CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUT AND DROPIN LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS AT LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND IDENTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONALLY CONTROLLABLE VARIABLES AFFECTING STUDENT HOLDING POWER

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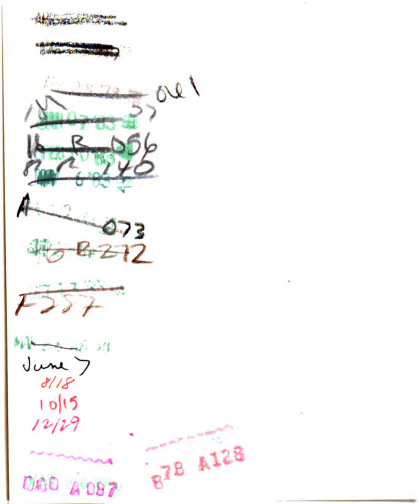
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ABSTRACT

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This study was designed to identify institutionally controllable variables affecting dropout and returnee liberal arts students. From the descriptive data hypotheses regarding attrition and holding power are suggested for subsequent experimental study.

A stratified random sample of two hundred fall or winter term, 1972-73, dropout and returnee liberal arts students at Lansing Community College were selected to be interviewed via telephone.

Each student interviewed was asked a series of open-ended questions concerning his purposes for attending Lansing Community College, his reasons for not re-enrolling (also, for a returnee his reasons for returning), and his attitudes about selected factors pertaining to the college.

Each interviewee was also asked to respond to strongly worded statements on five subscales: Self-Motivation, Instruction, Status, Importance of College, Environment.

Analysis indicated dropouts and returnees were different in that more returnees tended to be married than

dropouts, and returnees earned higher G.P.A.'s than dropouts. Also, married students earned higher G.P.A.'s than did single students.

An equal proportion of dropouts and returnees devoted time to gainful employment while attending college, and both groups worked approximately equivalent hours per week. Also, both dropouts and returnees in equal proportions said their work interfered with going to college.

The major finding was that non-preference students differed greatly from declared majors in the combined population of dropouts and returnees. Declared majors shared a more traditional view of college, viewed the instruction they received positively, earned higher G.P.A.'s, liked more liberal arts courses, and attended college for college related reasons rather than personal ones. Undeclared majors possessed the opposite characteristics.

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A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

Although many community and junior colleges have recently begun serious investigation of the attrition of their students, most studies have only emphasized assessing and anlyzing students' potential for academic persistence to predict attrition rather than systematically following up on students who had dropped out to discover what institutional action might have dissuaded many of them from leaving. Whereas up to now most community colleges could afford to ignore these dropout students because their places were immediately filled with new students, today such an attitude is rapidly passing; indeed, it may well be nearly extinct as enrollments level or even decline.

Lyman Glenny in "Pressures on Higher Education" argues that "Higher education will no longer be a growth industry unless an entirely new constitutency can be attracted to its institutions, and unless continuing education becomes an accepted pattern in our society."[1] He cites the following facts that indicate the "competition for students will increase to intense levels bordering on rapacious":[2]

1. The *actual number of five-year-olds dropped* 15 percent between 1960 and 1970. *These are the college youth of 1978 and beyond.*
2. The *actual number of births dropped* three percent between 1970 and 1971 and nine percent between 1971 and 1972. These are the *potential freshmen of 1988 and 1990.*
3. The *nation's birthrate is* at its lowest point in history, *at a rate below zero-population growth,* and it has not yet stabilized at that rate.
4. The *proportion of all males 18 to 19 years of age who are in college has dropped* to the level it was back in 1962, down to 37.6 percent from a high in 1969 of 44 percent. This drop can be attributed only partly to the draft, since the trend downward started at least two years before resolution of the draft issue.
5. The *proportion of males 20 to 21 years of age in college has dropped* from a high of 44.7 percent in 1969 to 36 percent in 1972, almost nine percentage points less.
6. *Women in the 18 to 19 age group leveled off* at about 34 percent in 1969 and *those in the 20 to 21 age group seemed to have leveled* at 25 percent in the past two years. This occurs *despite the ostensible efforts of colleges and universities to increase the proportion* of women going to college.
7. In the fall of 1972, the *four-year colleges and universities lost about 1.5 percent in the first-time freshman enrollment, while the community colleges increased less than two percent.*
8. In the past two years, *85 percent of all the increase in the number of first-time students entered the community college.*
9. The *Census Bureau estimates a sharp drop in the number of college-age youth after 1982,* almost paralleling the sharp rises during the 1960's. My own estimate, based on the Census Bureau projections and the data on live births of the U.S. Public Health Service, is that by 1991 we will have about the same number of college-age youth as we had back in 1965 or 1966. Although the U.S. Bureau of the

Census, the Carnegie Commission, and the U.S. Office of Education all project an increase in this age group after 1990, there is no actual evidence to support that assumption. Unless the number of live births begins to show an increase this year or next, the projected number of college-age youth will of necessity show further declines after 1990.

10. *Some colleges and universities are now advertising their programs and services in newspapers and on TV and radio* in order to attract students, a feature characteristic of proprietary schools but not thought to be in good taste for colleges.[3] [Italics Added]

Diverting attention from the attrition problem as a subject not worthy of study is the overriding national posture that only the student must change if he is going to complete a program in a community or junior college. This may be traced to at least two causes: 1) Historically, colleges and universities have taken a paternalistic and/or cavalier attitude of *we know what is best for the student, and if he doesn't like it, he should look elsewhere.* Hence, in the days of a sufficient or overflowing supply of students, it was easier to change students than it was programs and faculty. 2) Community and junior college faculty, especially in the liberal arts, having been trained in the traditional liberal arts fashion, felt it was their job to maintain high standards and, therefore, "cool out" those students who were not "college (i.e., university) material."

Another factor influencing community and junior college attrition studies is that much of the research has been

based upon previous investigation conducted in four-year colleges and universities. Unfortunately, the comparisons drawn "are generally based upon the authority and experience of these schools and tend to ignore the uniqueness of the community college student."[4]

It is critical in terms of student welfare and institutional income[5] that community and junior colleges approach the attrition problem from two points of view: 1) Students can be expected to make certain changes in attitude and behavior while in attendance at a community or junior college; but 2) those colleges can also be expected to make modifications (in delivery systems) based at least in part on carefully evaluated inputs from students who have dropped out.

Models for predicting potential attrition in individual students are now available and more are likely to appear as the research is published and replicated. The NORCAL model, reviewed in Chapter II of this study, is highly reliable, but as with other such research on attrition, it seems to have lacked focus. Individuals and institutions have been so eager to predict and identify dropouts and then experiment to reduce the number of dropouts, that a very crucial middle step has been overlooked. Such a middle step would have provided greater direction for the prediction and identification. This in turn would have logically furnished the third step, experimentation, with the requisite working

hypotheses. Such research has led people like Turner to make the following possibly misguided assumption:

> The fact that no solid pattern has yet emerged on why students leave college testifies both to the complexity of the subject and to a likelihood that unidentified and possibly unmeasureable factors are involved.[6]

A lack of focus can lead researchers to such conclusions. Turner, nevertheless, infers correctly that the subject is complex and the most accurate and/or most significant causes for community college attrition still remain unidentified. Thus, the proper second step, missing up to this point in attrition research, is the identification of variables that individual community colleges intent upon reducing attrition for specific populations can control.[7] Because most models designed to predict attrition have not included this middle step, much of the research has produced background on variables that an open-door institution can do nothing about. For example, although a student's college attendance pattern may be significantly influenced by how many schools he attended before the 10th grade or the extent of his mother's education (Cohen and Brawer, 1970); his grades in high school, his religious preference, his sex (Astin, 1972), or his race (Kester, 1970; Gold, 1970); too many institutions use the results of such research to conclude that nothing can be done except to wait for the student to weather the forces of his heredity and environment and ultimately drop out. Only recently have some community and

junior colleges become "proactive" in the sense that they are attempting to identify groups of high risk students and implementing special programs related to predicted causes of their possible attrition.

Even data gathered on variables possibly controllabe by educational institutions is usually vague and open-ended to the point that when schools begin experimenting on attrition they have little real information to form hypotheses that can reasonably be researched. Students weak in motivation are potential dropouts,[8] but since motivation is so abstract and its specific characteristics have not been positively isolated, little fruitful information has been or, indeed, can be gathered from the research.

Another factor critically affecting the community colleges is the very role being defined for them in higher education. The population attending a community college is essentially unique because of a general open-door policy -- any one, usually over eighteen, is eligible. As Jerome Karabel points out in his intriguing and potentially threatening article, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification,"[9] "The community college, generally viewed as the leading edge of an open and egalitarian system of higher education, is in reality a prime contemporary expression of the dual historical patterns of class-based tracking--and of education inflation."[10] He contends "the community college is the bottom track of the system of higher education both in class origins and occupational destinations of the student."[11]

Basing his conclusions on the research he conducted, Karabel points out that the background of community college students is lower class "as measured by income, occupation and education."[12] But he questions whether or not increased access to higher education has led to a "genuine expansion of education opportunity."[13] Thus, it matters not so much that students enter the realm of higher education, "but rather what happens to people once they get there."[14]

Kester, citing the works of Leland Medsker, K. Patricia Cross, and Charles Collins, believes that universal higher education will increase the numbers of students from lower socio-economic levels and lower aptitude levels.[15]

Dorothy Knoell emphasizes that community colleges must "develop and carry out special programs of assistance for these students," especially those students who have a high probability of failure and dropping out.

If Karabel is correct about the low socioeconomic makeup of community and junior college students, then Glenny's assessment that they are career oriented proposes a real challenge for the liberal arts components of community and junior colleges now and in the future.

Summary

Thus attrition in the community college is already a serious problem and demonstrates every sign of becoming even more serious as the number of students available in the community college marketplace continue to level off or

decrease and as competition for enrollment of the higher education student becomes more intense.

Because the community and junior college student is significantly different than the "typical" four-year college or university student, specific studies are necessary to deal with the uniqueness of the community and junior college student, especially regarding his reasons for attrition. Currently better descriptive research focused on identifying variables an institution can experimentally test would provide the best foundation for developing meaningful hypotheses concerning community and junior college students.

Purpose of Study

This study was designed to produce descriptive research on attrition at Lansing Community College with a focus on discovering variables that can be controlled by the college to reduce attrition and to increase holding power in the division of Arts and Sciences. Once these variables are identified, hypotheses will be developed and tested experimentally.

Objectives

This study was designed to accomplish the following:

1. To identify specific variables related to dropout and dropin by liberal arts students, especially those variables over which the college can exercise control.

2. To suggest hypotheses regarding attrition and holding power that could be used by the Division of Arts and Sciences of Lansing Community College to test experimentally.

To support this research students who have formerly dropped out of Lansing Community College but then decided to return were studied to see 1) if the college currently wielded any influence, direct or indirect, over their return, 2) how each overcame his original reason for leaving, and 3) what steps the college might take to increase the number of returnees and decrease the duration of their academic nonenrollment.

The choice of studying liberal arts students specifically rather than all dropouts at Lansing Community College was a pragmatic one. First of all, the population was limited and the characteristics among the subjects more likely to be common. Secondly, once the procedures and management system were worked out, then other divisions could utilize and apply them to their specific ends. Finally, the enrollment in the liberal arts both at Lansing Community College and nationally is decreasing seriously, particularly because of an ever increasing attack on the relevancy of liberal arts. Roger Howell, Jr., President of Bowdoin College maintains that "unless the liberal arts can demonstrate, today and tomorrow and the day after, their immediate relevance to the lives of students, they will indeed be dead."[16] This is not to say that the liberal arts and the concept of

a liberal education is without hope, but it does imply that those of us in the liberal arts must recognize our clientele is changing, and we must prepare to meet that clientele most effectively. Glenny's discussion of liberal arts colleges is singularly appropriate to the liberal arts students in community and junior colleges:

> The fact that enrollments in the liberal arts colleges, both public and private, were the first to level off and that the new students in higher education from low socio-economic backgrounds are career oriented rather than socially or humanistically inclined, does not necessarily mean the demise of liberal education. Rather, a fair interpretation of these events should lead to the conclusion that Maslow's view of value priorities is correct. Until certain essential physical needs are met, intellectual pursuits are bound to take second place. For the confident and overweaned middle-class or upper middle-class student--the traditional college goers--physical and economic needs are well met. That type of student will continue to enroll in traditional or modernized liberal arts program. Recognition that the number of such college-age youth will not be easily increased for many years should not be read to diminish the role of liberal arts works.[17]

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Although much criticism has been leveled against community colleges for not initiating more research on attrition, still what has been accomplished is not necessarily inferior work. Also, many hitherto unreported studies[1] may become public information as the problem becomes more prominent. Nevertheless, some thorough studies have been undertaken.

