of adult educators, teaching philosophies, the current scope of adult education, and the wide variety of adult learners. This literature provided an overview of the topic of adult education and uncovered some important issues in the field. Additionally, a brief discussion of program evaluation is provided.

I conducted a preliminary review in this area to refine the research problem. I began the search using specific terms found with the aid of Wizard 2.0 in the ERIC Database, and broadened my search to include related terms as my search became more defined.

Initially, I determined the type of search I needed to conduct. I chose the ERIC Database, EBSCOHOST, and *New Horizons in Adult Education* (a searchable, on-line journal). I transformed my research question into search terms used by the ERIC Database. I used the Wizard 2.0 (Thesaurus) to ensure that the language in my research problem related to the terms that ERIC uses. I used the terms adult education, adult educator, and program evaluation to begin my search. This search uncovered a plethora of articles related to program evaluation in adult education. This information was useful; however, I broadened my search to include descriptors such as faculty development, staff development, adult learning, program effectiveness, professional development, adult educator training,

educational trends, teacher education, program improvement, instructional program content, certificate program, educators of adults, adult education practitioners, educational development, skills for adult educators, adult educator training, higher education, program effectiveness, and best practices in adult education. In total, I examined hundreds of abstracts. I selected many abstracts and several full-text articles for a closer examination.

Upon reading the citations, I determined the articles I chose were based exclusively on program evaluation as it relates to programs that adult learners take. There was no research in the area of program evaluation as it relates to courses and training of adult educators in a diploma program. I found a large gap in this area. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) state, "The discovery of the gap, of instances where no information is available, is an exciting indicator that a topic would be good [sic] candidate for qualitative study" (p. 57).

The vast majority of the literature was based on the academic, psychological, and even physiological needs of adult learners. Many articles discussed how adult educators can ensure that adult learners meet learning objectives. Also, included were many strategies, tips, and tools to better teach adult learners. Information regarding strategies to teach adult educators was deficient.

The literature search provided me with an overall interpretation and understanding of the knowledge gathered in the specific areas I outlined above. It did not aid my understanding of the evaluation of a diploma program for adult educators. Further research is needed in this area to ensure that programs offered are meeting students' needs. There is a definite lack of empirical research in this area.

In addition to a traditional literature review, I have contacted a variety of sources for information. Although I found an enormous amount of interesting information about adult

education, I was unsuccessful in finding information related to my specific topic. My quest included the following sources: conference proceedings such as American Educational Research Association (AERA) and Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), internet web sites, and on-line journals. In addition, I telephoned leading Canadian adult educator Dr. Budd Hall at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education/University of Toronto. I met Dr. Arnold Love, a leading Canadian program evaluator at a luncheon and asked him for suggestions. He led me to Dr. Paul Favaro, who works for the Peel Board of Education in Toronto and is very knowledgeable in program evaluation. Dr. Favaro had no additional information. Additionally, I have contacted the International Council for Adult Education. Finally, I subscribed to two adult education listservs and found no information specific to my topic.

I sought internal and external evaluations from a sample of other Canadian universities: Brock University, Lakehead University, Nipissing University, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Ottawa, University of Guelph, University of New Brunswick, Mount Saint Vincent University, and Saint Francis Xavier University. Again, I had no success in tracking down similar evaluations.

Andragogy and Pedagogy:

In conducting the research, some interesting questions surfaced. How is teaching adults different than teaching children? Why did educators who possess a Bachelor of Education degree feel it was necessary to advance their knowledge in adult education? Can the skills they learned in their Bachelor of Education degree be applied to teaching adults? What did they feel they were lacking in their Bachelor of Education training in order to teach adults? Through the literature, and from personal experience, I suggest that the principles

and practices of teaching children and teaching adults are distinct. As MacKeracher (1996) states, "Adults are not mature children nor are children immature adults" (p. 17). It is a widespread notion that there are major differences between teaching adults and teaching children. As traditional classroom educators move to altered teaching practices, this difference may be minimized.

Not everyone agrees that there is a distinct difference between teaching children and teaching adults. "Some writers (Cranton, 1989; Hart, 1983; Houle, 1972) maintain that learning is learning and is the same at every age" (MacKeracher, 1996, p. 17). MacKeracher, however, cites early researchers such as Knowles (1970, 1990) and McKenzie (1977) who state that "adult learning and child learning are both qualitatively and quantitatively different" (p. 17). This difference is defined in the literature by the terms andragogy and pedagogy. It is important to define these terms. Barer-Stein and Draper (1988) state, "Traditionally, pedagogy has referred to the art of teaching children and andragogy to that of teaching adults" (p. 255). They offer a number of distinctions between the two groups, which I have summarized. Traditional pedagogy is generally characterized by dependent learners, external motivation, authoritative classrooms, no curriculum choices or self-diagnosis of learning needs, transmittal techniques and assigned readings, and assessment is conducted primarily by the teacher. Whereas, in an andragogical framework, Barer-Stein and Draper suggest the learner is increasingly self-directed and independent; internally motivated; enjoys an atmosphere characterized by mutual respect, collaboration, consent, and support for the learner. In this framework, diagnosis of learning needs is a collaborative effort; transformational learning uses inquiry projects, independent study, and experimental techniques and self-assessment is used as a method of evaluation.

I assume that not all classrooms, Grade 1 to Grade 12, follow a traditional pedagogical philosophy. I also assume that not every adult education situation is based on andragogical principles and practices. The two philosophies likely overlap in many cases. In fact, later works of Knowles (1980, 1989) suggest that a continuum exists between the two and depending on the situational variables and the learner, either pedagogical or andragogical philosophies are appropriate. An important point according to Barer-Stein and Draper (1988) is "the differences between the two have nothing to do with age, but rather represent different philosophical orientations or approaches to teaching and learning" (p. 255). MacKeracher (1996) recognizes that the "social, emotional, developmental, and situational variables which affect learning processes are different for adults and children" (p. 17). She takes into account the impact of life experience, history, and biological factors on learning. Presumably, these life experiences would be much different for adults than children. In addition, not all adults are the same. This accounts for Pratt's (1988) notion that andragogical methods are not appropriate for all adults. He states, "andragogical practice should acknowledge and accept of its learners both self-directedness and its obverse, dependency; both can be viewed as phenomenological expressions of a specific, context-bound, and limited situation" (p. 161).

Andragogy, as Knowles defines it, is "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (Cullen, 1999, p. 18). "Andragogy is based on the notion that adults are self-directed learners who are unique based upon their personal experiences. Their need to learn results from their desire to face the challenges they encounter throughout life" (Galbo, 1998, p. 13). There has been much debate over the actual origin of this word. Usage can be traced back to 1833 and the Germanic educator Kapp (Cullen).

As Cullen (1999) suggests, historically education was primarily based on the traditional pedagogical model. This model assumes that the teacher is the master--all knowing, and in control of all the learning taking place. In short, the learner was to sit back and take it all in. The students were "empty vessels" waiting to be filled up. Knowles (1973) found that this theory did not fit with his ideas of education nor his experience. Cullen states he looked at some of the great teachers in history such as Socrates, Plato, Jesus, Confucius, Aristotle, and Cicero and realized that they were teachers of adults not children. This had great impact on Knowles. What became apparent to him was that adults reacted differently to their teachers. He, initially went so far as to say that adults also learn differently than do children. These great teachers made assumptions about learning. They taught using methods such as learning by discovery, dialogue, and learning by doing. According to Knowles, "these methods eventually came to be labeled 'pagan' and were therefore forbidden when monastic schools started being organized in the seventh century" (p. 42). The monks used methods to control the development of children. Knowles states, "They were led to be obedient, faithful, and efficient servants of the church" (p. 42). According to Knowles, this was the origin of pedagogy. He defines pedagogy as "the art and science of teaching children" (p. 42).

Knowles (1973) suggests that educators of adults knew that the theory of pedagogy was not working well for them - - they knew that they had to violate some of the pedagogical assumptions and concepts if they were to keep their students. They felt guilty for departing from the pedagogical methods which were failing them. This was somewhat alleviated, according to Knowles, with the formation of the andragogical model.

"Andragogy derived from the stem of the Greek word 'aner,' meaning man (as

distinguished from boy)” (Knowles, 1973, p. 43). Knowles did not create this word; however, he did create the andragogical theory it is popularly associated with. Knowles explains that he was not talking about a clear-cut differentiation between children and adults as learners. Rather, he refers to differentiating between the assumptions about learners. His later work, (1980, 1989), helped to smooth the divide between pedagogy and andragogy. Even in 1973, he believed that the andragogical assumptions applied to children and youth as they mature. He states:

As an individual matures, his or her need and capacity to be self-directed, to utilize his/her experiences in learning is increased. To identify his/her own readiness to learn, and to organize his/her learning around life problems, increases steadily from infancy to pre-adolescence, and then increases rapidly during adolescence. (p. 43)

Knowles’ (1973) early understanding of andragogy was based on at least four main assumptions that are different from traditional pedagogy. He later (1980) expanded these assumptions from four to six. In this discussion, I have chosen to use the original four assumptions as they are currently the most cited in the literature, they are the core of his understanding of andragogy, and the additional assumptions are extensions of the first four and not new findings. Evidence of these four assumptions at work was found in the findings of my study. Comparisons between participants’ learning and the four assumptions are addressed in the discussion section.

Changes in Self-Concept

“As a person grows older and matures his [sic] self-concept moves from one of total dependency to one of increasing self-directedness” (Knowles, 1973, p. 45). This is the point where an individual becomes psychologically an adult. Knowles states that this is a critical period of time for an individual and from this point forward the person has a deep desire to

be perceived by others as being self-directed. He states this phenomena accounts for the feelings of tension and resistance when the person feels as though they are not allowed to be self-directed.

The Role of Experience

“This assumption is based on the theory that as an individual matures he [sic] accumulates an expanding reservoir of experience that causes him to become an increasingly rich resource for learning, and at the same time provides him with a broadening base to which to relate new things” (Knowles, 1973, p. 45). Learners at this stage prefer to be more personally involved using and analyzing their experience. We can also see similar assumptions being adopted in some sectors of the traditional school system in recent years, as some traditional educators move toward a student-centred model. Often children base their identity on family or friends. As we mature, we base our identity more on whom we have become and on our personal experiences. Knowles suggests if an adult learner’s experience is devalued, it is very serious, as this is perceived as a rejection of who he or she is. It is therefore important to allow for this type of active, experiential learning when dealing with adults. It is important to realize that a group of children in Grade 2 is more similar in their experience than a group of students in mid-life. The latter’s life experience could include a multitude of factors that make them very different. Factors such as work experience, divorce, marriage, and child rearing are all a part of their experience.

Readiness to Learn

This assumption is based on the difference in motivation between children and adults. Children are forced to go to school by law in this country, whereas adults choose to go back to school because they need or want to. Knowles (1973) suggests this need is “due to

developmental phases they are approaching in their roles as workers, spouses, parents, organizations members and leaders, leisure time users, and the like” (p. 47). “This assumption also takes into consideration the importance of the timing of learning experiences to coincide with the learners’ developmental tasks” (p. 47). According to Knowles, as an individual matures “his [sic] readiness to learn is decreasingly the product of his biological development and academic pressure and is increasingly the product of the developmental tasks required for the performance of his evolving social roles” (p. 46).

Orientation to Learning

This assumption deals with the difference between application of knowledge between children and adults. Children learn things that they are going to use in the future. “Their learning is subject-based and application is often postponed” (Knowles, 1973, p. 47). Adults come to a training or learning opportunity to fulfill an inadequacy in coping with their current reality. They want to apply tomorrow what they have learned today. Their time perspective is one of immediacy. One could argue that children have the same desire to learn relevant information and do not readily accept that the information they are learning is not relevant to their everyday lives. As educators move toward a student-centred approach in traditional Grade 1-12 classrooms, the importance of making the learning relevant to students is becoming a focus.

Knowles is not without his critics. Most recent is Pratt (1993). Pratt does not dispute Knowles’ (1973, 1980, 1989) andragogical assumptions so much as he does not believe that all adults gently fall into the self-directed and collaborative stream. He believes that under specific circumstances, adults like to and need to be dependent on their teachers. Pratt states that in some situations total self-direction is not possible nor is it desirable. He also states:

There is reason to suspect that adults vary considerably in their desire, capability, and readiness to exert control over these functions (self-directedness). Self-direction will thus be shown to be a situational attribute, an impermanent state of being dependent on the learner's competence, commitment, and confidence at a given moment in time. (p. 161)

Knowles (1989) would suggest that not all students are ready for self-directed learning either. The following quote further explains his position:

You don't just throw people into the strange waters of self-directed learning and hope that they can swim. This is a new experience for many people, and they need some preparation for it. Always before, they have been told by someone else--a teacher or trainer--what they are going to learn, how, and when. (p. 89)

Pratt's (1988) largest criticism of Knowles (1980) states that, "Andragogical presuppositions of self-directedness and collaboration need to be examined in light of three interacting set of variables which they in part define, and by which they are in part defined: situational, learner, and teacher variables" (p. 162). Another point Pratt raises is that as an adult you have control over your learning, but this does not mean that, as an adult, you necessarily want to take that control. The control might be something that you work toward, whereas, Knowles, (1973, 1980, 1989) makes the assumption that all adult desire the control eventually. Finally, Pratt states, balance is the key of an affective teacher-learner relationship. He suggest that "the essence of good teaching embraces both andragogy and pedagogy" (p. 170). Knowles (1989) also believed that both pedagogy and andragogy are appropriate in different circumstances. He states:

I presented the two models (andragogy and pedagogy) as two parallel sets of assumptions about learners and learning that need to be checked out in each situation; in those situations in which the pedagogical assumptions are realistic, pedagogical strategies are appropriate, and vice versa. (p. 80)

Burge (1988) states Knowles addressed the criticisms of his earlier assumptions about the contrasts between pedagogy and andragogy. She states, "Knowles argues that educators now have a choice of model and that they need to be able to recognize the conditions for which each model may be appropriate" (p. 4). Burge also states, "Differences in maturational stages, and in life roles will create more differences in learning needs and styles than Knowles accounted for in his original assumptions" (p. 4). Although she criticizes Knowles, she also states, that his contributions to practitioners and writers in adult education are great and have helped to develop what she believes a more useful term--the learner-centred-view.

In Merriam and Caffarella (1999) current literature on adult learning theories is discussed. They state that:

Just as there is no single theory that explains human learning in general, no single theory of adult learning has emerged to unify the field. Rather, there are a number of theories, models, and frameworks, each of which illuminates some aspect of learning. (p. 286)

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) discuss and critique Knowles' Theory of Adult Learning, Cross's Characteristics of Adult Learners (CAL) model, McClusky's Theory of Margin, and Jarvis's Model of the Learning Process. They state that each model "contributes in their own way to advancing our understanding of adult learners, but . . . none tells us much about the learning process itself" (p. 287). They also claim that further research is needed in testing these models.

Adult Education:

Adult learners represent a large majority of the educational market today. Programs for baby boomers as they enter middle adulthood are growing rapidly. The classrooms that

once held 19 to 24-year-olds are becoming the exception (Linter, 1997). "Since 1970, the number of students over the age of forty has tripled" (Tice, 1997, p.18). The debate over the best ways to instruct adult learners is also a raging sea of opinions and theories. There is no right or wrong answer in this debate. Opinions range from "the hyper-traditional, pedagogical claim that learning only occurs at the feet of the master, to the andragogical purist claim that adults should be completely self-directed and probably already know much of what compromises a college degree" (p. 18).

Which way is best? From my perspective, the answer is both and none. Tice (1997) suggests a balance between the two extremes is the best way to approach adult education. There is a notion that "if it is not broken, do not fix it" that comes from the traditionalists' point of view. The traditionalists have had many positive experiences in traditional classroom settings and feel that this is the proper way to learn. They feel that by studying the classics, history, and such they will build their "mind muscles." The traditionalists feel that "the current system of higher education (non-traditional programs) cannot possibly produce enough skilled, educated, and credentialed workers to meet the projected demands of business and industry" (p. 18). Tice states the view of one disgruntled mental disciplinarian who stated, "Quality programs are only those controlled by traditional academics and that non-traditional education will be the downfall of education as we know it" (p. 19). Clearly, this view-point is based on the notion that "true" learning is only achieved through passive learning. Again, there are positive and negative factors to consider with regard to traditional education. However, Tice claims it has been demonstrated consistently that "the traditional model alone does not fully serve adults" (p. 19).

The traditionalists seem to ignore the large body of research which indicates that

“application and active experimentation are essential to true acquisition of knowledge and that adults are qualitatively different than adolescents in their ability to learn and apply concepts” (Tice, 1997, p. 19). According to Tice, when taken to the full extreme, the non-traditional andragogical model does not fully serve adult learners either. She states, “This model in isolation creates questionable practices that can produce unreasonable expectations. The problem is while self-direction may be acceptable in a personal learning situation, institutions that grant accredited degrees cannot, in good faith, apply credentials to totally unstructured learning without diluting the significance of the degree” (p. 20).

According to Tice (1997), depending on the learner and the subject, varying degrees of both the traditional and non-traditional methods work. A student straight out of high school and a mature business person have very different life experiences. Tice suggests they cannot be treated the same. “A degree program that recognizes and builds on the competencies that adults bring to the classroom rather than treating them like a blank slate will invariably be more successful in meeting their learning needs” (p. 20). I suppose that each adult educator eventually decides on the most appropriate mixture of traditional and non-traditional instruction for themselves.

Rose (1997) suggests adult education has recently become all things to all people--different streams of people from literacy groups, businesses and organizations, and even historians are seeing the merit in continuing education and recognizing the merit in non formal education. This makes the field even more complicated. She suggests that “adult education is struggling with its very self-definition and purpose” (p. 6).

Several themes emerged as upcoming trends in adult education during an international conference on adult education that was held in Hamburg, Germany in July

1997, at which 140 countries were represented. The conference declaration reflects an international trend to abandon the “traditional notion of education as the transmission of a body of knowledge by means of prescribed curriculum and didactic teaching methods and to focus instead on discovering and serving the learners” (UNESCO Institute for Education, 1998, p. 12). The following thematic headings were considered:

Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning; ensuring the universal right to literacy and basic education; promoting the empowerment of women through adult learning; adult learning and the changing world of work; adult learning in relation to the environment, health, and population; adult learning, culture, media, and new information technologies; adult learning for the potential of different groups (e.g. indigenous people, migrant displaced populations, inmates, persons with disabilities); the economics of adult learning; enhancing international cooperation and solidarity; literacy as a focus in the world and its major regions; university-community partnerships; enhancing international co-operation and solidarity; technology in adult education; adult learning and ageing populations; and perhaps most importantly the notion that education should be accessible and available for all persons. (p. 3)

Adult education now is expected to meet the needs of a vast spectrum of learners.

All areas from health, to inmate education, to environmental education have needs for adult education programs. It is an enormous mandate.

The literature suggests that the demand for adult education has broadened as we moved from a simple industrial society to a complex information society (Studd, 1990). Studd suggests that returning to school full-time for an adult is a tremendous commitment, both personally and financially, and that more adults are choosing to further their education through adult education courses (preferably part-time). When we factor in the age of baby boomers, changes in the work force, the options available to people, and increased immigration, we can clearly see why the field of adult education is a booming business. Best

(1992) focused on flexible delivery systems that accommodate cultural diversity among adult learners. He suggests that societal situations such as single parent families, career changes, and job displacement have increased the need for services such as literacy, basic education, and upgrading. He predicts that there will be a further focus on courses for prison inmates and adults with disabilities in the future. Cherem (1990) attributes three factors affecting the paradigm shift in adult education: the exponential growth of information, changing demographics, and the emergence of a philosophy of adult development.

Program Evaluation:

In program evaluation literature (Berk & Rossi, 1999; Chelimsky & Shadish, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Fetterman, Kaftarian, & Wandersman, 1996; Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994; Patton, 1990, 1997; Pawson & Tilly, 1997; Rossi, Freeman, & Lipsey, 1999; Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1991) each author has his or her own definition of program evaluation, all of which are similar. According to Fetterman et al. they differ according to the stakeholders and/or how the findings will be used. For example, "Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvements and self-determination" (p. 3). In Patton's (1997) utilization-focused evaluation the focus is on the notion that evaluations should be useful to stakeholders.

Similarly to other evaluators, Rossi has a theory of evaluation (Shadish et al. , 1991). Interestingly, Rossi does not specifically mention his theory in his recent works (Berk & Rossi, 1999; Rossi et al. , 1999). It would appear, from reading his recent works, that they are built on his earlier theories about evaluation. Realistically, there is a smorgasbord of options when it comes to choosing an evaluation theory (Shadish et al.). Numerous

evaluation theories were developed between 1950-1980. Today, many of the evaluators previously mentioned do not subscribe to one theory exclusively; instead, they pull information from many evaluation theories when conducting an evaluation.

Many evaluators use *Program Evaluation Standards 2nd Edition: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* (1994) as a guide when performing evaluations. This book was produced by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, which includes members from 12 organizations. "The goal was to develop standards to help ensure useful, feasible, ethical, and sound evaluation of educational programs, projects, and materials" (p. xiv). The 30 standards provide "a working philosophy for evaluation. They define the Joint Committee's conception of the principles that should guide and govern program evaluation efforts, and they offer practical suggestions for observing these principles" (p. xviii). The standards are categorized into four sections: utility standards, feasibility standards, propriety standards, and accuracy standards. The utility standards "are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the information needs of intended users" (p. 5). The feasibility standards ensure that an evaluation will be "realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal" (p. 6). The propriety standards ensure that an evaluation will be "conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard to those involved in the evaluation" (p. 6). The accuracy standards ensure that an evaluation "will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the program being evaluated" (p. 6).

In most of the recently published books on program evaluation, one cannot find mention of specific theories; however, after considering several theories of evaluation (Shadish et al., 1991) and comparing them with the 30 Standards of Program Evaluation

(Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994) I can see many of the same topics covered. For example, in Rossi's Theory of Evaluation he discusses the importance of "choosing the best possible design, taking into account practicality and feasibility" (Shadish et al. , p. 377). In *Program Evaluation Standards 2nd Edition: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* there are three "feasibility standards" one of which is "practical procedures" (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation).

Just as adult educators have not fully subscribed to Knowles' Theory of Andragogy, neither have program evaluators subscribed to one theory of evaluation. In Fetterman et al. (1996) the authors describe empowerment evaluation. They state, "This approach has been institutionalized within the American Evaluation Association and is consistent with the spirit of the standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation" (p. 3). Patton (1997) also follows these standards.

Chelimsky and Shadish (1997) do not support the move away from traditional theories of evaluation; however, they admit it is time that a new universally accepted theory of evaluation be developed. They did not, however, present one in their book. Likewise, Shadish et al. (1991) state that theories of evaluation should be used more rigorously. In their book, however, they heavily criticize the theories of well-known evaluators such as: Scriven, Campbell, Weiss, Wholey, Stake, Cronbach, and Rossi.

Conclusions:

The discussion over the most appropriate assumptions to use in the teaching of adults has raised awareness among adult educators regarding learner, teacher, and situational variables that affect adult learning. There are no definitive answers to this debate. Knowles' assumptions have been criticized by Burge (1988), Merriam and Caffarella (1999), and Pratt

(1988); however, none of these authors discount the merit of Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1989) assumptions and many of their theories and models are based on his work.

In the same vein, the impact of the instructors' philosophies of teaching are considered in the debate. This debate is also unresolved. Authors such as Barer-Stein and Draper (1988), MacKeracher (1996), and Tice (1997), have settled somewhere in the middle -stating that a combination of the two philosophies are most appropriate. This is consistent with Burge (1988), Pratt (1988), and to some extent, Knowles (1989), and Merriam and Caffarella (1999).

Over the past few decades adult education has become all things to all people. We see that this debate is important considering the wide and varied roles adult educators play and the number of adult learners involved.