Fortunately, studies reported so far on community college attrition have been synthesized quite thoroughly by Boris Blai, Jr., Hugh J. Turner, Jr., and Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer. Each of their reviews has attempted to bring the research on community college attrition to a particular point of focus and establish a direction for further research.

Reviews

Three fine reviews of attrition in the community college have been produced. Possibly the most comprehensive is that of Boris Brai, Jr., "Two-Year College Dropouts--Why Do They Leave? Who Are They? How Many?"[2] He thoroughly reviews prescriptive and inferential data on student attrition. His work clearly summarizes the state of research on

attrition including the works of Cohen and Brawer (1970), Trent and Medsker (1968), Astin (1972), and Weigel (1969). Concluding, Blai abstracts the tendencies and characteristics (in no particular order) "which appear to 'profile' the college non-persister, as contrasted with the persister:"[3]

1 - Employed more time outside school
2 - More enroll in school as part-timers
3 - Attend more schools prior to 10th grade
4 - More often attend private, church-related and co-ed schools than other types of junior colleges.
5 - Lower high school GPA
6 - Lack of proximity to college
7 - Seek transfers to 4-year colleges
8 - Find institution calibre not as high as expected
9 - Desired subjects not in curriculum
10 - Experience academic difficulty
11 - Lack of goals or college-oriented interests
12 - "General" dissatisfaction
13 - Marriage
14 - Lack of interest in subjects
15 - Lack of open-minded, flexible and autonomous disposition
16 - Fewer parents urge college attendance
17 - Financial pressures
18 - Lower normative congruence
19 - Lower friendship support
20 - Lower social integration
21 - Lesser institutional commitment
22 - Want time to reconsider interests and goals
23 - Changed career plans
24 - Come from lower socio-economic backgrounds
25 - Have lower initial educational aspirations
26 - Smoke cigarettes
27 - Being a female
28 - Turning in paper or theme late
29 - Having no religious preference
30 - Health problems[4]
31 - Family problems

A second work, "The Half that Leaves: A Limited Survey of Attrition in Community Colleges," by Hugh J. Turner, Jr.,[5] strongly reviews research on attrition in both two- and four-year colleges with a special emphasis on distinguishing between student-related factors and college-related factors.

Turner voices a concern that "wide ranging looks at non-persisters are noticeably lacking in the community college literature;" however, he cites Matson (1965) who "considers institutionally-related research to be more profitable than general studies of dropouts."[6]

Student related factors are summarized to include inadequate student adjustment and motivation, and a lack of identification with the institution which "gives rise to dissatisfaction and to feelings of irrelevancy in aims and endeavors."[7] Also, family influences and expectations, previous school experience, and actual and perceived ability are important.[8]

College related factors include the degree of success "in adapting to the situation, in establishing satisfactory personal relationships, and in adjusting goals in light of realities." Finally, continued motivation toward a degree is important.[9] Turner concludes that a closer link between secondary schools and community colleges would be an initial step in decreasing college dropout rates.

A third review by Cohen and Brawer (1970) contends that college attrition not only is tied to the students' goals and objectives, but it also is related to the goals and objectives of the institutions they attend. Thus, the interaction of the student's concept of what to study, how long to study, courses available and the institution's policies may be related to whether or not a student persists in college or withdraws. Specifically, for junior college

students open door admissions may be an open door to *failure*, with negative side effects and "may have consequences of which we are only dimly aware."[10]

Another issue raised by Cohen and Brawer is that the assumed extreme heterogeneity of junior college students may not be necessarily so. Although they appear heterogeneous on demographic dimensions, little has been done to demonstrate heterogeneity on other measures. In fact, studies advanced by Tillery and Trent and Medsker suggest homogeneity in "potentially significant directions."[11] Nevertheless, the true nature of the community college student remains undiscovered.

Cohen and Brawer conclude their review by summarizing "certain assumptions held in common by a number of researchers" that should be considered in further research:

1. There is a need for basic research that seeks *to isolate personality dimensions in order to identify the potential school dropout.*
2. *Characteristics that differentiate the student with high dropout potential and the student with high persistence potential must be identified* so that academic procedures can be developed and evaluated.
3. *Academic attrition cannot be viewed solely in terms of the student* no matter how complete this analysis may be. The issue, rather, is a multifaceted one that requires investigation of the student interacting with other members of the college millieu . . . and with the general environment of the college itself.
4. Despite many efforts to isolate and understand characteristics that might describe the "good" teacher, *student withdrawal rates have not been related to dimensions of teacher personalities, abilities, or goal orientation.*

5. There is a definite *lack of experimentation with action programs* designed specifically to reduce attrition.
6. There is a need for analysis of *institutional organization characteristics that might affect attrition rates.*
7. Withdrawal rates in specific colleges have implications for faculty members in that *a high dropout rate may eventually affect faculty morale . . . .*
8. The question of attrition in college requires continual in-depth investigation, as well as the implementation of relevant findings. While all facets of the phenomenon of dropout can hardly be studied in a single population or a single project, *it is important that many of the suggested considerations be entertained in any research project.*
9. "Although the term 'college dropout' has become a bad word in the popular press and the American home town . . . the possibilities of both loss and benefit should be considered." *Perhaps dropout is not a negative term; indeed, the dropout may be exhibiting strengths not possessed by his fellow students.* At this point in our knowledge about education, however, we do not know how best to serve those who enter our colleges conceivably for purposes of completing their education through set programs.
10. *Early identification of the potential dropout may lead to more clearly defined goals and more efficient use of resources.* Programs may be especially tailored to answer the specific needs of different kinds of students enrolled for varying periods of time and various purposes. Identification of problems associated with the dropout may also lead to evaluation of what is learned in the schools, by whom, and to what ends.
11. There has been a tendency to describe junior college students as "heterogeneous" in terms of academic abilities, aspirations, and socio-economic status. "Heterogeneity" demands a more refined definition, however, if it is to describe these students. On what measures do they differ? How are they similar? If there are definite tendencies toward homogeneity, then programs and procedures should be tailored accordingly.[12] [Italics Added]

As can be seen from these three reviews, the attrition research on community college students has yet to produce sufficient data to assist individual community colleges in dealing with their attrition problems. Fortunately, many viable starting points for further research have been established, and Cohen and Brawer suggest some valuable guidelines that if accepted could help to focus community college attrition research for the benefit of such institutions.

Review of Specific Studies

Besides the reviews presented above, a number of specific investigations of community college attrition are important and highly relevant to this study. They propose critical starting points for both the method of data collection and the initiation of programs intended to reduce attrition and increase holding power.

NORCAL Study

Possibly the most extensive study on attrition in the two-year college to date is the three phase NORCAL study begun in 1968 and completed in 1971 by the Northern California Community College Research Group, a consortium of twenty-eight community colleges in Northern California.[13]

The first phase (1968-69) identified the "characteristics associated with the attrition of full-time day students during their initial enrollment period in college."[14]

Phase I's goals were:

1. Analysis of the NORCAL questionnaire items to identify those individual responses which were non-randomly distributed among community college withdrawals and persisters.
2. Multiple regression analysis of the most potent predictors to derive individual weights for the categorical responses to each item in the instrument that seemed to be associated with persistence status.
3. Development of discriminate scores, using the weights derived in Step 2, and analysis of the distributions of discriminate scores among students who withdrew and a randomly drawn sample of persisters in each participating college.[15]

As a result of the work accomplished in Phase I, a model was developed and applied to twenty-two colleges involved in the NORCAL Research Project, where it showed an acceptable level of prediction.

Essentially, seven out of ten students could be correctly identified as persisters or dropouts. The major findings were:

1. The potential dropout is likeliest to be black, least likely to be oriental.
2. The potential dropout is likely to come from a family that is less affluent, and is likelier to express greater concern over matters of finance and employment.
3. The potential dropout is likely to have less perceived parental encouragement for college.
4. The potential dropout shows a lower sense of importance of college.
5. The potential dropout is likely to have lower educational aspirations than the persister.
6. Ability is a key factor in the prediction of attrition, when grouped by sex; low ability males are three times likelier to withdraw than low ability females.[16]

Another finding of Phase I was individual community colleges provided patterns of support or rejection for potential

dropouts since the range of attrition for the twenty-two colleges varied between 3.90% and 21.24% with a mean of 7.47% (S.D. = 4.08).

During Phase II (1969-1970) of the NORCAL Research Project the one page questionnaire developed in Phase I was administered to 22,000 entering full-time day students in twenty-two Northern California community colleges. From nine variables used (SexAbility, Race, Need for Aid, Mother's Employment Status, Goal for College, Obstacle to College, Significant Source of Advice, Parental Encouragement for College, and Importance of College to the Self), the most effective combination of weighted responses was found in what was termed "Sum I."

Students who were likely to withdraw had the following characteristics based on the five most salient variables:

1. SexAbility: On the variable of SexAbility, the potential dropout is most likely to be a low ability male, least likely to be a middle ability female.
2. Race: On the variable race, the potential dropout is most likely to be black, least likely to be oriental.
3. Goals: On the variable of academic goals, the potential dropout is most likely to have lower educational goals than the persister.
4. Penc: On the variable of parental encouragement, the potential dropout is most likely to receive little parental encouragement for his college plans.
5. Imps: On the variable of importance of college to self, the potential dropout is most apt to have a low sense of the importance of college.[17]

The overall empirical validity of the model was .65 to .67, but if the number of students with a +10 score or

higher were compared to the number of actual withdrawals, the validity increased to .85. As a result, during Phase III only those students with exceptional liabilities (+10 scores of higher) were researched to provide for a reasonable evaluation, especially since all evidence suggested that the discriminate scores decreased in effectiveness as they approached zero.

Phase III (1970-1971) was used to design and test treatments to reduce attrition among first-time freshmen at each of the participating community colleges. Eleven schools used experimental designs and seven used post hoc studies or quasi-experimental designs.

The NORCAL Project had several obstacles, not the least of which was staffing and money at each participating college. Also, since the NORCAL Questionnaire had nonspecific variables, it functioned only in a predictive mode and offered little help in the prescription of possible treatments.

Of the five major variables used, only two (goals of the student and importance of college to the student) produced the least number of rival hypotheses, and because these variables were "essentially attitudes of the student and not attitudes of the parents" they were seen as changeable characteristics and could be treated.

Still, no case was made for the NORCAL Questionnaire other than a predictive one -- it "is a useful tool in assisting a community college to determine which freshmen will withdraw; it gives a few reliable clues on why they withdraw or what to do about it."[18]

Of the eleven colleges using the experimental designs, all eleven "reported fewer withdrawals among those students subject to treatment conditions." Six reported significance levels at the 5% level of confidence or higher. Secondly, "all colleges reported more students reenrolling among students subject to treatment conditions." Of the six colleges using grade point average in their experimental designs, all six found "higher grades among students in the treatment groups but only two reported differences significant at the 5% level of confidence."[19]

A fourth finding was that all colleges who reported a successful treatment program include counseling in their procedures. A final finding was that "most community colleges have within their present course structure and student services the potential for significantly reducing attrition among first-semester students."[20]

In conclusion Phase III of NORCAL is best summed up by Donald Kester, Project Director for Phase III:

> Not only is it clear that the provision of special services makes a measurable difference in attrition and performance, it is also clear that the potential for providing these services exists within every community college. The problem of attacking attrition is clearly one of will, not means. Perhaps this simple realization is the best contribution of the NORCAL project.[21]

The NORCAL study is evidence of the California community colleges' level of commitment to overcoming attrition within their institutions. Possibly the study's most important contribution is the identification of two major variables

which indicate that potential dropouts have lower educational goals and a low sense of the importance of college. These variables can be more easily treated than many others and have the potential for being clearly defined by further research. Finally, NORCAL demonstrates that increased counseling was effective in successful treatments indicating that the role of counseling may be expanded in the future and that faculty and administration may play an important part in this expansion.