After studying the literature on program evaluation, and until a more comprehensive, universally accepted theory of program evaluation is developed, it would seem acceptable to follow the 30 program evaluation standards (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994). This is what I have done in this evaluation.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Overall Approach and Rationale:

McMillan and Schumacher (1997) provide a brief definition of evaluation research as the determination of the worth of an educational program. They cite three major reasons an evaluation is conducted: planning; improving; and justifying procedures, programs, and/or products. The rationale for my evaluation research is program improvement and therefore summative in nature. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) indicate summative evaluations determine the effectiveness of a program and usually occur when a program is fully developed and is functioning without significant problems.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) state that a summative evaluation often is conducted by an external evaluator who can offer a refreshing outside perspective and a neutral attitude toward the worth of practice. I could not be considered as external to the Faculty of Education where this program is housed because I work for the Dean of Education, but I am external to this particular program.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest a researcher should consider two main factors when formulating a program evaluation. The first is to define the goal of the evaluation and the second is to name the primary audience. They suggest, "Evaluation questions about the significance of program goals or about the quality and effectiveness of program strategies reflect not inquirer autonomy or theoretical predictions, but rather a politicized process of priority setting" (p. 377). The goal of this research was to determine if the diploma program was meeting the perceived needs of the students. Denzin and Lincoln also state "in all evaluation contexts there are multiple, often competing, potential audiences--groups and

individuals who have vested interests in the program being evaluated--called stakeholders in evaluation jargon" (p. 377). In this study, there were several potential audiences to consider. These stakeholders included the students enrolled in the program, the developers of the Diploma in Adult Education, the population of adult educators in the province, and possibly other universities considering implementing a similar type of program. Denzin and Lincoln suggest, "Evaluators must negotiate whose questions will be addressed and whose interests will be served by their work. Like the selection of evaluation questions and audiences, determining the standards against which a program will be judged is a contested task" (p. 377). The primary audience I considered was the committee of developers of the diploma program, should they be interested in the findings. I cannot force my recommendations upon them. Adult education providers at large also may be interested in the findings.

Evaluations are conducted to test the solution to an initial problem. As Patton (1990) states, "The effectiveness of any human intervention is a matter subject to study . . . the conduct of evaluation . . . is to test out the effectiveness of specific solutions and human interventions" (p. 155). Patton suggests that applied research, such as the report commissioned by the Department of Education which called for a process for adult educator certification "seeks to understand societal problems and identify potential solutions. Evaluation research studies the processes and outcomes aimed at attempted solutions" (p. 155).

"When choosing a methodology one must consider that the beliefs of the evaluator help to guide the selection of a specific evaluation approach" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 378). In this research study, I wanted to ask students about their personal and professional

needs as adult educators. It is my opinion that the best way to gather information from participants is by asking them directly in interviews. Marshall and Rossman (1999) state:

One could argue that one cannot understand human actions without understanding the meaning that participants attribute to those actions--their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds: the researcher, therefore, needs to understand the deeper perspectives captured through face-to-face interactions. (p. 57)

I was interested in individuals' experience with the Diploma in Adult Education program. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest "different evaluation methodologies are used depending on the information needs of different audiences" (p. 383). Based on the research question, the preferred primary methodology for this evaluation is in-depth interviews using a standardized open-ended approach with graduates or near graduates of the program. Patton (1990) suggests a standardized open-ended approach is advisable in evaluative research as each participant is asked the same questions. "Asking different questions of different clients may reduce credibility" (p. 286). Marshall and Rossman (1999) state an in-depth interview "is a conversation with purpose" (p. 108). They also suggest that "the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (p. 108). This is the rationale behind using a standardized open-ended approach to in-depth interviews. This method allowed participants to elaborate; however, each participant was asked the same questions. This allowed for ease of comparison between participants (Patton).

When I was searching for a prescribed format of methodologies appropriate for program evaluation, I examined Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) discussion of the importance of choosing methods. They suggest what "importantly distinguishes one evaluation method from another is not methods, but rather whose questions are addressed and which values are

promoted” (p. 382). In addition, they state “A diverse range of alternative approaches to program evaluation framed around qualitative methodologies are acceptable” (p. 382). I quickly found there was no prescribed format to follow. One could argue that common sense plays a key role in scientific inquiry.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) also suggest there “are four major genres of evaluation methodologies” (p. 383). The one I considered was the pragmatism genre that “arose largely in response to the failure of experimental science to provide timely and useful information for program decision making” (p. 383). They suggest that the main feature of this genre is the primary emphasis on producing useful information. In this type of evaluation my goal was to produce information that will be helpful to developers of the program. In addition, “this approach seeks to enhance contextualized program understanding for stakeholders closest to the program and thereby forges direct channels to program improvement” (p. 384). I assumed the program was not perfect. It is my experience that generally all programs have their weaknesses. I also assumed students of the program were likely to be able to give an opinion about how the program has met or not met their needs. This assumption was correct as students provided suggestions for improvements in the program. This information may now be used by developers to modify the program if they choose.

Finally, one must consider, “What is a successful evaluation?” Berk and Rossi (1999) suggest that “an evaluation can be deemed successful when it provides the best information possible on the research question within the given constraints and adds to current knowledge” (p. 5). Berk and Rossi state an opinion that is not widely supported by other evaluation researchers. They suggest, “An evaluation may be successful even if the information provided is ignored, or even misused. Once the findings are presented in a clear

and accessible fashion, the evaluation is over" (p. 5). Therefore, the success of this evaluation, according to Berk and Rossi, is not dependent on whether the developers of the diploma program implement the suggestions put forth in this evaluation.

Population Selection:

McMillan and Schumacher (1997) suggest purposeful sampling is selecting information rich cases for in-depth study. In addition, they state that using this method also increases the utility of information obtained from small samples. Using this method of sampling, participants who were presently enrolled in or who had graduated from the diploma program were invited to participate in the program evaluation.

There were 29 students enrolled in the diploma program in the Faculty of Education. In addition, there were three graduates. All 32 individuals were invited to participate in the program evaluation. By inviting all individuals to participate in the research, the sample is considered a comprehensive sample, that is, "every participant . . . is examined" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 399). Initially, I found no reason to exclude anyone from the evaluation. Comprehensive sampling was employed to insure that the perspectives of all students enrolled in the diploma program were considered. In addition, McMillan and Schumacher deem comprehensive sampling as the "preferred sampling strategy" (p. 399).

This study has two distinct groups. The first group includes all enrolled students with more than two courses left to complete the requirements for the Diploma in Adult Education. I refer to them as enrolled students. The second group comprises individuals who have graduated or who have less than two courses to complete. I refer to this group as graduates/near graduates. These students are considered as key informants as they have completed/nearly completed the diploma program.

Initially, I tried to contact all 32 potential participants by telephone. I was unable to reach some of the participants at this time due to number changes. There was some information on their standing in the program available from the student files. At that time, I determined each student's standing in the 10 course requirements for completion of the Diploma in Adult Education. I discovered there were four students who had only taken one course in the program. I decided to eliminate these people from the study because I felt they could not accurately offer an opinion on how the program as a whole has met their needs. In total, I sent out 28 questionnaires along with a "Statement of Informed Consent" (see Appendix A) and a "Letter of Explanation" (see Appendix B). Participants were asked to complete and return the documentation in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

Participants were selected because they shared certain characteristics relevant to this study. They are all students or graduates of the diploma program. They are primarily adult educators working in a variety of adult education situations. They have personal practice in common and they can reflect on the courses that they have taken in this program. Additional criteria for entry into the research included their availability and willingness to participate. I would have been pleased to have all 28 individuals participate in the research; however, only 14 were able/willing to participate.

Data Gathering Methods:

As suggested by the UPEI Research Ethics Board, I performed a pre-test on the questionnaire (see Appendix C). This helped to determine how long it would take participants to complete it. The pre-test was also useful in clarifying any ambiguous questions. Through this process, I reworded Question #9, "What do you perceive to be your needs as an adult educator?" to "As an adult educator, what do you perceive to be the most

important skills you need to learn in such a program?" The questionnaire took the participant 12 minutes to complete.

Multimethod strategies were used in this evaluation. "Evaluation research necessarily employs a variety of research methods . . . because different methods have different strengths and weaknesses, and because the particular questions being asked should be coupled with the most effective research methods" (Berk & Rossi, 1999, p. 2). These methods included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and document review.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) state "just as there is no one form of qualitative evaluation practice, there is no single philosophical logic of justification universally embraced by qualitative evaluators" (p. 383). Yet, they suggest there is a dominant set of philosophical tenants and stances guiding qualitative evaluation fieldwork. They refer to a philosophical inquiry framework called interpretivist, and suggest one of the main characteristics is that "in the world of human experience, there is only interpretation" (p. 383). It is therefore the job of the evaluator to interpret what participants say. They state that the goal of the interpretivist evaluator should be to understand meaning constructed through openness and personal exchange between evaluator and subject (p. 383). I chose to use in-depth interviews because I believed they would be the most effective means for helping me understand participants' meaning. In addition, my experience as a research assistant for a program evaluator and my educational training (B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed. candidate) have helped me to develop personal integrity and a reservoir of knowledge about program evaluation.

Interviews:

I invited the graduates/near graduates to participate in an interview which would take no longer than 60-minutes. All 9 participants in this category graciously agreed. I scheduled

a time for the interview at a location convenient to them. I conducted the interviews over a 2 week period. Interviews ranged between 30 and 45 minutes. A “standardized open-ended approach” (Patton, 1990, p. 280) was used in the in-depth interviews. Patton suggests one benefit of this type of approach is that the questions are open-ended. He states that all respondents answer the same questions, which increases the comparability of the responses. It also “facilitates organization and analysis of the data” (p. 289). I found this method was extremely efficient. I told participants that the interviews would last approximately 60 minutes.

The purpose of interviewing was to develop an understanding of what students thought, felt, experienced, were concerned about, and expected when they came into and left the program. As Patton (1990) suggests,

The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone’s mind . . . but to access the perspective of the other person being interviewed. (p.278)

There were three main underlying themes in the questions I asked: participants’ needs as students in this program and as adult educators, likes and dislikes about the program, and changes they would make in the program.

I used an interview guide (see Appendix D) to help me stay on task during the interviews. “An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview” (Patton, 1990, p. 283). It also helps to ensure that the same basic information is gathered from each participant. According to Patton, using an interview guide helps “to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material” (p. 283). I was able to probe when needed. Patton suggests

beginning with questions that are easily answered to encourage descriptive talking. I began with, "Initially, how did you find out about the program?" Questions are often interpreted differently by participants (Patton). Therefore, to ensure I was getting the answers to my questions, I asked them in different ways. This insured that if the first question was misinterpreted I could ask the same question in a different way. For example, questions such as "What three things would you change about the program?" and, "If you were in charge, what kind of changes would you make?" both address the issue of how participants would change the program, presumably to make it better suit their needs. If participants answered the first question fully, I did not repeat the question. If they did not answer, I moved onto the next question and a few questions later I asked essentially the same question from a different perspective. This approach worked well for me as I found participants did interpret questions differently.

Through the questions (see Appendix D), I wanted to determine participants' expectations at the outset of the program. This helped me identify further needs. Participants were asked directly what their needs were in Question #6 (see Appendix D). This question elicited responses that related more specifically to their job situations. Whereas in Question #2, which dealt with expectations at program outset, I discovered some needs that would have gone unmentioned in Question #6. For example, one of the greatest needs was to upgrade their skills as instructors. Although this was never specifically stated as one of their needs, it was the very reason many enrolled in the program.

I also wanted to determine what participants liked best and least about the program. This assisted in determining strengths and weaknesses of the program. In addition, I wanted to know which specific topics in adult education were of interest to them. I had this in mind

when thinking about recommending new courses.

In retrospect, I wish I had asked participants about their thoughts on alternative methods of delivery for this program. In addition, after realizing that 7 of 9 participants held Bachelor of Education degrees or equivalent and decided they needed additional/different skills to deal with adult learners, I regret not asking why they felt they needed additional training specific to teaching adults. I suspect this would have presented a strong argument for specific adult educator training. After years of experience, many participants felt they were not reaching their students as well as they could be with their pedagogical training.

Question #21, "As a graduate/near graduate of this program, do you feel that there have been any issues/practices that should have been addressed and were not?" did not produce the type of information I expected. What I anticipated were specific topics in adult education that were not addressed through their course work-- topics such as prior learning assessments or workplace education. What this question gleaned was essentially many responses like the following: "No, no, I don't think so." I did, however, receive the answers I anticipated in Question #21 through other questions. I call it misinterpretation on the part of participants but perhaps a poorly written question would more accurately describe it. Obviously, considering 9 participants misinterpreted the question, there is something wrong with it.

I strongly considered using focus group interviews in the research. I decided against this method of collection due to the nature of the information I was looking for. I wanted to know each participant's personal opinion and experience. I wanted participants to feel free of judgment when they discussed their feelings and opinions. I made efforts to ensure participants felt at ease and carefully tried not to subject their opinions to any judgment

remarks on my part.