Corning Community College

Gunnars Reimanis, in a paper presented at the Annual Association for Institutional Research in 1973, reports that based on repeated observations of students at Corning Community College

> . . . .student attrition is related to low self-concept of academic ability, high debilitating anxiety, low internal reinforcement control, and lack of goal and value clarity. In some instances variables, such as debilitating anxiety have even continued to increase while in college for students who eventually withdraw.[22]

Reimanis interprets that "many of our potential drop-outs are personally not prepared for further formal education, they are uncertain about themselves, they see themselves as chess pieces being moved around by outside forces which they do not understand."[23]

These findings led Corning Community College to develop attrition programs that focus on helping students understand faculty and administrators as human beings, who are interested

in the student as a person, and that as such they "know, understand, and accept . . . that incoming students may not have a clear idea about their own values, goals, or roles, and that it is natural to be apprehensive" about unfamilar things.[24]

Reimanis found significant differences in the experimental group of Economic Opportunity Program students who attended weekly "rap" sessions ($p<.05$). High risk students ($N = 143$), given an achievement motivation program, showed a significant trend ($p<.10$) toward less attrition than the control group ($N = 962$). Also, "grade-point-averages increased significantly more ($p<.05$) for all achievement motivation groups during the second semester" compared to the control groups.[25]

Long term assessment reflected positively on the high success potential for achievement motivation training and indicated significant differences ($p<.05$) on grade-point-average; number of students transferring to four-year institutions; and on "the number of students who either graduated or transferred to a four-year institution versus leaving without continuing education."[26]

Other programs at Corning Community College designed to curb attrition are currently underway and presage significant success.[27]

Other Studies

Although not a work specifically examining attrition in community colleges, Jerome Karabel's "Community Colleges

and Social Stratification"[28] raises some pertinent questions on the problem. Viewing the function of a community college in a social system Karabel contends that the very act of attending a community college negatively affects persistence, *controlling for other variables* [his emphasis].

Karabel asserts that selective colleges are likely to "expect" their students to graduate. "Conversely, less selective colleges may exaggerate the differences between those who are 'college material' and those who are not--flunking out students who might otherwise have skimmed by."[29] He summarizes that "low selectivity, coupled with a built-in awareness of a sorting function may contribute to high rates of attrition."[30]

Astin (1972) maintains that high dropout rates are "primarily attributable to the lower levels of motivation and poorer academic preparation."[31] Trent and Medsker (1968) see motivation as the factor most related to entrance and persistence aside from adequate intelligence.[32] Since such motivation is formed early in life, Turner, citing Bard, Cooper, Knoell, and Roueche, urges community colleges to seek a "far closer relationship with secondary schools" as a means for combating preconditions that might not otherwise be controlled after a student reaches the community college.

Possibly one critical area of research that has not been fully researched is that of the student's alientation from the community college. French and Cardon (1969) suggest that dropouts 1) felt school was not preparing them for the

real world, 2) they had too little say in curriculum planning, 3) teachers did not understand them, and 4) they felt incompatible with the "system."[33] Cohen and Brawer (1970), citing Pervin and others, see dropping out "as a phenomenon that highlights the ancient struggle between the environment and the individual, each striving to modify the other . . . until a better balance is achieved."[34] Cross (1971) demonstrates that the school situation has been a "fearful experience" for New Students (students whose performance at academic tasks in the past has been below average) and the lessons they have learned are handicaps to future learning."[35] These New Students are often the core of the community college population and are encouraged by open door admissions policies and, as pointed out by Glenny,[36] increased "hard sell" marketing techniques. Mayhew (1969) reports that students "testify that at the point of entry into college they are quite confused and need a great deal of help and guidance in understanding themselves and deciding on their subsequent careers."[37]

Summary

As can be seen from the literature, although research on attrition in the community college is sketchy, there is every indication that the factors affecting attrition are generally identifiable, and many, such as a student's motivation, his clarity of educational goals, his attitude about the importance of college, and his pyschological interface

with the college itself, may be at least partially controllable by the institutions themselves.

Hopefully, further research will generate more specific information on these factors and many more action programs, such as NORCAL's on the large scale and Corning's on the individual college basis, may begin to produce the data necessary for all community colleges to deal more effectively with their primary concern, the students, and a democratic society's backbone, its educated citizenry.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF STUDY

Introduction

This chapter contains a description of and a rationale for the sample population in the study. Included is a brief review of the adopted questionnaire along with an explanation of the interview method.

Sample Selection

To identify variables the college can control to increase its holding power, two populations of liberal arts students were chosen for analysis:

1. Dropouts from fall term, 1972, and from winter term, 1973. For this study a dropout was defined as any student who did not return the following term (except summer) for any reason.
2. Returnees in fall term, 1972, and in winter term, 1973. A returnee was defined as a student who re-enrolled in Lansing Community College after an absence of one or more terms (except summer term).

Dropouts were chosen for analysis because only they could provide genuinely insightful information in the form of reasons for their own attrition. Dropping out was viewed as any voluntary or involuntary non-re-enrollment of a student during the term immediately following his last term of attendance, whether or not any goal fulfillment except graduation occurred.

Similarly, returnees were chosen because they alone could provide truly meaningful information on why they had returned to Lansing Community College and whether any significant differences existed between them and the overall population of dropouts in general. A returnee was defined as any student who re-enrolled for courses after an absence of one or more terms, not counting summer term.

Thus, the dropout population considered for analysis attended Lansing Community College as liberal arts students fall term, 1972, but did not return winter term, 1973, or they attended winter term, 1973, but did not return spring term, 1973. The returnee population considered for analysis was composed of students who re-enrolled fall term, 1972, after non-attendance for at least spring and summer terms, 1972. The rest of the returnee population was composed of students who re-enrolled winter term, 1973, after an absence of at least fall term, 1972. Liberal arts students only were chosen because they formed a homogeneous group with the potential of having similar reasons for dropping out or returning. Also, there was some concern among the other divisions of the college about how the information gathered might be used.

Both the fall and witner term dropout and returnee populations were divided into two groups according to curricular code and identified as non-preference students (non-pref) or declared majors as shown in Table 3.1. This separation partitioned dropouts and returnees into two distinct groups with

Table 3.1

Undeclared and Declared Majors

		Undeclared	Declared	Total
FALL 1972	Total Students Given Grade Fall, 1972	1394	1623	3017
	No. of Dropouts	463	496	957
	% of Non-Pref./D. Major Who Dropped Out	33%	31%	32%
	% of Dropouts Non-Pref./D. Major	48%	52%	100%
	No. of Returnees	182	239	421
	% of Non-Pref./D. Major Who Returned	13%	15%	14%
	% of Returnees Non-Pref./Major	43%	57%	100%
WINTER 1973	Total Students Given Grade Winter, 1973	1158	1478	2636
	No. of Dropouts	379	400	449
	% of Non-Pref./D. Major Who Dropped Out	33%	27%	30%
	% of Dropouts Non-Pref./D. Major	43%	57%	100%
	No. of Returnees	96	157	253
	% of Non-Pref./D. Major Who Returned	8%	11%	10%
	% of Returnees Non-Pref./D. Major	38%	62%	100%

approximately the same number of each. Also, if any significant difference existed between students who declared their majors and those who did not, it could be readily perceived by this division.

A further analysis was undertaken to determine whether such factors as sex, marital status, grade point average (G.P.A.), or age would suggest a more complex subdivision, but none of the above factors significantly affected the overall populations of dropouts or returnees.

Based on the analysis of the dropout and returnee populations for fall term, 1973 and winter term, 1973, eight distinct cells were selected for sampling. Table 3.2 shows these cells and each population.

Table 3.2

Population Presented by Cells

DROPOUTS		RETURNEES	
Non-Pref.	Major	Non-Pref.	Major
FD/NP (Fall Dropout, Non-Pref.) N = 463	FD/M (Fall Dropout, Major) N = 496	FR/NP (Fall Returnee, Non-Pref.) N = 182	FR/M (Fall Returnee, Major) N = 239
WD/NP (Winter Dropout, Non-Pref.) N = 379	WD/M (Winter Dropout, Major) N = 400	WR/NP (Winter Returnee, Non-Pref.) N = 96	WR/M (Winter Returnee, Major) N = 157

The aim of this study was to gather data on why students dropped out and also why some students who dropped out had also returned. Twenty-five subjects from each cell were randomly selected from computer print-outs that sorted the designated populations by curricular code, G.P.A. and sex/marriage. Thus, the samples reflected proportionately the actual populations according to the above factors.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire, to be used for interviewing each student selected, was developed. The first part of the questionnaire was composed of open-ended questions designed to elicit information directly or indirectly affecting why a student drops out or why he drops out and then returns. (See Appendix A for the questionnaire.) Open-ended questions were asked first so that any prejudices toward the questionnaire would be diminished at least at the beginning.

The second part of the questionnaire was composed of thirty strongly worded statements designed to measure the students' attitudes about themselves and Lansing Community College.

Interviews

To collect as much data as possible in this exploratory study, students were interviewed by telephone rather than by mailed questionnaire. Use of this technique provided a greater chance of actually reaching the student and obtaining a response.

The telephone interviews were conducted by three Lansing Community College students, one male and two female, who were trained for this procedure. Each student interviewer in a simulation activity was first interviewed via telephone by either the researcher or his assistant who used the actual survey questionnaire. Then after a debriefing and reaction session the potential interviewer while under the observation of the researcher or his assistant actually interviewed a subject via telephone. Feedback was offered where necessary until the interviewer felt confident and was judged adequately trained by the researcher. Students were chosen as interviewers because it was expected that the students being interviewed might be more open and frank with fellow students. (See Appendix B for a copy of the telephone format used by the interviewers.)

The interviews were conducted during the last two weeks of August and the first two weeks of September, 1973. This time was chosen for two reasons: 1) No interviewee would currently be attending classes at Lansing Community College since it was a vacation break; thus, all students would be responding with equal objectivity regarding the college, 2) The student interviewers were available to conduct the interviews both during the day and evening, whichever was necessary to reach the interviewees.

Limitations of This Data Collection

One major limitation of this study is its confinement to liberal arts students at Lansing Community College; consequently, it does not represent findings that might apply to community college students nationally or even throughout Michigan.

Another limitation was the delay between design and implementation of research. Since the interviews were not conducted until August and September, 1973, it is possible some students in the sample were not reached because they had long since moved. Nonetheless, of the two hundred students selected, one hundred and fifty (75%) were reached. This time lag was generally caused by the difficulty in obtaining data processing printouts of selected populations in a utilizable format. Furthermore, analytical procedures had to be developed to best interpret the information once it was received.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The accumulated data of the questionnaire interviews is analyzed, discussed and interpreted in this chapter which is divided into three major parts:

1. the results of the strongly-worded items and their subscales,
2. the results of the open-ended questions, and
3. an overall summary.

Of the two hundred students selected for the sample, one hundred fifty were actually contacted. Only eight of those reached refused to be interviewed. Table 4.1 on the following page includes 1) the total number of all dropouts and returnees fall and winter terms, 1972-73, with corresponding demographic data, and 2) the number of completed interviews and demographic data for each cell.

Table 4.2 indicates that the ratios tested in the sample drawn quite accurately reflect the total population of interest during the fall and winter terms, 1972-73. In particular, the sample proportions of the sexes and majors closely correspond to their respective proportions in the total population of dropouts and returnees.

Table 4.1

Cell by Cell Analysis of Population and Sample

Overall D & R Population	FUD	FDD	WUD	WDD	S-TOTALS	FUR	FDR	WUR	WDR	S-TOTALS	TOTALS
Males	217	254	203	219	893	97	129	47	87	360	1253
Females	246	242	176	181	845	85	110	49	70	314	1159
Single	267	341	224	278	1110	94	150	44	93	381	1491
Married	196	157	155	120	628	88	89	52	64	293	921
Total Non-Pref.	463		379		842	182		96		278	1120
Total Major		496		400	396		239		157	396	1292
Total					1738					674	2412
% Non-Pref./Major					48/52					41/59	46/54
Sample D & R											
Sample N =	25	25	25	25	100	25	25	25	25	100	200
Interviewed	17	20	15	22	74	16	14	19	19	68	142
%	68	80	60	88	74	64	56	76	76	68	71
Demographics											
Males	7	9	7	14	37	9	5	10	10	34	71
Females	10	11	8	8	37	7	9	9	9	34	71
Single	9	13	8	13	43	5	4	9	10	28	71
Married	8	7	7	9	31	11	10	10	9	40	71
Total Non-Pref.	17		15		32	16		19		35	67
Total Major		20		22	42		14		19	33	75
% Non-Pref./Major					43/57					51/49	47/53

Table 4.2

Overall Population vs. Sample Chosen

		Total Dropouts and Returnees	Sample Interviewed
Choice of Major	Non-Pref.	1120 (46%)	67 (47%)
	Major	1292 (54%)	75 (53%)
Sex	Males	1253 (48%)	71 (50%)
	Females	1159 (52%)	71 (50%)
Marital Status	Single	1491 (62%)	71 (50%)
	Married	921 (38%)	71 (50%)
	N =	2412 (100%)	142 (100%)

When analyzing the demographic data of the total dropout and returnee population, a significant finding emerged: majors who dropped out were more likely to become returnees than were non-preference students who dropped out. (X^2 = 10.13, $p<.1$). [Table 4.3 and Figure 4.1.]

While no patterns could be established concerning male or female dropouts and their inclinations to return, a significant discovery that married dropouts tend to return more frequently than single dropouts was uncovered (X^2 = 11.08, $p<.1$). [Table 4.4 and Figure 4.2.]

No other significant findings were disclosed in analyzing the overall demographic data.

Strongly Worded Items

Thirty strongly worded statements were developed to determine how dropouts and returnees within the Division of Arts and Sciences of Lansing Community College perceived aspects of the college and themselves according to designated categorical subscales. Furthermore, significant differences between groups were sought.

Five subscales were developed to investigate the following factors:

1. Self-Motivation: the student's impressions of his own academic ability and desire to succeed in college.
2. Status: the student's recognition of Lansing Community College as an institution of higher education and his degree of identification with the college.

Table 4.3

Dropouts/Major (D.M.) vs. Dropouts/Non-Pref. (N.-P.)
As Potential Returnees

	Dropouts	Returnee
Non-Pref.	842	278
Declared Major	896	396
Totals	1738	674

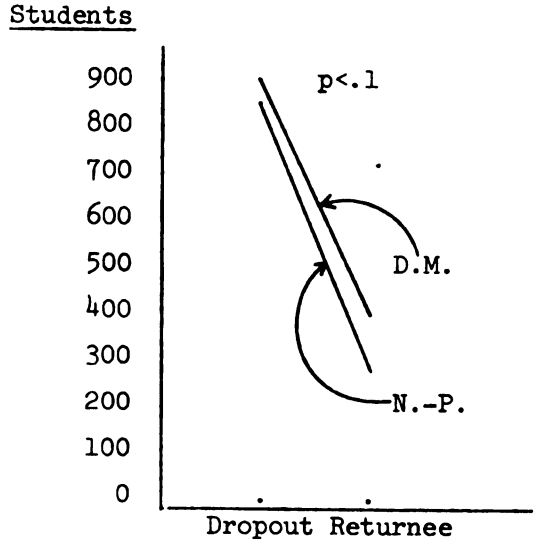

Figure 4.1

Dropouts/Major vs. Dropouts/Non-Pref.
As Potential Returnees

Table 4.4

Married Dropouts vs. Single Dropouts
As Potential Returnees

	Dropouts	Returnee
Married	1110	381
Single	628	293
Totals	1738	674

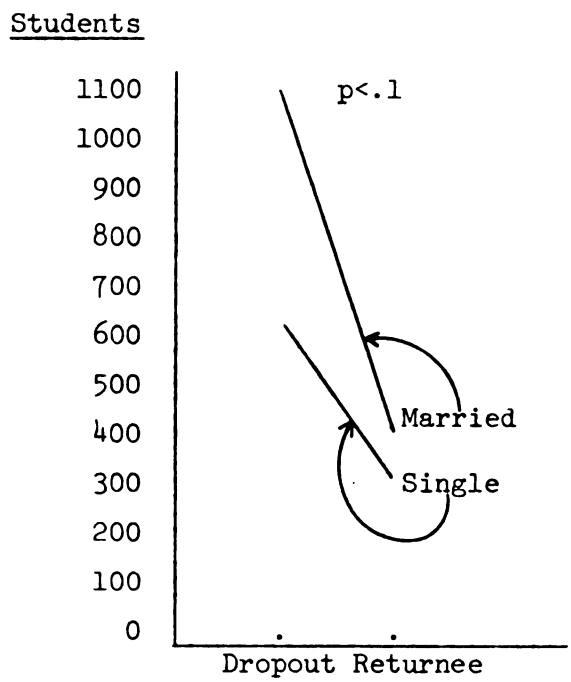

Figure 4.2

Married Dropouts vs. Single Dropouts
As Potential Returnees

3. Environment: the student's attitudes regarding the quality of learning environment that exists at Lansing Community College.
4. Instruction: the student's opinions of the relative quality of instruction at Lansing Community College.
5. Importance of College: the student's estimation of the value of a college education.

All responses obtained during the telephone interviews along with pertinent demographic data were recorded on optical scannable score sheets. With assistance from the Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University information on the score sheets was transferred to computer cards for later use in computer analysis.

From the information recorded on the punched cards, the five subscales for each student were tabulated and stored. Then an intercorrelation matrix composed of fifteen variables (15 x 15) including the five subscales was computed to determine the significant relationships (at the $p<.1$ level) amongst the variables. The instrument's reliability was tested via the Office of Research Consultation's Jennrich program and was found to be $r = .679$. (Cyril Hoyt substantiates the use of analysis of variance to estimate an instrument's reliability.[1]) Finally, several chi-square tests of independence were computed on the demographic data via program ACT of the Michigan State University CISSR system of statistical programs.

Significance

All tests were determined significant at the $p<.1$ level since it was the intent of this study to identify as many

possible factors affecting attrition of liberal arts students and their return, and because it was considered important to minimize Type II errors, i.e., errors of omission. This leads naturally to a higher than usual *p* level. Borg and Gall support the p .1 used in exploratory studies.[2]

Dropouts vs. Returnees

Using chi-square tests only two significant differences between dropouts and returnees were revealed. First, returnees are more likely to be married than dropouts (X^2 = 4.064, p<.1), and, second, returnees in general have higher G.P.A.'s than dropouts (X^2 = 7.813, p<.1). [Table 4.5 and Figure 4.3.] One may logically hypothesize, then, that when dropouts marry (while they are out of school), many renew their desire to attend college. It was also found that marital status correlated negatively with the subscale of Instruction (-.1823, p .1), which may be interpreted to indicate that married dropouts and returnees viewed the instruction they received more favorably than did single dropouts and returnees. Thus, the conclusion that married students view instruction more favorable and tend to attain higher G.P.A.'s might be drawn. This would lend credence to the findings that more returnees tend to be married than dropouts and they return with higher G.P.A.'s than those returnees who are single.

This finding is reinforced by the positive correlation between marital status and G.P.A. for all dropouts and returnees (X^2 = 10.785, p<.1), possibly indicating that dropout and

Table 4.5

Status by Grade Point Average

G.P.A. Range	Status: Dropout	Status: Returnee
0.00	22	8
0.01-1.99	11	17
2.00-2.99	21	20
3.00-4.00	20	23
TOTALS	74	68

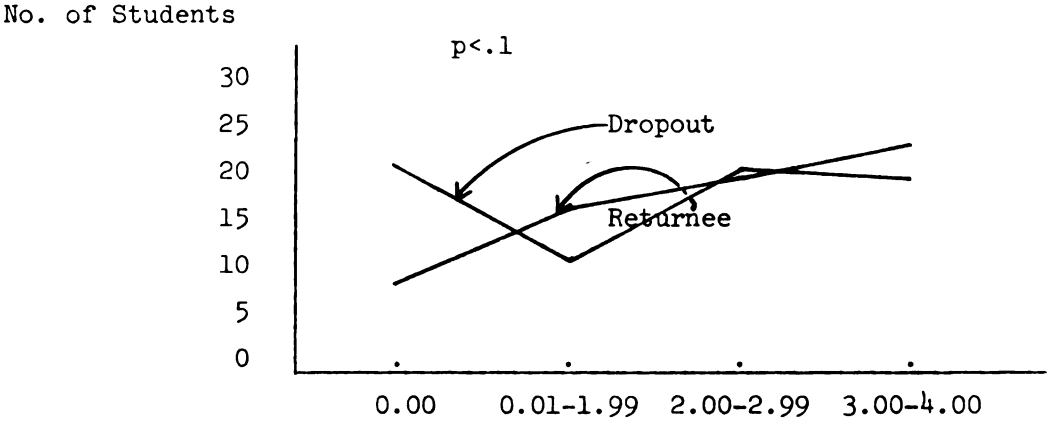

Figure 4.3

Status by Grade Point Average

returning students with high G.P.A.'s tended to be married and those with lower G.P.A.'s tended to be single.

Other than the two differences, returnees are more likely to be married than dropouts and they have higher G.P.A.'s, the selected sample of dropouts and returnees do not appear to differ significantly on any other variable or subscale used in this study. [Table 4.6 and Figure 4.4.]

Career Plans

For both dropouts and returnees a positive correlation was found between a change in major and a change in career plans (X^2 = 15.466, $p < .1$), Thus, if their majors changed, then their career plans tended to change also, or if their career plans changed, their majors were likely to change. The direction of the relationship is not indicated by the data. [Table 4.7 and Figure 4.5.]

In addition, negative correlations were discovered between changes in majors and the subscales of Instruction (-.16805, $p < .1$) and Importance of College (-.17269, $p < .1$). Those students who expressed no inclination to change their majors seemed to place value higher on both college and the instruction they received than did students who changed their major.

Similarly, a negative correlation was observed between those students changing their career plans and the Importance of College (-.16647, $p < .1$). As with students who changed their majors, it may be that dropouts and returnees who

Table 4.6

Grade Point Average by Marital Status

G.P.A. Range	Marital Status: Single	Married
0.00	21	9
0.01-1.99	13	15
2.00-2.99	23	18
3.00-4.00	14	29
TOTALS	71	71

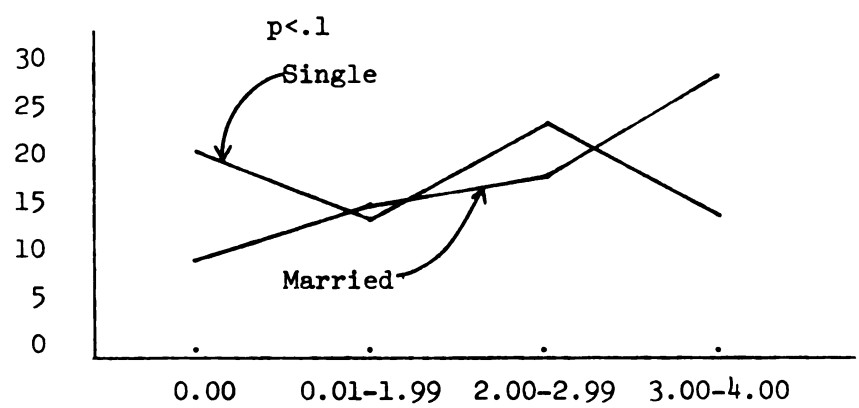

Figure 4.4

Grade Point Average by Marital Status

Table 4.7

Change of Major by Change of Career

Have Career Plans Changed

Would You Change Your Major?	Would Change Major	Would Not Change Major
Did Career Plans Change?		
Yes	22	15
Not Sure	2	10
No	23	68
TOTALS	47	93

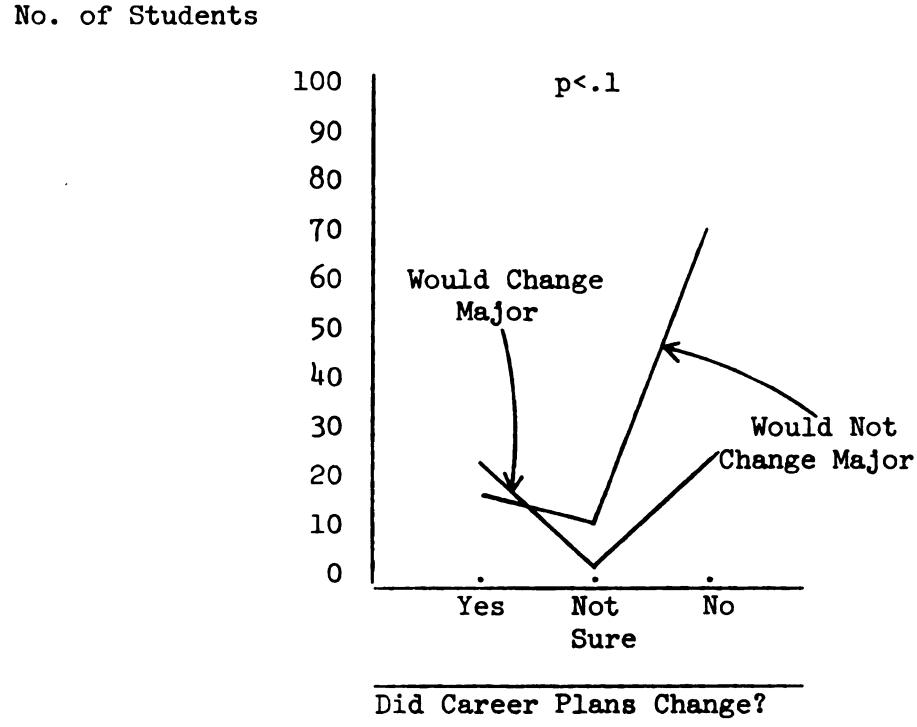

Figure 4.5

Change of Major by Change of Career

changed their career plans did not see college as important or relevant as those who did not change their career plans.