Patton (1990) states, "The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer" (p. 279). In all my research, I keep this fact in the forefront of my mind. By nature, I am inquisitive about people. I am interested in their lives. This is one reason I enjoy interviewing people. According to Patton "No less important than skill and technique is a genuine interest in and caring about the perspectives of other people. If what people have to say about their world is generally boring to you, then you will never be a great interviewer" (p. 279).

Questionnaires:

In total, I sent out 28 questionnaires. I received nine completed questionnaires (see Appendix C) from graduates or near graduates and five completed questionnaires from enrolled students. I excluded two of the five responses I received because the respondents had not begun the program yet. In total, I received a return rate of 50%. This rate was low considering I contacted many participants by telephone (see Appendix E) before hand and they agreed to complete and return the questionnaire and the consent form (see Appendix F). This verbal agreement did not guarantee that the questionnaires would be returned. There are a couple of potential reasons for this. The questionnaires were sent out in the summer months. This could have been a factor because people take their vacation during this time. Also, the questionnaire was long (see Appendix C). It was not something that could be completed in 3 or 4 minutes. Participants were required to sit down and reflect about their experience. People may have put it aside waiting for a good time to complete it and ultimately did not get a chance to complete and return it. After a period of time had passed, they may have felt it was too late. I did not send out reminders.

The questionnaire included demographic questions such as: employment status, age, sex, occupational training, previous education, work experience, previous training in adult education, and employment status. Participants were asked their reasons for enrolling in the program, their job interests, their goals at program entry, and their employment status at program entry. In addition, there were questions about the Diploma Program in Adult Education and the extent to which it has met their needs. The demographic questions were used to profile participants. I chose to use the questionnaires to gather this information instead of an interview because the questions are personal. Often people do not like to answer questions of this nature, but they are important to ask because the answers "help the interviewer locate the respondent in relation to other people" (Patton, 1990, p. 292). This demographic information became an important factor in the research. I was able to determine that 7 of the 9 interviewed participants held similar teaching positions in adult education. Without this information I would not have been able to delineate which participants' needs were met more fully by the program.

Document Review:

Because there is scant information published about program evaluation in adult educator programs, I considered both internal and external reviews conducted at other Canadian universities as sources of information. I contacted a sample of Canadian universities where similar types of programs are offered and was unable to obtain any similar evaluation reports.

I asked for permission from instructors of the Diploma in Adult Education Program to analyze their course evaluations. There were 13 courses eligible. The evaluations contain questions about both the instructor and the course. I was specifically interested in the

comments regarding the courses. I obtained a list of instructors and their addresses from the Extension Department at UPEI. I sent a Letter of Explanation (see Appendix G) and Statement of Informed Consent (see Appendix H) to all instructors with the exception of two, because I could not retrieve their addresses. I received permission from 9 of 11 instructors. Data analysis procedures are discussed in the following section. Analyses of these documents are found in the findings. Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe the benefits of using document review:

It is an unobtrusive method . . . specialized analytical approach called content analysis . . . an objective and neutral way of obtaining a qualitative description of the context of various forms of communication It is non-reactive: It can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way. . . . The disadvantages are the information is interpreted by the researcher. (p. 117)

Data Analysis Procedures:

This process began shortly after initial data were collected and continued until the process was complete. After initial interviews were conducted, I transcribed the audio tapes immediately. This was a useful process as I became more familiar with the data after hearing them for the second time. After all the transcripts were completed, I re-read the transcripts. Then I began the process of coding the data. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) suggest “Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories . . . most categories and patterns emerge from the data” (p. 501). I chose to code the transcripts using the inductive process. McMillan and Schumacher describe the process of coding as “a process by which the data are sorted into topic categories” (p. 504). I began coding the transcripts question by question. I found this was manageable in terms of organizing the data. I allowed the codes to emerge as I read through each segment. I did not impose codes before I began

the process. At the end of each question I had between 15 and 50 codes. The goal of performing this operation is to “identify similarities and distinctions between categories to discover patterns” (p. 505). I used this very detailed type of coding to ensure I was correctly portraying the meaning from each participant. I did not feel a more general coding system would be appropriate.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997) suggest “looking for recurring meanings that may become major themes or patterns” (p. 507). From these codes I looked for patterns. Many codes naturally fell together. After amalgamating the codes, there were between two and seven categories. These become my major themes.

During the process of coding and developing themes, I learned the importance of coding. Before I began, I had certain perceptions about what participants said. I wanted to perform detailed coding so I could look at the data with a fresh perspective. I formed opinions after conducting and transcribing the interviews and reading the transcriptions. I wanted to be certain I captured the participants’ perspectives. Sometimes a phrase might stand out in my mind--something one participant said. I did not want to give it more importance than it actually had, but I found this is what happened. Once the codes and categories were developed I found that my thoughts about participants’ comments changed. Categories emerged, some strongly, which I had not considered to be very important. I found this to be a very interesting and enlightening experience.

There are various strategies of coding. I used a strategy suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (1997), of “segmenting the data into units of meaning called topics and grouping the topics into larger clusters to form categories” (p. 509). I wrote a code in the margin of the transcripts to identify each segment. I used a separate piece of paper with two

columns to write the code and a description. This made it easy to identify each segment. After I coded each question, I amalgamated the codes forming new categories. It was during this process that the themes emerged. As a means of ensuring validity in the coding process and theme development I tried to rearrange the codes into different categories. The themes presented in the findings are the themes that fit most naturally together. For each question I found a few codes did not fit into any category. They became “left overs.” McMillan and Schumacher state “these ‘left over’ topics may become important topics or unrelated topics as data collection continues” (p. 511). The “left over” codes were examined and are presented in the findings. I followed the same procedure for coding the questionnaires and course evaluations. There were many fewer data involved and the process was efficient.

Trustworthiness:

Throughout the evaluation research I used the standards outlined in *Program Evaluation Standards 2nd Edition: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs* (1994). All applicable standards are addressed in the design and methodology, data analysis, and/or findings sections of the thesis.

In addition to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994), the audit trail documents the conceptual development of the research. This includes audio tapes, transcripts, coding information, and theme development. This provides an adequate amount of evidence for anyone interested in reconstructing the method I used to reach this study’s conclusions.

I have used several methods to increase the validity of my research. Firstly, I used the data collected from the questionnaires and course evaluations as a means of triangulating the data gathered in the in-depth interviews. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) state that

“triangulation is the cross-validation among data sources and data collection strategies . . . to find regularities in the data, the researcher compares different sources, situations, and methods to see whether the same pattern keeps recurring” (p. 520).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), “Validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world” (p. 404). In order to increase validity, all in-depth interviews were audio taped with participants’ permission. Each tape was then transcribed using participant verbatim language, that is, the tapes were transcribed verbatim. By using mechanically recorded data and participant verbatim language, validity was enhanced. In addition, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher, I used participant review whereby the interview transcript was sent to each participant so that each one had the opportunity to confirm and/or amend his/her responses. The authors suggest this procedure brings accuracy and validity to the study. All transcripts were returned with a signed Transcript Verification Form (see Appendix I). In addition, the process of peer debriefing with other graduate students and professors was used to further enhance the validity of the data and to reduce researcher bias.

Negative cases are reported in the findings. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggest,

Time-honored procedures such as triangulation and negative case analysis and newer procedures such as member checks, peer debriefers, and audits are all utilized by interpretivist evaluators to enhance credibility of their inferences. This work can make no contributions unless it is perceived as credible and trustworthy. (p. 385)

By using the suggested methods of Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Patton (1990), and the Joint Committee on Standards for Education Evaluation (1994) I feel that I have made a significant effort to enhance the validity of the data I collected.

Human Participants Protection:

Prior to the commencement of my research I obtained ethical approval from the Research Ethics Board at UPEI. After initial contact was made with a potential participant, a "Statement of Informed Consent" (see Appendixes A and F) was mailed to him or her. I used two separate "Statement of Informed Consent" forms, one for the enrolled students as they were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix F), and another for the graduates/near graduates as they were asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in an interview (see Appendix A). The "Statement of Informed Consent" explained the purpose of the research and their rights as participants.

As mentioned in the trustworthiness section, I returned the transcripts to participants so that they could review and amend their transcripts. There was no deception involved in this research. This was avoided by conducting interviews with fully informed participants. My findings are as accurate and truthful as possible. Finally, participants maintain their full right to privacy as no names are used in order to protect their identity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Findings from the nine interviews were coded according to each question and across questions. This facilitated both the process of coding and further the process of making sense of the data. The findings are presented in emergent themes. The findings from course evaluations have been included here as well. This aids in comparing similarities and differences between interview comments and course evaluations. The strengths and limitations of each course according to the course evaluations are presented. Additionally, each course was given a rating out of five based on the "Course Related Information" (see Appendix J) section of the evaluations. In the course evaluations, eight questions regarding course-related information are asked. A Likert-type scale was used with "0" meaning Not Applicable and "5" meaning Strongly Agree. I used the mean rating for each question.

Findings From Interviews:

Discovery of the Program

Participants were asked how they initially found out about the diploma program. Seven of the participants indicated they were actively seeking such a learning opportunity for various reasons, both personal and professional. Information about the Diploma in Adult Education came from various sources such as word-of-mouth and through colleagues in the workplace. Six participants felt that the diploma program would be applicable to their work situations. Three mentioned that the program sounded very interesting and they were motivated to upgrade their education. Three participants were actually enrolled in distance learning programs at other institutions at the time they found out about the diploma program offered at UPEI. Two participants spoke of a job advertisement from the Institute of Adult

and Community Education-Holland College that suggested candidates who have taken or are enrolled in the Diploma in Adult Education would be preferred. Holland College is the only community college in Prince Edward Island. One participant told me she has never seen the diploma program mentioned again in a job advertisement.

Expectations at Program Outset

Participants were asked what their expectations were at the outset of the program. This elicited various responses. The responses included expectations they set, both for themselves and for the program. Three participants had no expectations. One theme emerged strongly: Participants were very keen to upgrade their skills. It appears the upgrading was as much for themselves personally in terms of personal growth as it was for upgrading their professional skills. As I mentioned previously, 7 participants were eager to begin a program in adult education. They were anxious to improve their skills, develop professionally, and become more active in their learning. One participant stated, "I would have taken anything related to adult education. I was ready to learn." Four participants I interviewed identified themselves as lifelong learners. They expressed their love and enjoyment of knowledge and school. Six participants indicated they began the program intending on going right through and completing the diploma program. Three said they had no intention of completing the program. They intended to take a course here and there. As the courses unfolded, they decided they would continue on. One participant stated, "I thought--Why stop now?" Another said, "I didn't want to miss out on the next course."

Seven participants were employed in the practice of adult education for several years before they obtained specific adult education training. They felt they were adequately meeting the needs of their students with the skills they had developed over time. Five felt

they did things naturally or by instinct. Two felt they needed more theory behind what they were doing. They needed validation that they were on the right track. As one participant stated, "I was just looking for some course to verify what I was already doing." Five felt the diploma program would provide the necessary skills and knowledge they were missing.

Two participants specifically enrolled in the program to increase their employability. They did not feel these expectations had been met. One participant is employed in adult education on a short-term contract in adult education and the other employed on a contract in an unrelated field. As a point of interest, both these individuals have undergraduate degrees, but not in education. Adult educators working at Holland College a desirable work site, must have a Bachelor of Education degree to qualify to teach adults. This was a source of disappointment to these 2 participants as they thought they would be much more marketable after completing the program. A third participant enrolled for many reasons, one of which was to increase her job security, a goal that was not realized. She stated, "In regards to job security or making me a preferred candidate for a job--not at all. It is not recognized. In regards to helping to prepare me to better deal with adult learners--definitely." Notwithstanding, all 3 participants stated they felt the experience was beneficial. One participant expressed the enjoyment she experienced from the social aspect of the program. She said this was her time to socialize and interact with colleagues and friends.

Were expectations met?

When asked if they felt their expectations had been met by the program, 8 of the participants answered, "Yes." Reasons for this answer included the high level of enjoyment they experienced. The next theme consisted of the applicability of the information and learning to their profession. One graduate stated, "I wouldn't want to do my job without

these courses.” Another stated, “It was relevant information - stuff I truly believe in.” The last theme was the issue of promotion. Five participants, although they were pleased with the learning achieved in the program, were disappointed with the acknowledgment, recognition, and promotion of this program by employers in the field of adult education. This is a very common theme throughout the findings.

Program Administration

The next question participants were asked was, “What is your opinion about how the program was administered?” The large majority of responses dealt with issues of organization within the program. One suggestion was having a specific person in the Faculty of Education available to advise students on upcoming courses, changes, and reminders. One participant said at one time there was such an “advisor.” She appreciated having a contact. She said this disappeared over the years. Additional organizational comments such as the order of courses, amount of structure, difficulties in getting instructors to teach specific courses, cancellation of courses due to low registration, and short notice of changes and cancellations, were stated. One participant expressed her concern over course changes and cancellations, “Not a lot of notice given out whether they are going to have a course or not-- will it be canceled, or how many you need to have a course.” Another participant described the experience of taking night courses. She said, “Most of us are working people and by 9 o’clock you are exhausted.” She felt the course should be offered earlier in the evening if possible.

The other emergent theme included positive comments about the administration of the program. The program’s flexibility and the ability to miss a course and pick it up with few problems were mentioned as benefits.

Profession

Participants were asked, "What is your profession?" Due to confidentiality issues, I have chosen not to identify specific job titles or areas. I can report, however, that 8 of the 9 participants interviewed are presently employed in the area of adult education.

Needs as Adult Educators

Participants were asked what their perceived practical needs were as adult educators. Their responses were categorized into two main themes. The first was the need for information specific to teaching adult learners. One participant stated, "The first need I have is to be able to understand the learner and meet them without intimidating them. Make sure everybody feels comfortable and is recognized for what they bring to the learning situation." Their needs included a general understanding of teaching adults, how to achieve student success, knowledge of adult education principles of learning and teaching, knowledge of learning styles, understanding adult learners and their needs, effective teaching skills, how to overcome barriers to learning, and practical resources applicable to adults. Also, they felt they needed to develop their empathic skills and really understand where the learner was coming from. One graduate stated, "I have to have empathy for the students realizing where they are coming from. It is important I see they have success because failure has been the norm (with her particular clientele)."

The second theme is based on specific information or courses they felt they needed as adult educators. These areas include: assessment, learning difficulties, literacy, promotion, marketing, computer skills, counseling, sociology, psychology, and reflective practice. Many of these areas were covered over the span of the 10 courses. The exceptions are literacy, marketing, and promotion.

The issue of more time and more resources was addressed by one participant within the context of the diploma program. She states, "The very first thing would be time. Time to prepare materials that are as useful to the needs of the learner as possible. I think most of us feel we are doing the best we can with what we have but we are always wanting it to be a bit better."

Topics in Adult Education

The next question evoked responses that were more specific to the techniques and teaching skills they required. The question was, "What topics in adult education do you find the most interesting and beneficial?" Particular issues such as: practical suggestions that are immediately useable in their work place, realistic assessment, and dealing with health and life management issues. The following quotation captures the needs of 4 of the participants, "Practical, hands on, group work techniques--I really like to see innovative things."

Being aware of how adults learn was a strong theme. Five participants indicated the more information they obtained about how to best reach adult learners, and the better prepared they were, the more success their students could achieve. One participant indicated her satisfaction with this aspect of the program, "I guess the things that taught you how to become learner centred rather than content centred."

Again, specific courses were identified as being interesting and beneficial. At the top of the list were strategies to deal with learning disabilities. One participant mentioned that, "Special topics dealing with people with learning difficulties is very important to me as I deal with this in my work. I should have this type of knowledge." Along the same lines, another participant said, "Learning difficulties are a real key thing. Knowing some strategies that can help move people beyond where they are now is important." Entrepreneurial Education was

second as it showed participants the importance of creativity in their own teaching and strategies to encourage it in their students. One participant reflected on the course, "It gave me new ideas on presenting the material especially with adults." Program Development and Implementation, Counseling the Adult Learner, Assessment of Adult Learning, and Educational Technology & the Adult Learner were available courses offered which participants found beneficial and interesting. They had a few ideas about new courses to add to the program; these were Global Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Curriculum Development.

Specific teaching skills and techniques they learned were also mentioned. Many strategies were learned as instructors modeled these techniques. One participant indicated the benefits of modeling, "It gave me new ideas on presenting the materials." Ideas such as group work, innovative thinking, counseling, journaling, practical hands-on work, and active learning were mentioned.

Most Favorable Aspects of the Program

The next question elicited the response, "That is hard to answer" from one participant. I asked, "What did you like best about the program?" Six themes emerged from this question. The strongest was the sense of community they felt from the group. Team work, group work, social aspect of the group, class atmosphere, networking among colleagues, and interacting with others were identified as well-like aspects of the program.

As one participant expressed, "I loved the class atmosphere. It got to be like a group." Practical strategies they learned emerged, as in many categories, as one of the best aspects of the program. Learning how to deliver presentations, for example, was one skill 6 participants developed over the course of the program. The strategies were related to their

lives as adult educators and they were practical. One participant stated, "The different projects we did and presented in class and learning from each other was the best in my opinion." In the same vein, relevant information delivered was another theme. This emerged in more than one instance. One participant stated, "It was particularly meaningful because I had worked with adults and you can really relate a lot of it." The variety of strategies and information learned was also important to participants. The methodologies used by instructors such as differentiated projects, presentations, and group activities in combination with the variety of courses was an important feature to participants. This gave them many opportunities to model the methods used by their instructors in their own classrooms. The flexibility of the program was also mentioned. Nine participants worked and had families at the same time they were completing their program. They appreciated the accommodating nature of the program. They could add or drop a course when circumstances warranted it. Lastly, the instructors were mentioned as the best thing about the program. As one participant stated, "There were a few instructors in the program who reached out to their students. They were extremely enthusiastic about their topics and they were very enthusiastic about working with the group of learners. They made everyone feel valued, important, and successful. Of course this is the key." Another participant stated how she felt her time at university was her time and her freedom. She exclaimed, "I love university and I love learning."

Least Favorable Aspect of the Program

Specific organizational problems ranked as among the least favorite aspects of the program. Participants mentioned the unknown such as the uncertainty if a course would be offered as one of their least favorite aspects. The sequence of courses, overlapping of

material in two courses, and the feeling that one course was being used as a filler without much planning, were other issues mentioned. Two participants mentioned their personal struggle at times balancing home, family, and school. One participant expounded on her frustration with the educational jargon. She said it was difficult to understand at times. The volume of negative comments about the program was substantially less than the positive comments about the program. The program was deemed very useful and relevant to the 7 of the participants. The negative comments were directed to administrative and promotional concerns.

Particularly Good Courses

An outline of the diploma program is included (see Appendix K). I asked participants to identify a course they felt was particularly good and they seemed to carefully consider this question. Counseling the Adult Learner was taught by two instructors. From the comments, I surmised this course was taught using two distinct methodologies: one using a very practical approach and the other a more theoretically based approach. Interestingly, this course came out as a favorite in both cases. Participants who were enrolled in the theoretically-based counseling course made comments such as: applicable, holistic, enjoyable, and beneficial. The participants in the practical counseling course said it was practical and interactive. Unfortunately, I did not receive course evaluations for either counseling course.

Assessment of Adult Learning was rated equally as high. One participant claimed this course was the most useful. Three said it was applicable to their work, enjoyable, but it was a lot of hard work. In the course evaluations it was rated 4.3. This was not the highest of all the ratings. Strengths included the instructor's enthusiasm and knowledge in this area.

Two felt it provided a good overview of the subject and it was a necessary course. Six indicated the class atmosphere was positive and collaborative. The one limitation was the amount of time allowed to complete the course. There was one negative comment about the text book. As with Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities), participants commented most about positive impact of the instructor. In the interviews, participants commented more about the applicability of the information learned to their jobs. This discrepancy could be explained by the “honeymoon period” after a course has been completed, by which I mean the excitement of finishing a course and the feeling of respect and admiration a student gains for an instructor over the period of a course. Apparently, over time, the knowledge learned is what students remembered most.

Entrepreneurial Education seemed to open a new door for people. They stated they learned a lot, enjoyed the method of instruction, loved the interaction in the class, and it unleashed their creativity in the process. There were no course evaluations completed for this course.

Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities) was deemed most useful by one participant. Six said it was applicable; they learned a lot; they learned useful strategies; enjoyed the practical assignments, variety, and teaching methodology used; they found it meaningful; and a lot of hard work. It was rated 4.6 in the course evaluations. The greatest strength mentioned was the information obtained about learning disabilities, and the enthusiasm and knowledge of the instructor. The interaction between colleagues was also a strength of the course mentioned by 2 participants. Other comments were that the course was practical, the information was applicable, and independent study was permitted. Limitations included time, as it was offered in the Spring session, and it was a lot of work.

One participant indicated a more practical application of theory and testing would be beneficial. It was a course four participants identified as being most useful or beneficial in her work. It seems as time went on the information they learned in the course became more relevant and important in their job. Before taking the course students might not have been able to identify learning disabilities as readily. After they completed the course, they were more aware and had strategies to cope with learning disabilities. In the course evaluations the instructor was rated as one of the greatest strengths, whereas in the interviews, participants talked about the importance of the information and strategies gained. As suggested earlier, the elapsed time could account for this discrepancy as at the end of course it is the instructor who leaves the greatest impression. Later, the information imparted, especially if useful in their jobs, became what they remembered most about the course.

Another course mentioned was the Sociology of Adult Education. Five participants stated the instructor's enthusiasm, caring concern, and role modeling were important. In addition, the topics, contrasts in textbooks, and applicable learning also made the course enjoyable. This course was rated 4.4 which was in the mid range of the ratings. In the course evaluations, the collaboration of the class and introduction to critiquing were among the two greatest strengths of this course. The instructor's actions and provision of an atmosphere conducive to learning were others. Feedback, challenging material, effective feedback, teaching methodology, and practical application were other comments. There was strong agreement between the course evaluations and interviews in this case. Limitations were varied. One comment was made regarding each of the following areas: room size, compressed material, lack of relation to the course topic, time limits, and dislike of the text.

Principles of Adult Education was mentioned by one participant as a good foundation

course and she claimed it provided a needed framework. Course evaluations were not available for this course.

Without naming specific courses, 3 participants talked about their general feeling toward courses in the program. They stated they enjoyed the following aspects: the interactive teaching, the group work, the variety, the effective teaching methods used by instructors, as well as their enthusiasm and the fact that most courses were well designed. One participant stated, "I liked all of them."

Disappointing Courses

Several courses listed below were identified by participants as particularly disappointing. There was one course 6 participants identified as their most disappointing. The course was Issues in Adult Education. Comments regarding this course include: not relevant, repetitious, and not focused on issues in adult education. Other comments were directed to the instructor's method of delivery. Approximately 70% of participants commented about this course. They stated it was not structured; not directed well; and instructions were unclear, demotivating, and disappointing. One participant, in spite of the fact that she agreed with other participants' reactions to the course, found the course to be a good learning experience. She stated, "But you know, I learned a lot from it. I didn't like it, but it made me go in there and do it on my own. I learned what self-directed learning was all about." This course received the lowest rating of 3.7 from the course evaluations. This is consistent with the comments received in the interviews. There was no consensus regarding the strengths of this course. One student identified each of the following as strengths: subject matter, extensive research, instructor availability, collaboration, atmosphere, instructor, wide variety, and critical thinking. Three students identified both the

lack of structure and self-directed learning as limitations. Other limitations were negative experience with self-directed learning, no prior background, no continuous learning, more resources needed, and unclear expectations from the instructor. The comments in the interviews seemed to be more directed toward the instructor's teaching methods. I would have expected the course evaluations to be lower considering the negative comments from participants regarding this course. It seems participants were trying to find a positive comment to write and felt freer to speak more negatively about the course in the interviews.

Approximately 3 of the 9 participants indicated that a special studies course, sometimes referred to as "the hodge-podge class," was disappointing. This class was offered as a seminar where students trying to complete required courses for the diploma program and Master of Education students met together every 2 weeks for 1 ½ hours to discuss their progress. It was completely self-directed. Two students found this course very beneficial, while others found it was poorly organized and lacking in structure. No course evaluations were conducted for this course.

Educational Technology and the Adult Learner frustrated one participant as she did not have computer access. She indicated it was a poor learning experience for her. This course rated 3.9 in the course evaluations. Considering it was rated low I was surprised there were not more comments in the interviews about it. Strengths were the flexible, likeable, organized instructor; group work; distance education; use of technology; reasonable workload; and up-to-date material. The largest limitation was access to technology. Other comments were related to students' lack of technology background and computer glitches. Three participants told me that they disliked technology in general. This could account for the low rating.