Students Who Work

A finding that was not surprising disclosed a negative correlation between working and G.PA.A. (-.15125, $p<.1$). Thus, dropouts and returnees who were employed tended toward lower G.P.A.'s than those who did not work. However, no significant correlation between working and any other variable in the study was detected, suggesting that whether or not a dropout or returnee works has little effect on his relationship and attitudes towards Lansing Community College. However, this is not to say that working has no effect on whether or not a student drops out of Lansing Community College.

Help at Lansing Community College

Positive correlations were revealed between the variable measuring help received from people employed at Lansing Community College in selecting courses and the subscales of Environment (.17725, $p<.1$) and Status (.19838, $p<.1$). Those who were helped perceived the college environment and its status as favorable, while those who did not receive help in selecting courses tended to view the college's environment and its status less favorably.

Sex

No significant correlations were unearthed with the variable of sex except with the Importance of College

(-.16575, p.<1), which may imply that male dropouts and returnees valued college less than did female dropouts and returnees.

G.P.A.

Besides correlating negatively with student employment (see Students Who Work above), G.P.A. also negatively correlated with the subscale measuring Instruction (-.20554, p<.1). Additionally, a negative correlation was deduced between curriculum code, i.e., whether a student had declared a major or not, and G.P.A. (X^2 = 9.115, p<.1) implying that students who had declared their majors received higher G.P.A.'s than those who were non-preference.

It may then be concluded that dropouts and returnees who had higher G.P.A.'s also viewed their instruction positively, were more likely to have declared their majors, and tended to be married (see Dropouts vs. Returnees above). Conversely, those with lower G.P.A.'s viewed their instruction negatively, were likely not to have declared a major (non-preference), and tended to be single.

Subscales

All five of the subscales positively intercorrelated at the p<.1 level of significance.

Environment	1.00000				
Self-Motivation	.22823	1.00000			
Instruction	.30645	.45129	1.00000		
Status	.37706	.36416	.42609	1.00000	
Imp. of College	.28709	.35505	.24196	.24462	1.0000
	Envir.	Self-Mot.	Instru.	Status	Imp. C.

Figure 4.6

Subscales

This indicates that the five subscales sustain a high degree of interrelationship in that students who viewed any one subscale positively also viewed the others in the same way. Similarly, students who reacted negatively to any one subscale also did so with the others.

The relatively strong correlation between Status and Instruction (.42609) suggests that those who evaluated their instruction favorable accorded Lansing Community College more status, while those who perceived their instruction unfavorable ranked the college lower on the status scale. The data, however, do not indicate the direction of the relationship.

Likewise, the high relationship between Self-Motivation and Instruction (.45129) indicates that the more self-motivated a dropout or returnee was, the more positively he saw the instruction he received, while those less motivated rated their instruction less positively; nevertheless, the

direction of the relationship may only be conjectured.

Open-Ended Questions

All students interviewed were asked a series of open-ended questions before they were given the strongly worded items. The purpose of asking the open-ended questions first was to reduce the effect of any possible bias inherent in the questionnaire used.

After the interviews were completed, each question's responses were normally categorized into one of two or three general groupings. Of primary interest was the classification of responses into two categories--those that fell under the college's direct or indirect influence, and those that did not.

Chi-square tests were then calculated to see if any significant differences could be found between 1) dropouts and returness and 2) non-preference (N.-P.) and declared majors (D. M.).

Reasons for Not Re-Enrolling

All dropouts and returnees interviewed were asked why they chose not to re-enroll in the term following their last attendance. Table 4.8 illustrates the major groupings of their responses by dropouts vs. returnees and non-preference vs. major.

Table 4.8

Reasons For Not Re-Enrolling

Factors	Dropout	Returnee*	N.-P.	D.M.**
Job Interferred	16	19	19	17
Money	5	6	5	6
Time Limited	12	4	6	10
Personal Reasons	10	20	16	14
Goals Fulfilled	21	9	16	14
No Desire	8	13	11	10
Grades	1	1	2	0
Course Not Avail.	6	0	1	5
TOTALS	80	72	76	76

*P<.1 **N.S.D.

A significant relationship was established between dropouts and returnees (X^2 = 19.13, p<.1) concerning the reasons given for not returning, but no significance was determined when the same population was compared as non-preference vs. declared majors. More returnees than dropouts tended to cite personal reasons or simply a lack of desire. Dropouts, on the other hand, cited more technical reasons such as having fulfilled thier goals or lacking sufficient time to attend school.

Interestingly, few dropouts and returnees indicated the lack of money as a direct problem, yet both groups with equal frequency cited job related reasons for not re-enrolling, implying money was at least an indirect problem. Perhaps lack of money was not seen as a problem by these groups becaue they had allowed their job to interfere; thus they may have worked at the expense of their schooling.

Primary Reason for Coming to Lansing Community College

All the responses to the question which asked the primary reason for coming to Lansing Community College were put into two general categories: 1) personal factors and 2) college related factors.

No significant relationship was uncovered between status and primary reason for coming, but major was related to their primary reason for coming to Lansing Community College (X^2 = 8,58, $p<.1$). [Table 4.9 and Figure 4.7.]

As can be seen, 82% of the declared majors counted college related factors as the primary reason for enrolling at Lansing Community College compared to 62% of the non-preference students. Thus, declared majors had more specific college related reasons for coming to Lansing Community College than did non-preference students.

College related factors included the college's low cost and convenience, its image and atmosphere, special courses and transfer curricula. Personal factors cited were "a desire to come," encouragement from an employer or a desire to train for a new job, and personal enrichment.

Most Satisfying Class

Only major (non-preference or declared major) when correlated with responses to the question which class was the most satisfying at Lansing Community College provided any significant relationship (X^2 = 11.37, $p<.1$). [Table 4.10 and Figure 4.8.] Eighty-five percent of the declared majors chose liberal arts courses, while only 58% of the

Table 4.9

Reason for Coming

	Drop.	vs. Return.	N.-P.	vs. D.M.
College Related	73	72	62	82
Personal	27	28	38	18
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

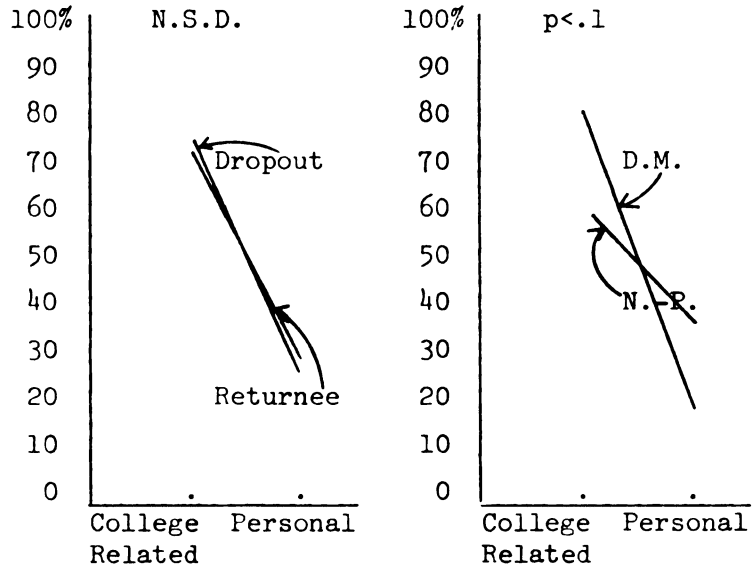

Figure 4.7

Reason for Coming

Table 4.10

Most Satisfying Class

	Drop. vs. Return.		N.-P. vs. D.M.	
Liberal Arts	73	74	58	85
Other	27	26	42	15
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

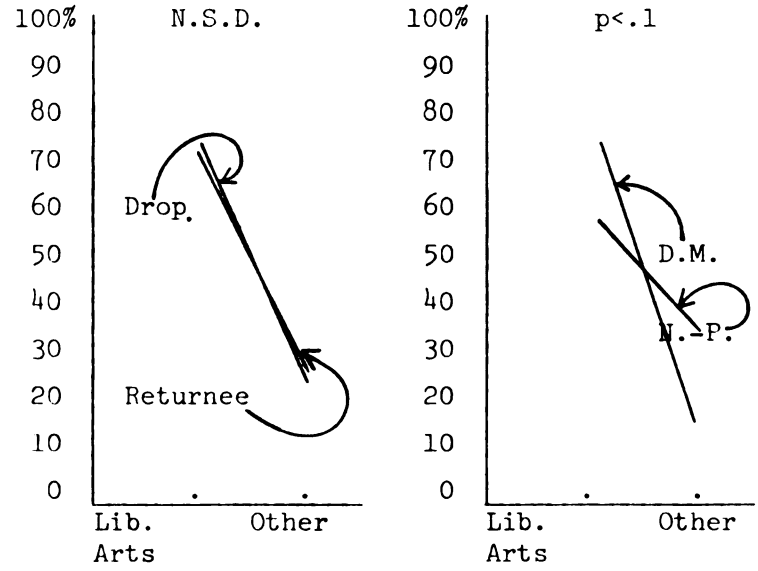

Figure 4.8

Most Satisfying Class

non-preference students chose liberal arts courses as their most satisfying. Non-preference liberal arts students probably enrolled in more classes outside the Division of Arts and Sciences and as such were more likely to identify them as their most satisfying classes. This may account for the 42% who so chose. Furthermore, non-preference students probably do not "fit" the curriculum as well as declared majors or they too might declare their majors.

Neither status nor major displayed any significant relationship when students indicated their reasons for finding a class satisfying. Overall, more than 74% of those interviewed specified the instruction or the material and course content as the factor that they liked.

Most Disappointing Class

When asked to identify which class was most disappointing, only non-preference vs. declared major provided any significant differences ($X^2 = 6.513$, $p<.1$). [Table 4.11 and Figure 4.9.] Sixty-five percent of the declared majors identified liberal arts courses as disappointing compared to 4% who cited non-liberal arts courses and 31% who identified none of the classes as disappointing. Only 44% of the non-preference students, on the other hand, cited a liberal arts course as disappointing, while 13% cited a non-liberal arts course and 43% cited none.