In the course evaluations, Program Development and Implementation offered in July 1998 received a rating of 4.8. All students indicated the strength was the instructor. Also, 3 mentioned the course was both well organized and they liked the class atmosphere. Limitations included offering the course in the summer session. Two students said it was a lot of material to cover in a short time. They felt this was both a strength and weakness. Comparatively, this course was virtually unmentioned in the interviews. This was interesting because, along with the Adult Learner, it received the highest ratings in the course evaluations. It has been 2 years since it was first delivered, so perhaps time is a factor here.

The Adult Learner course was delivered again in May 2000 by a different instructor. It also received high course evaluations with an overall rating of 4.6. The strengths of this course according to course evaluations follow: 5 of 9 participants said it followed the principles of adult learning, and 3 participants indicated the strength was the instructor. Other comments included: wide variety, meaningful, tools and direction given, and the course was organized and structured. Limitations included the lack of time as it was offered as a 6-week summer course. One comment each was made concerning the door being locked, and the terminology being difficult. Again, with the exception of the last two comments and one comment that stated this course had the most impact professionally for one participant, this course went unmentioned in the interviews. One factor could be that only three interviewed participants were enrolled in the course offered in May. This does not explain fully why this course was rated highly but not mentioned in the interviews.

Interestingly, the Adult Learner was rated highly at 4.8 in the course evaluations. This course was delivered in June 1999. Again, as with Program Development and Implementation, there were virtually no comments in the interviews about this course. The

exception was one comment which stated it was a good foundation course. In the course evaluations, the greatest strength of this course was the instructor's use of appropriate strategies, usefulness of the information, experienced educational freedom, and learning from the instructors' modeling. The sole limitation mentioned was time. I expected more comments about this course because it was highly rated. Perhaps because of the nature of the course, which provided a general overview of adult learners, participants may have found they had some of this knowledge before they began. I am led to assume this because the majority of the strengths in the course evaluations were about the instructor and not about the material. This is consistent with course evaluations from both Assessment of Adult Learning and Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities).

As shown above, there is a substantial amount of agreement between the interview comments and written course evaluations. Interestingly, there are some contradictions as well. I have surmised why these contradictions may have occurred.

Three Changes Participants Would Make

Participants were asked what three things they would change about the program. The largest response dealt with recognition and promotion of the program. Seven participants were very pleased with the learning that occurred, but felt frustrated with the lack of promotion and recognition the program receives. All 9 participants did not think it was valued by employers in the area of adult education. Three said it was beneficial for them personally, but they did not feel it made them preferred candidates for adult education jobs.

Another change 8 participants would make is to either add or delete particular courses. Subjects they wanted to see addressed and/or additional courses added were: ESL, Teaching Literacy, Workplace Education, Prior Learning Assessment, and Needs

Assessment. In addition, one participant wanted to be able to choose from electives offered in other programs.

Additional changes were suggested in the area of sequencing and content of the courses. Two courses 4 participants thought could be combined were the Adult Learner and Principles in Adult Education. They found the information was repetitious. Three participants suggested prior learning credits for other courses they took through work (e.g., Life Skills Coaching). Three suggested changes in the sequence and initiating prerequisites for some courses. For example, some stated the Adult Learner should be a prerequisite for many courses.

Program's Greatest Challenge

Participants were asked what they saw as the program's greatest challenge. Eight participants stated that promotion and recognition of the program was the greatest challenge. Five stated comments similar to the following quotation, "I would say the publicity-- in order for it to survive." They said adult educators need specific training to best meet the needs of their students. In addition, they stated such qualifications should be mandatory to teach adults. Many worried about the program becoming extinct because it is not recognized among employers. One participant suggested a practicum option: "There should be opportunities for people who have completed the program to work in some area."

Issues and Practices

Participants had only a few comments on the question, "Were there any practices or issues which should have been addressed and were not? These included the suggestion to offer Educational Technology and the Adult Learner in the lab, and the focus should always be on adult learners and issues.

Benefits and Drawbacks to a Part-time Program

All participants said they were satisfied with the program on a part-time basis. One participant said it gave her a unique perspective as she could return to work and apply what she learned. This way she could observe the difference right away. Eight participants commented that part-time was the only way they could do it. This was due to family, financial, and work commitments. All nine said there were no drawbacks to taking the program on a part-time basis--except for summer school and the length of time it takes to complete the program.

Registration

All participants, with one exception, stated they had little or no problem registering. On one occasion, there was an increase in fees after the course began. Also, late fees were added to the students' bills on occasion as courses did not always follow the regular university schedule. These charges were removed. One participant stated she had many problems with registration.

What would you tell a colleague?

I asked participants what they would tell a colleague about this program. All 9 participants said they would highly recommend it and encourage a colleague to take the program. They would tell them the courses were excellent and professors were "top notch." Other comments included that the program is a must for adult educators, the courses are excellent, and they enjoyed the experience. One participant said she would advise a colleague to take it only if he/she had a Bachelor of Education degree first as she finds it is difficult to find work in the area without it.

Changes & Important Things to Continue

In response to the questions, "If you were in charge what would you change?" and "What is the most important thing the developers of this program should keep doing?", participants returned to the issue of promotion. All 9 participants said the whole area of adult education must be promoted as a distinct field. One stated, "People (employers) are not well aware of the program here." In addition, 3 participants said they should keep finding qualified, enthusiastic, motivated instructors and also keep the flexibility of the program. One participant said that candidates should be chosen from various fields. Another suggested telling people in the beginning that they need a Bachelor of Education to work in the field.

Courses That Had the Most Professional Impact

I asked what course had the most impact on participants professionally. One participant each said Assessment of Adult Learning, Entrepreneurial Education, Program Development and Implementation, and Counseling the Adult Learner, Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities), Educational Technology and the Adult Learner, and Sociology of Adult Education had the most impact on them. One participant said it was difficult to say which had the most impact.

Additional Comments

The final question I asked was "Any additional comments?" Over 60% of the comments from this question were positive. Among the comments were: wonderful courses, others should take them, very pleased, fun, enjoyed learning, enjoyed social aspect, very helpful faculty, great way to update credentials, and honored to do it. One participant said, "I have always said I did it for myself and my students." Other comments included organizational issues such as: rearrange courses, add courses (for example ESL), provide

literacy training, and provide additional training as the need arises. The issue of promotion came out here as well. All 9 participants suggested advertising, promoting, and marketing the program.

Common Themes:

Learning About Adult Learners

There were several common themes throughout the findings. One of the most striking to me was the enjoyment most participants experienced in learning about adult learners. I found many participants were hungry for knowledge to enable them to better teach their students. The concern these participants had for their students was apparent. They wanted practical, useful information they could implement in their classrooms. Participants greatly appreciated courses that offered skills in counseling and in the holistic examination of the adult learner. Assessment in Adult Learning and Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities) was at the forefront as useful aspects of the program. Many of the participants indicated they wished they had taken the course years ago as the things they have learned are useful in working with adult learners. There was a sense of respect for their students. They were eager to obtain the skills and knowledge which would help them provide a successful learning situation for their students.

Lifelong Learning

The next common theme, 4 participants shared, was the commitment to lifelong learning. This began with their own commitment to personal growth and professional development. This was shown by the many comments about learning all they could about adult learners. Again, this included the quest for learning holistically about adult learners.

Satisfaction With Level of Instruction

Another theme was the satisfaction with the level of instruction participants received. Specifically, they were impressed with the variety of instruction they received. Each instructor had his or her personal teaching style and methodologies, and students were able to observe differentiated instruction. This modeling by instructors was instrumental in obtaining new teaching methodologies they could try in their own classrooms. Also, through their variety, the courses covered a wide scope of information about teaching adult learners. All participants said they would recommend this program to colleagues in adult education. Many indicated others could benefit from taking such a program. They felt strongly that without specific training in adult education it is difficult to meet the needs of the students.

Marketing and Promotion

Finally, all participants were concerned with the marketing and promotion of the program. They felt the program needs specific attention in these areas in order for it to survive.

Findings From Non-Interviewed Participants' Questionnaires:

In total, five questionnaires were returned from enrolled students. Two of these were discounted because the students were just beginning the program and have not taken any courses. Thus the results are thus based on three questionnaires. The average age of participants was between 40 and 50-years-old. Two students have taken four courses and the other three courses. All are employed in the area of adult education. Their goals at program entry were to learn more about teaching adults, personal growth, professional development, and to refine their teaching skills. The skills and knowledge they identified as most important to learn in such a program included knowledge regarding: the uniqueness of adult learners, how to assess students at program entry, and how to recognize learning disabilities

and to know what supports are in place to help these individuals. All 3 participants said that so far their needs have been met by the program.

The topics most interesting to them included assessment, learning disabilities, learning styles, program planning and implementation, needs assessment, counseling, issues in adult education, and sociology of adult education. The least useful courses so far were Educational Technology and the Adult Learner and Issues in Adult Education. The most useful courses were Assessment of Adult Learning and Special Topics in Adult Education (Learning Disabilities). One participant stated that all courses have been useful in her job. Again, many of the issues are the same for these students as they were for the interviewed participants. Interestingly, this group had no changes to recommend. They also have experienced no problems with registering for courses. They did have some advice for the developers of the program. They suggested employers do not recognize the program and Holland College does believe in the merit of this program. This is significant as Holland College is the largest employer of adult educators in Prince Edward Island. One suggested that Holland College was not taking any steps forward in recognizing the program, and she said this needs to be addressed.

Findings From Interviewed Participants' Questionnaires:

Five of the 9 participants completed the questionnaire. The other 4 completed the demographic section and used the other questions as a pre-interview guide to get them thinking about the program. Three of the participants completed the program over one year ago, so the questionnaire served as a reminder about the courses. Participants ranged in age from 30 - 60, with an average age between 40 - 50. Their educations varied: 7 of the 9 interviewed have a Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent, and all participants had

completed the program except for 2 who had one course each to complete. When asked the question, "Have your needs as an adult educator been met by this program?", the five who responded all said, "Yes."

I coded the questionnaires by question and will not report the results in detail because they are identical to the findings from the interviews. The reason the results are the same is, perhaps, because some participants completed the questionnaires either immediately before their interview, during the interview, or not at all. Many participants told me they looked at the questionnaire in advance but did not complete it. It seems that they used it more as an interview guide than a questionnaire.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

From my reading of the literature on andragogical assumptions (Barer-Stein & Draper, 1988; Burge, 1988; Cullen, 1999; Galbo, 1998; Knowles, 1973, 1980, 1989; MacKeracher, 1996; Pratt, 1988, 1993; Rose, 1997; Tice, 1997), I realized that assumptions about adult learning were represented throughout the findings. The participants in this study are adult learners as well as adult educators. Throughout the courses, they were exposed to andragogical principles and practices. They were both learning these principles as they relate to their students and at the same time they were experiencing them through instruction as students. This may have been their first experience in a classroom being taught using an andragogical approach. This is an assumption I base on the fact that these methods had such an impact on the participants (Knowles, 1989). Personally, through my Bachelor of Arts degree (Canadian Studies), I was taught exclusively by traditional pedagogical methods (Barer-Stein & Draper; Cullen; Tice). Professors dictated and I memorized. I was used to it and did not realize there was another method of teaching. Yet, my recent Bachelor of Education training was quite frankly a shock to my system. It was so different to what I experienced as a Canadian Studies major. It was based on what Knowles would call andragogical assumptions. The experience was so active and inspiring. Professors respected their students. It was a real leap from what I was used to--and a delight. I remember the feeling of academic freedom. I loved to go to class and I felt I could flourish in the environment. This feeling of excitement and freedom is consistent with the feelings Knowles (1989) describes in his book *The Making of An Adult Educator*. Based on the interviews with participants, it seems that they felt the same way. The use of andragogical

practices and principles had a great impact on them. There is evidence to support this statement throughout the findings. They found that their life experiences and histories were important. MacKeracher also discusses the importance of experience. The learning participants experienced was relevant to their lives and their work. They were recognized for already knowing something and not treated as though they were blank slates (Tice). They experienced many aspects of andragogy as outlined by Barer-Stein and Draper and Knowles. The needs of participants as they reported them in the study are presented below.