The significance of the right hand chart is attributable to declared majors having a higher percentage of disappointing classes than non-preference students. This finding is

Table 4.11

Most Disappointing Class

	Drop. vs. Return.		N.-P. vs. D.M.	
Liberal Arts	51	59	44	65
Other	10	7	13	4
None	39	34	43	31
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

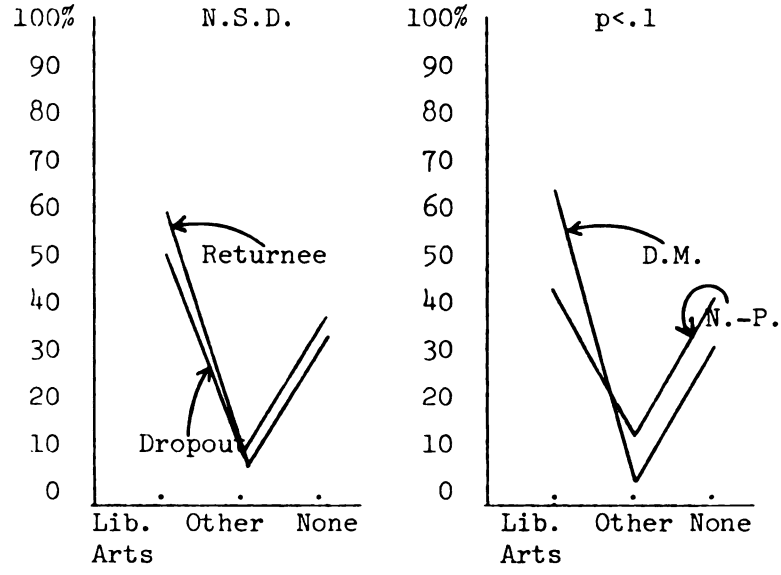

Figure 4.9

Most Disappointing Class

consistent with the result for the most satisfying class.

Like Most About Lansing Community College

While no significant difference was detected between dropouts and returnees and their likes about Lansing Community College, non-preference students vs. declared majors was significant (X^2 = 5.410, p<.1), [Table 4.12 and Figure 4.10.]

Whereas non-preference liberal arts students liked equally aspects of the college directly related to courses (courses, scheduling, instructors) and those more related to factors of the college outside the classroom (size, atmosphere, convenience, proximity, location, facilities, cost), declared majors strongly chose aspects directly related to the classroom.

This inquiry is closely related to the question asking for primary motivation for enrolling in Lansing Community College, discussed earlier. The findings are similar for both breakdowns. The data suggest that declared majors are more serious about academics than the non-preference students for this population of dropouts.

Biggest Gripe About Lansing Community College

Although significance was identified between biggest gripe at Lansing Community College and major (X^2 = 7.091, p<.1), little value can be attached to this since so many responses were only classifiable as miscellaneous. [Table 4.13 and Figure 4.11.] Most importantly, nearly 50% of

Table 4.12

Like Most About L.C.C.

	Drop. vs. Return.		N.-P. vs. D.M.	
Course Related	60	58	50	67
Non-Course Related	40	42	50	33
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

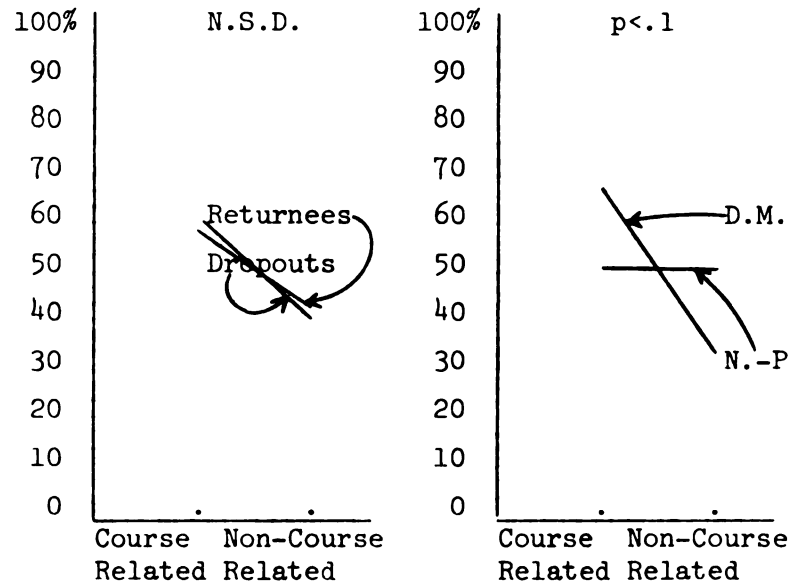

Figure 4.10

Like Most About L.C.C.

Table 4.13

Biggest Gripe

	Drop.	vs. Return.	N.-P.	vs. D.M.
None	51	42	61	39
Parking	11	19	12	18
Miscellaneous	32	39	27	42
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

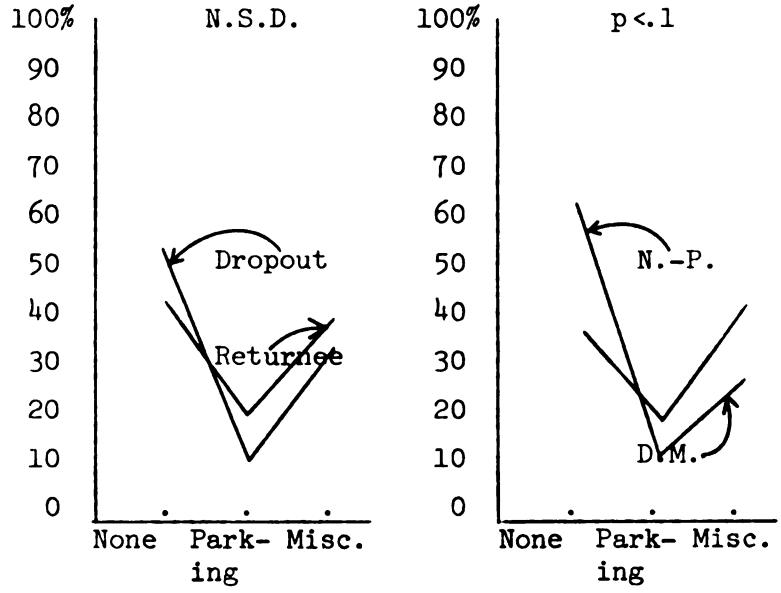

Figure 4.11

Biggest Gripe

those interviewed had no gripes about Lansing Community College. The only gripe capable of classification concerned parking, and then only 15% of those interviewed viewed it as a problem.

Declared majors had more gripes about Lansing Community College suggesting again that they are a more serious group than those dropouts who had not declared their major (non-preference).

Change in Major

No significant differences were ascertained between status or major concerning what they would change their majors to, if they should change their major field of study. Importantly, one hundred students would not change their majors at all, even though this included forty-four non-preference students. [Table 4.14 and Figure 4.12.]

Discussion

Based on the data presented, a number of hypothetical questions can be raised concerning dropouts and returnees.

Do Returnees Differ From Dropouts?

Most of the data presented indicates that returnees differ from dropouts only in minor ways: 1) More returnees than dropouts tend to be married, and 2) Returnees had achieved higher G.P.A.'s prior to dropping out. Supporting this, married students, both dropouts and returnees, attain higher G.P.A.'s. Hence, if a population to be encouraged to return

Table 4.14

Change Major

	Drop. vs. Return.		N.-P. vs. D.M.	
Would Not Change	77	73	73	77
Liberal Arts	9	16	10	14
Other	14	11	17	9
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%

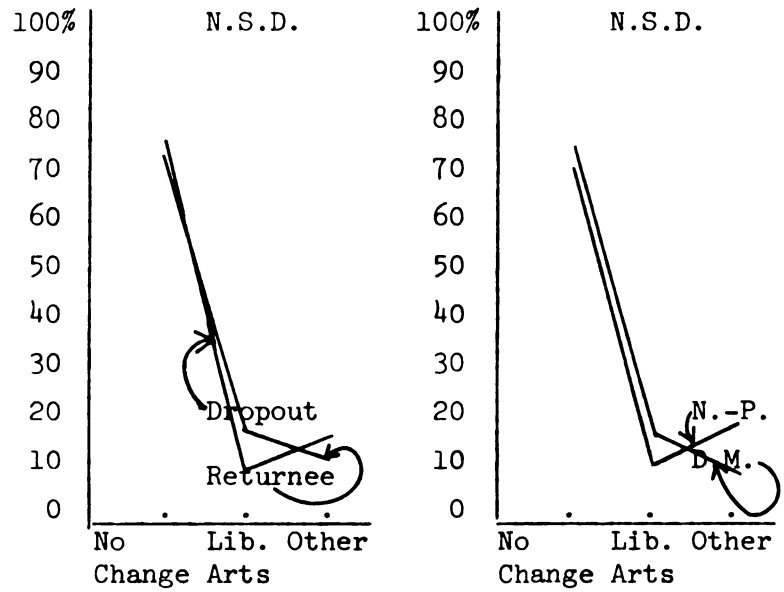

Figure 4.12

Change Major

were chosen, married dropouts would possibly be a better choice than single dropouts, since they would in general maintain higher G.P.A.'s and thus insure greater probability of success.

Returnees cited more personal reasons for not re-enrolling when they dropped out. Those who dropped out generally tended to identify a lack of time and/or a fulfillment of goals as their primary reasons. Obviously this indicates that many students are not re-enrolling because they may have transferred without graduating, or they otherwise fulfilled whatever goals they had set for themselves, and as such could be viewed as having had a successful experience at Lansing Community College. Indeed, this could be as high as 25% of all the dropouts. Nevertheless, 13% of the returnees cited they had previously fulfilled their goals, yet they eventually returned to take more classes. This may reflect how short range the goals of many dropouts are, and they need to eventually find more goals.

Another interpretation that might be developed is that many returnees are more able to see themselves as the reason for not continuing and as such are not as likely to blame outside-factors as the cause. Thus, only they have to change, not the Division of Arts and Sciences or its courses. It, also, may be that many returnees perceive more realistically that they were the primary reason for dropping out in contrast to dropouts in general, of whom many are "looking" for a reason. Finally, it may be easier to admit personal failure

when it has been overcome (indicated by returning) than it is if it has not been conquered.

Beyond these factors, this study failed to identify any differences between dropouts and returnees.

What is the Relationship of Instruction to Attrition and Holding Power?

No specific class or group of liberal arts classes seems to affect attrition among liberal arts students positively or negatively. Those classes reported as most satisfying or most disappointing were spread quite evenly across the five liberal arts departments in relative proportion to their enrollments. Even the reasons offered produced no significant results. Forty-five percent of those listing reasons why they disliked a class blamed the instruction, while 30% of those citing reasons for liking a particular class said they liked the instruction. Of those disappointed by a class, 41% contended it was the content or material, while of those who were satisfied by a class 40% declared it was the content or material. So instruction and class content were most frequently reported as the strongest attitude factors in student satisfaction with courses at Lansing Community College.

Married dropouts and returnees tended to view their instruction more positively than did single dropouts and returnees, but this may be because they tended to earn higher G.P.A.'s. Interestingly, very few students mentioned poor grades as a reason for leaving.

It may be concluded that instruction neither causes students to drop out of college nor does it encourage them to return. It may have some effect on the students' leaving or returning when it is linked with some other variable or variables, but directly it is not a factor.

What is the Effect of Working and Attrition?

Both dropouts and returnees who were employed tended to achieve lower G.P.A.'s, but no other differences were uncovered. Of the students who were interviewed, 117 (82%) were employed. Surprisingly, 82 (70%) of those 117 who were employed worked 36 or more hours a week, even though 51 (44%) said they thought their job interfered with their college work. Although it could be expected that returnees specifically might be different from dropouts in general, 74% of the returnees worked 36 or more hours a week and 53% said their job interfered with their school work.

Working and going to school is a way of life for Lansing Community College students. Although their work may have affected whether or not students dropped out, nevertheless it seemed to exert little influence on whether they returned or whether they continued to work once they had returned. As the data illustrates, they continue to work just as much as they did when they dropped out.

An unusual finding revealed that all eleven of the students who said they had been encouraged to enroll in school by their employer were non-preference students. Of these eleven, six were dropouts and five were returnees. This

might indicate that these students were responding to their employers' wishes more so than their own since none of them had declared a liberal arts major.

Does a Dropout's Attitude About College Affect His Possible Return?

It appears based on this study that a notable difference exists between non-preference students and declared majors. Both dropouts and returnees who have declared their majors appeared to have developed a more traditional attitude about college. They viewed the instruction they received more positively, they earned higher G.P.A.'s, they "liked" more liberal arts courses, and they attended college for college related reasons rather than for personal ones. In contrast, the non-preference liberal arts students possessed the opposite characteristics indicating that it might be very difficult for them to find satisfaction in a system designed to reward and enforce the more traditional attitudes and behaviors. However, the direction of any cause and effect relationship was not determined by this study, so it is unknown whether non-preference students developed these characteristics before or after their encounter with college.

Are Non-Preference Liberal Arts Dropouts and Returnees Different From Declared Liberal Arts Dropouts and Returnees?

This question is simply answered with an overwhelming "YES." Declared majors achieved higher G.P.A.'s, liked aspects of the classroom most, attended Lansing Community College for college-related factors, and strongly chose liberal arts classes as their most satisfying. In contrast,

non-preference students tended to attain lower G.P.A.'s, enrolled in Lansing Community College for personal reasons, and chose non-liberal arts classes as their most satisfying.

Interestingly, non-preference students also chose more non-liberal arts classes as their most disappointing ones than did declared majors. This may be accounted for in at least two ways. Quite likely the data related to the non-preference student population was tainted by responses of many students who were "officially" identified as liberal arts students, but who in fact may have been misclassified by the registrar's office. Thus, these students were often taking non-liberal arts courses, and as such may have indicated them as most satisfying or disappointing. Another influential factor might be that since they had not declared a major, they were "shopping" for an area of interest. Unrestricted by a declared curriculum and its specified liberal arts courses, these students took advantage of the freedom to chose courses that may have been interesting to them.

This inclination to "search and explore" is supported by the findings that non-preference students attending Lansing Community College for more personal reasons than did declared majors. They may have come to find out for themselves if college was "the route to travel" and whether they could find something of interest there. Since declared majors cited college related factors for enrolling, possibly this indicates they have found what they were looking for in the college.

Another unusual finding disclosed that non-preference students did not indicate a desire to change to a specific major. Over 70% declared they would not change, thus suggesting they had yet to find what they were looking for, or they were not looking for anything in particular. Only 10% asserted they would declare a liberal arts major, whereas 11% reported they would choose a major other than in the liberal arts.

It is also known that non-preference students tend to earn lower G.P.A.'s and view the subscale of instruction more negatively than declared majors. Since the five subscales intercorrelated significantly we can infer that non-preference students may not have perceived college as being important, they may have given Lansing Community College (and possibly themselves) low status, they possibly lacked self-motivation, and they could have viewed the college environment negatively. Finally, the incidence of return is significantly less for non-preference students compared to declared majors. Yet, the reasons for their leaving or returning are different, indicating difference treatments must be developed to assist those dropouts and returnees with non-preference students to continue or return if it is in their best interest.

If attitude is a key factor affecting the attrition of non-preference students and declared majors, then this is definitely a variable Lansing Community College can employ to its and the students' greatest advantage. As pointed out,

however, no single treatment may be uniformly applied, but several treatments for a range of specific groups may be necessary.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Summary

This study was designed to identify institutionally controllable variables affecting dropout and returnee liberal arts students at Lansing Community College. From the descriptive data collected hypotheses regarding attrition and holding power would be suggested and subsequently used experimentally by the division of arts and sciences.

The subjects interviewed were a stratified random sample of dropout and returnee liberal arts students all of whom had been enrolled during the fall or winter terms, 1972-1973, at Lansing Community College. Two hundred students, one hundred dropouts and one hundred returnees, were selected to be interviewed via telephone by trained student interviewers. One hundred fifty were actually reached (75%) including eight who refused to be interviewed. Those reached proportionately reflected the demographic make-up of the overall dropout and returnee population for the academic terms selected.

Each student interviewed was asked a series of open-ended questions concerning his purposes for attending Lansing Community College, his reasons for not re-enrolling, (also,

for a returnee his reasons for returning), and his attitudes about selected factors pertaining to Lansing Community College.

After the open-ended questions were completed, each interviewee was asked to respond to thirty-strongly worded statements designed to measure his attitudes on five sub-scales: Self-Motivation, Instruction, Status, Importance of College, Environment. He responded to each statement with "I agree," "I'm not sure," or "I do not agree."

Once the interviewing was completed, the data were transferred to punched data processable cards, and various forms of analysis were carried out. The Office of Research Consultation at Michigan State University assisted in this procedure.

Analysis of variance and chi-square tests produced results that indicated dropouts and returnees were different in that more returnees tended to be married than dropouts, and returnees earned higher G.P.A.'s than dropouts. Also, married students earned higher G.P.A.'s than did single students.

In addition an equal proportion of dropouts and returnees devoted time to gainful employment while attending college, and both groups worked approximately equivalent hours per week. Also, both dropouts and returnees in equal proportions said their work interfered with going to college.

The major finding of the study was that non-preference students differed greatly from declared majors in the combined population of dropouts and returnees. Declared majors shared a more traditional view of college, viewed the

instruction they received positively, earned higher G.P.A.'s, liked more liberal arts courses, and attended college for college related reasons rather than personal ones. Non-preference students possessed the opposite characteristics.

Conclusions

1. More returning students were married than were dropouts.

2. Returning students earned higher G.P.A.'s than had dropouts.

3. Married students, both dropouts and returnees, earned higher G.P.A.'s.

4. Both dropouts and returnees shared similar attitudes about working and attending college.

5. Non-preference students, both dropouts and returnees, tended to view college in an untraditional fashion, evaluated instruction received more negatively, earned lower G.P.A.'s, liked non-liberal arts courses more than liberal arts courses, and enrolled in college courses for personal reasons.

6. Declared majors, both dropouts and returnees, viewed college in a traditional fashion, evaluated instruction received more positively, earned higher G.P.A.'s, liked liberal arts courses more than non-liberal arts courses, and attended college for college related reasons.

Discussion

Certainly the challenges of decreasing attrition and/or

increasing holding power regarding liberal arts students at Lansing Community College are most worthy of exploration. It should be apparent to even the most uninvolved faculty member, administrator, or staff person that it is advantageous for both the students affected and the college to deal directly with these issues.

Reducing Attrition

Initially it is important that students who enroll a first time be encouraged to continue to enroll in following academic terms. This implies proactive programs designed to anticipate potential attrition among specific groups of students. Such programs should be designed with the basic goals of assisting those students who want to stay in school, rather than trying to keep students in who have no desire to be here. This can only be determined, however, through a strong counseling-advising program that involves all members of the college, and especially the faculty. Nationally, we know

> Few institutions have felt disposed either to provide the needed, specially trained counseling staff or to insist that all or a large majority of faculty counsel students and become somewhat competent in the activity. Adequate counseling or advising of students is an expensive undertaking, but it is one which students say they want and need. Relatively few institutions have been willing to rearrange the deployment of their resources to provide this effective service.[1]

This is supported by this study's finding that students who reported receiving sufficient help in selecting courses also

viewed favorably the instruction they received and accorded Lansing Community College higher status than those students who judged they did not receive enough help.

As a start, faculty and staff who would volunteer their time could be assisted in developing stronger advising techniques that are at least two-fold: 1) Advising should be an ongoing activity of the division. Actively concerned faculty who are constantly in a position to assist students seeking clarification of their personal goals and the college's role in those goals through contacts in the classrooms, offices, and informal areas of the college should take advantage of these numerous opportunities. 2) More sincere and effective advising procedures should be established during the pre-registration and regular registration periods. Possibly a temporary divisional advising center, manned by interested faculty and staff, could be set up during these periods. Faculty could direct students to this center, especially by giving it credibility in their attitudes towards its functions.

Various sub-groups of liberal arts students need to be "adopted" by faculty and staff. For example, married women possibly need to know of a certain faculty member who is interested in advising them and assisting them in cutting red tape, arranging their class schedules around children's school hours and husbands' working hours, and clarifying their roles in college in contrast to the divergent roles of unmarried students. This specialized attention would

differ little from the treatment currently extended to veterans. It might be added that the population of married female students is much greater than the number of verterans enrolled.

Another important group, obviously, is composed of non-preference liberal arts students. As the study shows, these students need considerable help in clarifying their goals. They drop out at a similar ratio to declared students, but their incidence of return is significantly lower. This indicates that their problems must be dealt with before they actually leave. They need to know better what the college is, how they fit into it, and where they can go for special help.

Students contemplating absence for a term or better should be specially counseled prior to leaving so that they do not harbor guilt feelings about dropping out, and especially, so they will feel truly welcome to return at another time. Instead of requiring students to seek out particular instructors to sign drop cards, the liberal arts division should designate a specific office each term to handle drops, to briefly interview dropouts as they go, and possibly cut the red tape. If the reason for dropping is something still within the institution's control, the student might be assisted and thereby dissuaded from leaving.

Finally, the college and most importantly the faculty must accept the necessity for a student's employment and

how the demands of his work responsibilities affect and relate to this class performance. As the study shows, a high percentage of both dropouts and returnees work, and most of them work twenty or more hours a week. These students need a great deal of help in clarifying the role of work as it conditions the role of going to school. It is reasonable to assume that many are trying to attain a security of income while simultaneously amassing college credits in order to earn their degree as soon as possible. The conflict is obvious to faculty, but few working students are able to perceive it in terms of the hours demanded to successfully master subject matter and complete courses satisfactorily. This notion is supported by the finding that over half of the dropouts and returnees worked and felt their work interfered with their schooling, yet each group persisted in doing both. Since working is a fact of life, the arts and sciences division should incorporate an in-service program to more thoroughly understand the problem and develop ways of assisting students to cope with their situation of both working and going to school.

Increasing the Number of Returnees

Because so many students drop out after each term, it is important to encourage as many as possible to return including those who have already fulfilled their original goals. An interesting finding of the study however, shows very few dropouts or returnees actually fulfill their goals.

Successfully persuading dropouts to re-enroll becomes all the more important if programs to reduce attrition either are not developed or fail.

A major source of potential returning students lies in those dropouts who are married or become married. The study indicates married students originally earned higher G.P.A.'s than did single students, and that married students who return earn higher G.P.A.'s in general. Since married students are more successful academically than single students, special programs should be developed to attract their return. Such a program could include special sections of courses, especially basic courses, designed for married students only (similar to honors sections). Married students possibly need to develop unique sense of identification with the college. Other programs might include special husband and wife seminars, weekend classes designed for married students, and the assignment of a special co-ordinator to assist and attract married students.

The most important tactic to encourage students to return is the development of a public relations campaign aimed at these students particularly. A new positive image for the returning student within a community college can be created so that returning students feel welcome and re-enroll with pride and not diffidence. This image can be enhanced by providing a specially speeded up re-enrollment procedure. All should see and understand that the returning student is highly regarded by the college.

As an extension of the public relations campaign, an alumni office should be established to identify alumni, to communicate with them, to set special seminars and activities for them, to assist them in re-enrolling, and to make them feel they are always welcome at the college and college sponsored events.

Some of the students interviewed in this study responded that a member of the college staff, faculty, or administration influenced their enrollment. If each employee is more aware of how much he can potentially affect enrollment and re-enrollment, then another indirect blow can be struck in the way each "sells" the college.

Returning non-preference students should be identified and accorded some special counseling to assist them in identifying goals which the college can assist them to achieve. Since a great many of the non-preference liberal arts students enrolled in non-liberal arts courses, as evidenced by the courses they reported as liking or disliking, greater care should be taken to insure non-preference liberal arts students actually are interested in the liberal arts on a non-preference basis.

It is further possible that many non-preference liberal arts students may not identify with the liberal arts courses currently offered in the division of arts and sciences. This could account for their enrollment in so many non-liberal arts courses. As the literature suggests, the liberal arts in the most traditional sense may not be relevant to many

students. Often non-preference liberal arts students are "liberal arts" students only according to curricular code designation, but in fact the courses they choose indicate that behaviorally they are not connected to the liberal art curricula. A solid evaluation of the current liberal arts curricula should occur, and non-preference students should be surveyed carefully to identify what they dislike about liberal arts courses and what kinds of liberal arts courses would be acceptable to them. Furthermore, modifications to the present delivery systems may be necessary to once again attract these students.

Implications for Further Research

This study concludes that a primary determinant in whether a dropout returns for courses is his declaration of a major. Non-preference students should be questioned to ascertain whether those who drop out are significantly different from those who continue to take courses. It would be most interesting to discover what characteristics motivate non-preference (high dropout potentiality) students who persist for three or more terms. Since their attrition potential is highest, possibly the college is somehow effective, albeit unwittingly, in assisting them to stay.

Liberal arts student who work should be investigated to determine whether working dropouts and returnees differ significantly from those who persist, especially in how each values college as compared to work and its benefits.

A most important area for further research would be measurement of dropout fear and anxiety levels, especially of those dropouts who were undeclared majors, compared to measurement of anxiety levels of successful persisters. If the literature is correct (see Cross, Mayhew, Cohen and Brawer), this research should produce variables the college could use to reduce attrition and increase holding power.