Need to Gain Knowledge

The greatest need the majority of students had was to gain knowledge and information about adult learners. Most of the participants in this study had been trained as teachers which served them well for a time. As they needed more information on adult learners they sought it. This follows Knowles' (1980) Readiness to Learn Assumption. This assumption is based on the motivations of adult learners. Participants needed more information about adult learning so they could more effectively perform their jobs. They were not forced to enrol in the program, rather, they enrolled because they discovered they really needed this information. This is also consistent with the views of Barer-Stein and Draper (1988) and MacKeracher (1996) that adult and child learning are different.

Need to Understand Holistic Learning

Participants wanted to look holistically at the adult learner, that is, they had a need to know what made the person who he/she is today--his/her experiences and learning barriers. They realized that a person is the sum total of his/her life experiences. I have determined through the study that this need was largely met. Most participants were extremely satisfied with the knowledge imparted during the program. Due to the variety of

courses and instructors, students had the opportunity to consider all aspects of adult learning. Many indicated that to learn about teaching adults was not enough. They needed to develop empathetic, counseling, and assessment skills. They needed to be able to identify learning difficulties. Also, they needed general knowledge of the principles and practices of adult learning. It was the holistic approach to adult education they needed and many felt they gained in the end. Notwithstanding, there were areas in which they felt they needed more information such as the areas of literacy training and ESL. Four participants felt courses need to be offered specifically in these two areas.

Need for Employability

Two participants' needs were different from the others. These individuals contributed most of the "left over" comments (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 511). This leads me to surmise that perhaps the program is geared toward the adult educator working in a teaching context and not to the adult educator who works in adult education situations that do not directly involve teaching. According to Best (1992), Cherem (1990), and Rose (1997), the field of adult education is large and varied. These 2 participants needed to find work in the area of adult education. They thought the program would make them more marketable in this field. What they discovered in the process was that most teaching adult educators need to have a Bachelor of Education degree to obtain work with the largest organization which hires adult educators--Holland College. This was a disappointing discovery for these 2 participants as they felt this institution would be a prospective employer.

Need to Experience a Variety of Teaching Methods

Many participants stated how much they enjoyed the variety of teaching methods they

experienced throughout the program. These techniques included presentations, group work, discussions, and discovery learning. This demonstrates Knowles' (1980) Role of Experience Assumption and his principles of adult learning (1989). They were able to use their accumulated knowledge and experience as a resource. They liked to be personally involved in their learning. Many adult learners do not appreciate the transmissal type of teaching-- better known as "chalk and talk" (Barer-Stein & Draper, 1998; Cullen, 1999; Tice, 1997).

Need to Upgrade Their Skills

Another need many participants had was the need to upgrade their skills. Many had been working in the field for years but had no formal training in adult education. Seven of the 9 participants who participated in interviews have a Bachelor of Education degree or equivalent. They were doing a fair job with the knowledge and skills they had but felt they could do more for their students with specific training in adult education. They also felt the need to validate what they were doing. They wanted to know if they were "on the right track." Of the 7 participants, all were satisfied this need has been met. Many talked about the practical skills they learned during the program. They were able to use many skills in their place of employment. Through their instructors' teaching methodologies they were able to experience the techniques in practice. Many suggested this was extremely beneficial to their teaching. Again, we find evidence of Knowles' (1973, 1980, 1989) discussion on the importance of learning relevant, useful information.

Need to Feel Like a Part of a Larger Group

Another need expressed was the need to feel like part of a larger group. Some felt isolated as adult educators and the benefit of a large group of people working in similar areas was reassuring. This need was met for many by the interaction in class and through group

projects and presentations.

Need to Have Their Program Recognized

The need to have their program recognized was not met. All 9 participants were concerned that the program was not well recognized and respected. This was the largest area of concern and complaint among participants. All participants said the program needs to be marketed and promoted more among employers. There was also concern regarding the future of the program. Participants felt that if the program was not recognized among such organizations such as the Institute for Adult and Community Education at Holland College which employs approximately 70 full-time and part-time adult educators, other adult educators will not have the incentive to take the program and it might become extinct. Most said the program was so applicable to their work that all individuals who work with adults could benefit from this program. The need to feel that what they did was important and beneficial was not met externally. Internally, participants felt they had increased their knowledge and skills, but employers in the field did not recognize the merit of the program.

Need to Be Respected as Adult Learners

In adult education, respect for the learner is at the forefront. Participants in the program had the need to be respected as adult learners. This is consistent with the writings of many adult educators (Burge, 1988; Cullen, 1999; Knowles, 1973, 1980, 1989; MacKeracher, 1996; Pratt, 1988, 1993; Tice, 1997). Indeed, they expected to have instructors follow good principles and practices of adult education. Otherwise, the validity of the program would be decreased. They needed instructors who "walked the talk." This need was largely met as they found the instructors were, for the most part, respectful, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable in their subject area. Each instructor brought a new

teaching methodology to the classroom and participants appreciated the variation. They said they learned a lot from the different teaching styles. We see here Knowles' (1980) Changes in Self- Concept Assumption. This is based on the assumption that as we get older our self-concept changes from one of dependency to more self-direction in our learning. Adults generally do not like to be told exactly what to do and when. Although according to Knowles (1989), in the beginning, there needs to be a gradual introduction to self-direction. This is probably because as children and young adults we are used to an authority figure telling us what to do and how. For the most part, participants felt the principles of adult learning were followed. In one particular course, most participants commented negatively on the instructor's teaching methodology. Interestingly, 2 participants, even though they felt they were somewhat deserted in this particular course, still found this to be a good learning lesson. They indicated that it taught them what self-directed learning was and that they might approach it differently with their own students. I would surmise, from the interviews, that in this particular course they learned self-direction by being thrown into it with little direction or explanation. This created feelings of anxiety and tension. Knowles discusses the repercussions of self-directed learning without a proper introduction.

Need to Learn Relevant and Applicable Information:

Knowles' (1980) Orientation to Learning is based on application of knowledge. Participants did not want to learn something they could use in 2 years time--they wanted to use it the next day. Participants also had the need to feel as though they were getting their money's worth. They did not want to go to class to learn inappropriate or irrelevant information. This need is also evident in Merriam and Caffarella's (1999) discussion on adult learning theories. This need was fulfilled in most cases with the exception of two

courses most students felt were repetitive. Participants were there to learn. They sacrifice personal time, finances, and time away from their families to take these courses. They want to make certain that what they are learning is beneficial.

Need to Learn a Variety of Practical Resources:

The need to learn a variety of skills, tools, and practical resources was great. I discuss this apart from the need to learn about holistic adult education in general. Five participants wanted to be able to walk away with a tool kit of sorts: ideas they could try in their own classrooms, and strategies to increase participation and motivation. They learned about learning styles which helped them reach more of their students. They learned the importance of variety. They learned the impact of different teaching methods on themselves and translated this to their students. They learned about active experiential learning first-hand. This was a new experience for most. They were introduced to many teaching strategies they had never tried, such as journal writing and reflection. It appears that this need to learn a variety of practical resources was met for many participants.

Overall Satisfaction:

Many participants are working in the same or similar jobs they had when they began the program. Most participants did not receive tangible benefits from taking this program, that is to say they did not receive additional job security, promotions, or pay increases as a result. In spite of this, participants were very satisfied with the program and the benefits they received in the area of professional and personal growth. I found this significant. This can be attributed in part, perhaps, to their expectations at the outset of the program. I would not have been surprised if participants expressed displeasure with the program because it did not lead to better jobs and higher wages. There were only 2 participants who expressed that their

main reason for enrolling in the program was to increase their employability and to obtain a job in adult education. Seven were working in the field already; therefore, their expectations were mostly to upgrade their skills and knowledge, and the program fulfilled their expectations in this regard.

Suggestions for Improvement:

Although participants indicated the program largely met their needs as adult educators, they did have some suggestions which were offered in a very constructive, specific manner. The suggestions were offered as ways to improve a program which they felt is very applicable to adult educators. The suggestions fell mostly into two categories: general organizational suggestions about the administration of the program and specific curriculum changes, and the area of promotion and marketing of the program. Firstly, I will discuss the administration and curriculum changes. The addition of an advisor in the Faculty of Education to whom they can direct any questions or concerns was one suggestion. This would be a specific contact for information regarding their status, upcoming courses, changes and cancellations. There is such a person in the Faculty called the Coordinator of Diploma and Graduate Studies. This person has recently taken on the position and may not have identified himself to all students in the program. Also, 3 participants completed the program before he began this position. There was concern over the availability of instructors at times. Also, the fear of cancellation due to low enrollments was stressful at times.

Specific curriculum changes were recommended. Some suggested The Adult Learner and Principles of Adult Education could be combined. Many suggested adding a few courses to the program, including literacy training, ESL, and global education.

Throughout the findings, participants indicate their belief that specialized skills and

knowledge are required to teach adults and that the andragogical principles and practices they experienced in this program also work well with their adult students. Many researchers, (Barer-Stein & Draper, 1988; Burge, 1988; Cullen, 1999; Knowles, 1973, 1980, 1989; MacKeracher, 1996; Pratt, 1988, 1993; Tice, 1997) would agree that variations of these principles and assumptions indeed lead to increased adult learning.

CONCLUSIONS

This leads me to the importance of program evaluation. This program was created due to the need to provide educational training for adult educators. This need was discovered through the report *Tough Challenges: Great Rewards - A Strategy for Adult Literacy/Education in Prince Edward Island*. Once a solution was created to deal with this need--namely the Diploma in Adult Education--all concerned hoped that the original problem was solved. If there was no evaluation conducted one would be left simply hoping the diploma program is doing what it was designed to do. My research illustrates that this program is largely doing what it was designed to do--educate adult educators. These are the participants in the program who actually teach adults in classrooms. Through this research I determined that the "non-teaching adult educators'" needs are not as fully met as the "teaching adult educators." Historically, the majority of candidates in this program have been from the "teaching adult educator" stream. This leads me to wonder whether the program is appealing or relevant to the broader spectrum of adult educators.

As numbers steadily decrease in this program, it is clear to me that in order for this program to survive it needs to reach a larger audience. This is the benefit of evaluation. Although this research shows that this is a program which participants feel is valuable and worthwhile, it will not survive unless it is changed. If the program was to be discontinued,

the fact that graduates and current students believed it was an effective program becomes a source of frustration. Positive comments are not enough to sustain this program. Through evaluation, I have found some key information to help sustain this program should the developers choose to use it.

Summative evaluations, according to Patton (1990), “serve the purpose of rendering an overall judgement about the effectiveness of a program, policy, or product for the purpose of saying that the idea itself is or is not effective and, therefore, has the potential of being generalizable to other situations” (p. 155). The research shows that the diploma program is effective in teaching adult educators about adult learners. Therefore, adult educators teaching adults can benefit from such a program and the idea of specialized training for adult educators is clearly a good one. Participants, particularly those teaching adults, found the learning experienced in the program valuable. Those not presently engaged in teaching adults found it less useful. I recommend changes to the program to increase the likelihood that this program will meet the needs of a wider variety of adult educators. The changes I recommend include performing a comprehensive needs assessment of all adult educators in Prince Edward Island, and combining, eliminating, and/or adding courses to the program.

Most participants in this study found that the andragogical philosophy is appropriate for teaching adult learners. That is not to say that it was a conscious decision to break away from the philosophy they learned earlier, but they had a sense that their students needed a different approach. Through experience, many participants discovered the andragogical philosophy through trial and error. After taking specific training in adult education, they discovered the assumptions of adult education were both beneficial to them personally in terms of how they learned, as well as, beneficial for their students. This suggests the merit

in specific training for adult educators.

Through this research, I have determined the extent to which the Diploma in Adult Education Program is meeting the perceived needs of the students. In the process more questions have come forward. I found about 70% of the participants had very similar needs. It is not surprising, as 4 of the 9 participants are employed by the same employer doing similar jobs. Two others work in the same organization and their needs were similar to the others but specific to their jobs. The other 2 participants are individuals who do not have a Bachelor of Education degree and who are having difficulties finding employment in the field. When I look at the whole picture, I see the needs of the 70% were more fully met by the program. This leads me to consider changes in the program to make it more fully meet the needs of all students. The enrollment has decreased and is dangerously low, without positive action, I fear this program will soon cease to exist. In the spring of 2000, Program Development and Implementation was nearly canceled due to low enrollment. This will be the same case in the fall 2000 session. Does the program need expansion in order to reach the needs of the larger population who deal with adult educators? This questions is connected with the area of promotion and marketing. The program has been running since 1997. Is it possible that the program was so poorly promoted that potential participants working in the field of adult education who would benefit from this program have not heard about it? The alternative is the program is not appealing to them. Adult education is a wide field. It covers the span of human resource departments in corporations, government agencies, and voluntary organizations. It would seem that the program has not been well promoted. There are potentially hundreds of people who could benefit from this education. Why are they not enrolled?

From my perspective, what would be necessary for this program to meet the needs of a more varied base of adult educators is perhaps a comprehensive needs assessment of all adult educators in Prince Edward Island. It would also be useful to determine how people would like to see this program delivered. It could also identify personal barriers to the current program.

In conclusion, this research has provided answers to my original research question: Does the Diploma in Adult Education at UPEI meet the perceived needs of the students? I have determined the degree to which the program is meeting the needs of the students. In the process, many more questions have been raised--larger questions that cannot be addressed through this research. Additional research should be conducted in the area of adult educator training and certification, as well as evaluations of adult educator training.

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Appendix A
Statement of Informed Consent (Questionnaire & Interview)

I, _____, agree to participate in this program evaluation on The Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island that is being conducted by Cindy Wood, a Master of Education student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island. I understand that the information that she collects will be used for the purpose of her Master's thesis and also as a part of a program evaluation she is conducting for the Faculty of Education.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to ask students of the Adult Education Diploma if the program has met their needs as adult educators.

I understand that the study involves answering a questionnaire (15 minutes) and an interview that lasts approximately 60 minutes, which will be audio taped.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the study or to leave, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study, I understand this will have no effect on my relationship with instructors of this program, the Faculty of Education, or with my final standing in the Diploma in Adult Education.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential, and that the names of all the people in the study will be kept confidential. I understand that Cindy Wood is the only person with access to the data.

I understand that I may contact the researcher, Cindy Wood at 566-0962 or her research supervisor, Dr. Graham Pike, at 628-4304 at any time to discuss this research.

I understand that I will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, but that my participation may influence the direction of this program in the future. The researcher has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do. I understand that I may keep a copy of this form.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Today's Date

Your Signature

_____ I would like to be informed of the results of the program evaluation.

Appendix B

Letter of Explanation

June 13, 2000

Dear Student:

I am performing a Program Evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island as a part of my thesis requirements for my Masters in Education degree and as a report for the Faculty of Education. I understand you have taken courses from this program.

I am looking for your opinions, attitudes, and ideas about the program as you experienced it. I am inviting you to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire regarding the program. All information that you provide will be kept in confidence. I will be the only person with access to the information.

Since I am surveying a limited number of people, the success and quality of this research is based on the information you provide. I have enclosed a Statement of Informed Consent that explains confidentiality and a questionnaire. Please complete both documents and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 566-0962. Thank you for your anticipated participation.

Yours truly,

Cindy L. Wood

Appendix C

Questionnaire

Evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education - June, 2000

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete and return this questionnaire. The results from this questionnaire will be kept in confidence.

1. Name: _____
2. Age: 20-30 _____ 30-40 _____ 40-50 _____ 50-60 _____ 60+ _____
3. Education: (please indicate what type of degree)
High School _____
Bachelor's Degree _____
B.Ed. _____
College _____
Other _____
4. What courses have you completed?
_____ Ed. 561 The Adult Learner
_____ Ed. 562 Sociology of Adult Education
_____ Ed. 563 Program Development and Implementation
_____ Ed. 564 Issues in Adult Education
_____ Ed. 565 Educational Technology and the Adult Learner
_____ Ed. 566 Assessment of Adult Learning
_____ Ed. 567 Entrepreneurial Education
_____ Ed. 568 Counseling the Adult Learning
_____ Ed. 569 Principles of Adult Education
_____ Ed. 595 Special Topics in Adult Education
5. What is your previous experience in Adult Education?

6. What were your goals at program entry?

7. What area of adult education are you employed?

8. What was your employment status at program entry?

9. As an adult educator, what do you perceive to be the most important skills you need to learn in such a program?
-
-
-
10. Have your needs been met by this program?
-
-
11. What topics in adult education are the most interesting and beneficial to you as an adult educator?
-
-
12. From your perspective, what course(s) has been the least useful?
-
13. From your perspective, what course(s) has been the most useful?
-
14. What three things would you change if you were the developer of this program?
-
-
-
15. What is the reason these three things need changing?
-
-
16. Have you experienced any difficulties when registering for your courses?
-
-
17. Do you have any advice for the developers of this program to help you met your needs as an adult educator?
-
-
-

Appendix D

Interview Guide

1. Initially, how did you find out about the program?
2. Think back - What were your expectations at the outset of this program?
3. Do you feel that your expectations have been met?
4. What is your opinion of how the program was administered?
5. What is your profession?
6. What do you perceive to be your needs as an adult educator?
7. Have your needs been met by this program?
8. What topics in adult education are the most interesting and beneficial to you as an adult educator?
9. Who are the clients that you serve?
10. What are their specific needs?
11. Has this program helped you meet the needs of your students?
12. What did you like best about the program?
13. What did you like least about the program?
14. Think back to a course that you felt was particularly good. What made it good?
15. Think back to a course that you felt was particularly disappointing. What made it disappointing?
16. From your perspective, what course(s) has been the least useful?
17. From your perspective, what course(s) has been the most useful?
18. What three things would you change if you were the developer of this program?
19. What is the reason these three things need changing?

20. What is the greatest challenge for this program? What should be done about it?
21. As a graduate/near graduate of this program, do you feel that there have been any issues/practices that should have been addressed and were not?
22. In your opinion, what were the benefits of taking a diploma program on a part-time basis?
23. In your opinion, what were the drawbacks of taking a diploma program on a part-time basis?
24. Have you experienced any difficulties when registering for your courses?
25. If you were in charge, what kind of changes would you make?
26. What would it take for this program to receive an excellence award?
27. What would you tell a colleague about the Diploma in Adult Education?
28. Suppose you were trying to promote this program what would you say?
29. Can you tell me one positive aspect about the program?
30. Can you tell me one negative aspect about the program?
31. Think back - what course has had the most impact on you professionally?
Personally?
32. What is the most important thing the developers of the program should keep doing?
33. Did we miss anything?

Appendix E

Telephone Script

I am performing a Program Evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island as a part of my thesis requirements for my Masters in Education degree and as a report for the Faculty of Education. I understand you are a student (or graduate) of this program. What I am looking for is your opinions, attitudes, and ideas about the Diploma as you experienced it. If you are presently a student in the program with more than two courses to complete before you graduate I am inviting you to complete a questionnaire regarding the program. If you are a graduate or someone with two courses or less left to complete the program I am inviting you to participate in an interview about your perceptions of the program. All information that you provide will be kept in confidence. I will be the only person with access to the information.

Enrolled Students: If they agree to complete a questionnaire, I will ask for their mailing address. I will enclose a Statement of Informed Consent along with the questionnaire. I will ask them to complete and return both documents in the envelope provided.

Graduates/Near Graduates: If they agree to an interview I will set up a time for us to meet. I will send a letter of invitation, a Statement of Informed Consent, and a questionnaire. I will ask them to complete and return all documents in the envelope provided.

Appendix F

Statement of Informed Consent (Questionnaire Only)

I, _____, agree to participate in this program evaluation on The Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island that is being conducted by Cindy Wood, a Masters of Education student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island. I understand that the information that she collects will be used for the purpose of her Master's thesis and also as a part of a program evaluation she is conducting for the Faculty of Education.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to ask students of the Adult Education Diploma if the program has met their needs as adult educators.

I understand that the study involves answering a questionnaire (15 minutes) which includes questions about myself and my perceptions of the Diploma in Adult Education.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw my data from the study I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study, I understand this will have no effect on my relationship with instructors of this program, the Faculty of Education, or with my final standing in the Diploma in Adult Education.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential, and that the names of all the people in the study will be kept confidential. I understand that Cindy Wood is the only person with access to the data.

I understand that I may contact the researcher, Cindy Wood at 566-0962 or her research supervisor, Dr. Graham Pike at 628-4304 at any time to discuss this research.

I understand that I will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, but that my participation may influence the direction of this program in the future.

The researcher has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do. I understand that I may keep a copy of this form.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Today's Date

Your Signature

_____ I would like to be informed of the results of the program evaluation.

Appendix G

Letter to Instructors Requesting Course Evaluations

Dear Instructor:

I am performing a Program Evaluation of the Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island as a part of my thesis requirements for my Masters in Education degree and as a report for the Faculty of Education. I understand you have been an instructor in this program.

In this study I plan to send out questionnaires and conduct in-depth interviews with students and graduates from the program. In addition, I would like to perform a document review of course evaluations. This would serve as a means of triangulating my data with the questionnaires and interviews and will increase the validity of my study.

I am requesting permission to examine your course evaluations for any course(s) in the diploma program. I am only interested in the portion of the evaluation that deals with the course itself. No information will be used from the portion of the evaluation that deals with the instructor. All information will be kept in strict confidence and anonymity is guaranteed.

If you are agreeable, please complete and return the Statement of Informed Consent (enclosed).

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact me at 566-0962. Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Cindy L. Wood

Appendix H

Statement of Informed Consent (Instructor Course Evaluations)

I, _____, agree to participate in this program evaluation on The Diploma in Adult Education at the University of Prince Edward Island that is being conducted by Cindy Wood, a Masters of Education student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island. I understand that the information that she collects will be used for the purpose of her Master's thesis and also as a part of a program evaluation she is conducting for the Faculty of Education.

I understand that she will examine my course evaluations from the course/courses that I have instructed in the Diploma in Adult Education at UPEI.

I understand that she is only interested in the portion of the evaluation that deals with the course and not the portion that deals with the instructor.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw my data from the study, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from the study, I understand this will have no effect on my relationship with this program or the Faculty of Education.

I understand that all the information I give will be kept confidential and no name will be used in the report. I understand that Cindy Wood is the only person with access to the data.

I understand that I may contact the researcher, Cindy Wood at 566-0962 or her research supervisor, Dr. Graham Pike at 628-4304 at any time to discuss this research.

I understand that I will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study, but that my participation may influence the direction of this program in the future.

The researcher has offered to answer any questions I may have about the study and what I am expected to do. I understand that I may keep a copy of this form.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Today's Date

Your Signature

_____ I would like to be informed of the results of the program evaluation.

Appendix I

Transcript Verification Form

June 30, 2000

Dear Participant:

Please find enclosed a copy of the transcript from our recent interview. Please read it over to ensure that the information is correct. At this time, please feel free to add or delete any information. By conducting this check, I will be able to write in my thesis that the transcripts from the interviews were verified by the participants. This gives the research more validity.

Please sign and return the bottom of this page to confirm that this transcript is of the interview conducted on June 20, 2000.

Thank you for your participation.

Cindy L. Wood

I have read the enclosed transcript and verify that it is a transcript of the interview I participated in on June 20, 2000 with Cindy Wood.

Signature

Date

Appendix J

Evaluation - Course Related Information

<u>Course Related Information:</u>		(N/A)	(SD)	(SA)		
21.	The level of difficulty of this course was appropriate.	0	1	2	3	4	5
22.	My interest/appreciation in the subject area has been stimulated by this course.	0	1	2	3	4	5
23.	The course outline gave a good indication of course content.	0	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The readings/text assigned were helpful and relevant in meeting course objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The audio-visual materials used were relevant to the course objectives.	0	1	2	3	4	5
26.	With respect to content, this was a very valuable course in the program.	0	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Compared with other university courses, I learned a lot in this course.	0	1	2	3	4	5

General Instructor/Course Information:

28. What were the strengths of the course?
29. Were there any serious limitations in the course? If so, what were they?
30. Do you have any suggestions that would improve the course?
31. Do you have any additional comments that you wish to make about either the course or the instructor?

Appendix K

Overview of the Diploma Program in Adult Education

The Diploma Program in Adult Education is designed for educators working in a variety of adult education situations, including post secondary institutions, community learning centres, and government agencies” (Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island, n.d., p.1). In order to graduate students must complete all courses with an overall average of at least 70%.

The diploma program includes the following 10 core courses:

- ED 561 The Adult Learner
- ED 562 Sociology of Adult Education
- ED 563 Program Development and Implementation
- ED 564 Issues in Adult Education
- ED 565 Educational Technology and the Adult Learner
- ED 566 Assessment of Adult Learning
- ED 567 Entrepreneurial Education
- ED 568 Counseling the Adult Learner
- ED 569 Principles of Adult Education
- ED 595 Special Topics in Adult Education. (p. 1)