As the study shows, students who value a college education little also adjudge the college low status. Since these students often were non-preference students, an experimental program should be undertaken to discover ways of improving the status of the college especially in the eyes of these students with the hypotheses that students who accord the college high status, value college more, and, therefore, are likely to be persisters.

Hypotheses For Experimental Study

1. Compared to students who persist in college, students, especially non-preference students, who drop out of college have lower self-concepts, have a greater number of negative experiences, have higher fear and anxiety levels, and value a college education little.

2. The incidence of students returning to college after being out one or more terms will be higher if they see other students who have returned given special treatment in advising and registration and by faculty.

3. Various student subgroups (married women, working men, parents of pre-school children, adults over forty years of age, etc.) will have a higher rate of persistence if they are encouraged to know one another through information activities and are assisted by faculty members interested in and formally assigned to such subgroups.

4. Since non-preference liberal arts students take many non-liberal arts courses, non-preference students are more likely to persist if they are formally assisted in an encouraged to "shop around" in non-liberal arts courses as a means of finding an area of interest.

5. Students with untraditional views of college are more likely to persist if directed to seek advising and classes from faculty with similar views; students with traditional views of college are more likely to persist if directed to seek advising and classes from faculty with similar views.

6. Both declared majors and non-preference students will be stronger persisters in college if they have personal, non-classroom contact with their instructors once a week than will those students who do not.

7. Working students who attend college because their employers encouraged them to do so are more likely to be non-preference students and are more likely to drop out than working students who come to school of their will.

8. Students with unclear college goals, generally non-preference students, are less likely to drop out if

they personally review these unclear goals with an interested member of the college staff, faculty, or administration.

9. Married dropouts are more likely to return to college than single dropouts and will earn higher G.P.A.'s than will single dropouts who do return.

Approach to the Future

Increasing pressure from both outside and inside the realm of higher education is being applied on all liberal arts schools and faculties to justify the content of their curricula in light of the demands and problems of the modern world. Indeed, many liberal arts faculty are beginning to have doubts of their own. From Washington and the Office of Education comes the summary that "general education leads to general unemployment." All education should be cut to the bare bones of applicability. Yet, haunting these judgments are the national crises and scandals of Vietnam, Watergate, the breakdown in the concept of the family, crime, poverty, and ecology. The effects of men who would put practicality ahead of values, technological and personal advancement ahead of forethought on consequences, and ends before means are all to obvious to us today.

It would appear that the last barrier between an enlightened nation of democratic people and utter chaos and inevitable destruction must be maintained and increased by the very heart of a good liberal arts education--the development and recognition of the need for values that rest on more than sheer expediency.

It would seem that the faculty and administration of the Division of Arts and Sciences should begin to study the relationships of its courses and programs with the modern world and to develop ways of promoting such courses and programs in order that they be seen more accurately in light of the shallow criticism of those who look disdainfully upon anything that is not immediately applicable or immediately transferable into a lucrative pursuit of the moment. Those in the liberal arts must not assume that this issue of relevancy shall pass like a common fad. Its effects are immediately evident in enrollment figures; they are distantly but blatantly obvious in the misplaced values of many of those involved in Watergate and its ensuing controversy. Ultimately, any challenge to the relevancy of the liberal arts must be met and overcome through firm philosophical commitment, through aggressive innovative action demonstrating resolute belief in their value, and through enrollment figures that not merely remain constant but increase as tangible evidence that at least one enemy, attrition, has been defeated.

ENDNOTES

ENDNOTES

Chapter I: Statement of Problem

[1]Lyman A. Glenny, "Pressures on Higher Education," in College & University Journal (A Reprint) XII (September, 1973), p. 2.

[2]Ibid., p. 17.

[3]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[4]Mark Weigel, "A Comparison of Persisters and Non-Persisters in a Community College, ERIC ED 044 115, 1969, p. 1.

[5]"Considering the amount of time, energy and money spent in the recruitment-admissions process, the problem of attrition in each class prior to graduation cannot be ignored. And, since a 'low' retention rate may have implications for institutional actions -- in such areas as curriculum evaluation, admissions and student-faculty relations -- this type of 'statistic' reflects a state of affairs which is important on academic as well as 'economic' grounds . . .", see Boris Blai, Jr., "Two-Year College Dropouts--Why Do They Leave? Who Are They? How Many?", ERIC ED 058 879, March, 1972, p. 1.

[6]Hugh J. Turner, Jr., "The Half That Leaves: A Limited Survey of Attrition in Community Colleges," ERIC ED 038 127, March, 1970, p. 5.

[7]Turner uses the term "self-related factors" and "college related factors" to make essentially the same distinction. Turner, p. 8.

[8]See James W. Trent and Leland Medsker, Beyond High School (San Francisco, 1968), p. 260.

[9]Jerome Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," in Harvard Educational Review, XLII (November, 1972).

[10]Ibid., p. 526.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Karabel, p. 527.

[13]Ibid., p. 520.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Donald L. Kester, "NORCAL - An Impressive Achievement: A Review," ERIC ED 044 111, 1970, p. 5.

[16]Roger Howell, Jr., "Questions About the Liberal Arts," in College Management, February, 1973, p. 9.

[17]Glenny, p. 5.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

[1]Arthur W. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, "Student Characteristics; Personality and Dropout Propensity," ERIC ED 038 130, March 1970, p. 17.

[2]Boris Blai, Jr., "Two-Year College Dropouts--Why Do They Leave? Who Are They? How Many?", ERIC ED 058 879, March 1972.

[3]Ibid., p. 17.

[4]Ibid.

[5]See Turner.

[6]Ibid., p. 3, n. 4.

[7]Ibid., p. 7.

[8]Ibid., p. 8.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Cohen and Brawer, pp. 17-18.

[11]Ibid., p. 18.

[12]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[13]Donald L. Kester, "The Lesson From the Three-Year NORCAL Attrition Study: Many of the Potential Dropouts Can be Helped. Phase III Final Report," ERIC ED 058 779, July, 1971.

[14]Kester, p. 5.

[15]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[16]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[17]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[18]Ibid., p. 13.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 19.

[22]Gunars Reimanis, "Student Attrition and Program Effectiveness," 1973, p. 2.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 3.

[26]Ibid., p. 4.

[27]Ibid., pp. 3-9.

[28]See Karabel.

[29]Ibid., p. 534.

[30]Ibid.

[31]See Bali, p. 7.

[32]See Turner, p. 8.

[33]See Bali, p. 7.

[34]Cohen and Brawer, p. 13.

[35]K. Patricia Cross, Beyond the Open Door (San Francisco, 1971), p. 31.

[36]Glenny, p. 3.

[37]Lewis B. Mayhew, Colleges Today and Tomorrow (San Francisco, 1969), p. 101.

Chapter IV: Analysis and Discussion

[1]Cyril Hoyt, "Test Reliability Estimated by Analysis of Variance," in Psychometrika, VI (June, 1941), 153.

[2]Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, Educational Research: An Introduction (New York, 1971), p. 287.

Chapter V: Summary and Discussion

[1]Mayhew, p. 101.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thirty Strongly Worded Items Administered to All Dropouts and Returnees Interviewed

1. People who work around LCC are interested in seeing students succeed.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

2. Going to college is generally a very satisfying experience for me.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

3. I often felt uneasy when I was around LCC.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

4. My instructors wanted me to learn.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

5. LCC is really not much different than high school.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

6. People who go to college make more money than people who don't.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

7. Whenever I wanted some information at LCC I often got the run-around.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

8. My parents don't think a college eudcation is very important.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

9. It was easy to make friends at LCC.

   1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

10. I often got behind in my school work.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

11. A student can see an LCC instructor for problems other than class work.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

12. I was a better student in high school than I was at LCC.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

13. When taking classes at LCC, I usually missed one or more classes a week.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

14. Neither of my parents ever attended college.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

15. I probably would get a better education at a four-year school.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

16. College is easier for most other people than it is for me.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

17. Most of the courses I took at LCC didn't seem very practical to me.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

18. When I was taking classes at LCC, I scheduled my study time and I was able to keep my schedule.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

19. My instructors enjoyed seeing students in their offices.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

20. Getting an Associate degree is important to me.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

21. I wouldn't recommend LCC to my friends.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

22. I am a better student in college than I was in high school.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

23. Most of my friends have never gone to college.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

24. LCC was a good school for me.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

25. If forced to choose between working and going to school, I would give up going to school.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

26. I would feel uncomfortable wearing a shirt with any kind of LCC emblem on it.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

27. I now feel less sure about my ability to get through college than before I went to LCC.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

28. My instructors seldom knew me by name.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

29. I found most of my classes interesting.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

30. I definitely will transfer to another college after I'm through at LCC.

    1 = Agree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not Sure

Open Ended Questions for Fall Term Dropouts*

1. What was the main reason you did not re-enroll at LCC winter term after enrolling for coursework last fall term?

2. Have you since re-enrolled?

   Yes No

3. If NO, do you plan to re-enroll at LCC in the future?

   1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Not Sure 5 = DNA

4. What about LCC do you like the most?

5. What is your biggest gripe about LCC?

6. Were you working at a job at the same time you were taking classes at LCC?

   1 = Yes 2 = No

7. If YES, about how many hours a week were you working?

   1 = 1-10; 2 = 11-20; 3 = 21-35; 4 = 36+; 5 = DNA: Not Working

8. Do you think your job interfered with your college work at LCC?

   1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Not Sure 4 = Blank 5 = DNA: Not Working

9. What was the most disappointing class you took at LCC?

   [Pause, let them give class, then ask] why?
   [After the reason is given, then ask] did you finish the course?
   What grade did you receive?

10. What was the most satisfying class you took at LCC and why?

    [Pause, let them give class, then ask] why?
    [After the reason is given, then ask] did you finish the course?
    What grade did you receive?

---

*The same questions with minor word changes were asked of winter term dropouts.

11. What was your primary reason for coming to LCC? Did any person influence you to come to LCC? If so, who (list by role, not name)?

12. Would you change your major field of study if you returned to LCC?

    1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Not Sure

13. If YES, what would you change it to?

14. Since you have attended LCC, have you changed your career or life plans any?

    1 = Yes 2 = No

15. Did you usually feel you received enough help from people employed at the college in selecting your courses?

    1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = No Opinion

Open Ended Questions for Fall Term Returnees*

The Returnees who were interviewed were asked the same questions as the dropouts with the following additions or changes:

1. According to the records here at the college, you re-enrolled for classes in the fall term of 1972 after having stopped taking classes in previous terms. What was the main reason you did not re-enroll for any classes until this last fall term?

2. What influenced you to re-enroll for classes this last fall term?

6. When you have re-enrolled for classes at LCC, did you have any problems being re-admitted?

    1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Not Sure

7. If YES, would you describe your problem? Pause = then ask: What would you suggest the college do to correct this problem?

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*The same questions with minor word changes were asked of winter returnees.

APPENDIX B

TELEPHONE FORMAT

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TELEPHONE FORMAT

General Format for Telephone Interviews

"Hello, is _____ there, please."
(John Smith)

"_____, my name is _____ and I'm a student at
(John)

Lansing Community College. I'm working on a special project sponsored by the college to gather information about the college which would be used to improve its services. Could you take five minutes to answer some questions concerning the college and its courses? Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous."

IF YES: "Thanks _____, before we being, I want to ask
(John)
you to be completely frank in your responses, since from the information you give us, we're going to suggest changes that LCC can make in its program.

IF NO: "Thank you, _____, I'm sorry to bother you.
(John)
Good-bye."

IF NOT HOME: "I'm a student at Lansing Community College, could you tell me when I might be able to reach _____?"

IF MOVED: "I'm a student at Lansing Community College, could you possibly tell me how I might reach _____, would you happen to have his phone number?

Format of Directions for Thirty Strongly Worded Items

"I appreciated your help on the items I have asked you so far; now I would like your responses to some statements about Lansing Community College. I will read to you a statement, and I would like you to respond by saying either 'I agree,' 'I disagree,' or 'I'm not sure.' Please give your responses quickly. Do you understand my directions?"

If YES, begin.

If NO; Ask him what he does not understand and then explain and give the following sample:

"If I said to you, Lansing Community College is located in downtown Lansing,--would you say you agree, you disagree, or you're not sure?"

"Fine, let's begin."

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