

REFRAMING THE ISSUE OF PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION:

AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation was concerned with why some adults participate in organized adult education activities while others do not. The specific research question was:

What are the conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities held by those in the workplace who have attained a high school diploma or less?

A comprehensive review of participation research literature revealed that since the 1920's participation research has been dominated by particular approaches and yielded consistent descriptions of the characteristics of those who participate and those who do not. People's reasonings beneath those findings have remained mainly hidden from researchers, however. In contrast, this research study explored its research question from a different focus, perspective and technique in the hopes of contributing to adult education researchers' understandings of the phenomenon of participation. It focussed on the heterogeneous nature of those who are less likely to participate and used an interpretive perspective and a qualitative technique. Phenomenography was the particular interpretive perspective used in this study. It is a relatively unique research approach developed in Goteborg, Sweden which yields conceptions--that is, categories of description which represent the variations in people's ways of viewing, experiencing or conceptualizing a phenomenon.

A pre-tested, open-ended interview collected data about workers' conceptions. A survey-type questionnaire and printed materials about the organization and educational offerings provided additional information. The

study identified respondents' conceptions about 1) the context in which the study was conducted (control of workplace opportunities, outcomes of work, impact of technology), 2) opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities and 3) uses of participation in organized adult education activities. In the process, it refined terms, uncovered new dimensions of the issue of participation and challenged traditional assumptions which have guided such research.

Insights from this study were integrated into four major areas of relevance to the study of participation in organized adult education activities. These highlighted: 1) the important role of the workplace in forming workers' views of organized adult education activities, 2) the artificial tidiness of the participant/non-participant distinction and 3) three underlying themes which represented workers' focus on the individual, expression of satisfaction and recognition of symbolism. An agenda to direct future adult education research and practice was derived from those themes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	vii
I. Introduction	1
II. Development of the research problem	6
A. The research focus	6
B. The research perspective	10
C. The research technique	15
D. Toward a research question	23
1. Adult education activities	24
2. Conceptions about organized adult education activities	28
3. Non-participants	30
4. A particular context	33
E. Statement of research question	35
III. Research design and implementation	37
A. Phenomenography	37
B. Data collection	44
1. Selection of setting	44
2. Selection of respondents	45
3. Selection of data collection technique	49
C. Data analysis	52
D. Limitations of the study	55
E. Summary	55
IV. Context	57
A. Description of work and the workplace	57
1. Work	58
2. The workplace	59
B. Workers' conceptions of control of workplace opportunities	63
1. Conception I: Workplace opportunities are other-determined	
64	
a. Level 1: Individuals and groups in authority	
control workplace opportunities	64
b. Level 2: An organizational system controls	
workplace opportunities	65
c. Level 3: The times control workplace opportunities	
68	
2. Conception II: Workplace opportunities are self-determined .	
69	
3. Discussion	71
C. Workers' conceptions of the outcomes of work	77
1. Conception I: Work has intrinsic outcomes	78
a. Level 1: Work has positive intrinsic outcomes	79
b. Level 2: Work has negative intrinsic outcomes	79
2. Conception II: Work has extrinsic outcomes	80

a. Level 1: Work has positive extrinsic outcomes	81
b. Level 2: Work has negative extrinsic outcomes	82
3. Discussion	83
D. Workers' conceptions of the impact of technology on the workplace	87
1. Conception I: Technology will not affect work in the future	88
a. Level 1: Some work has not and will not be affected by technology	88
b. Level 2: Some work has been affected by technology but will not be affected again	89
2. Conception II: Technology will affect work in the future	90
3. Discussion	92
E. Summary	94
V. Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities ...	96
A. Current research about opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities	96
1. Situational barriers	97
2. Institutional barriers	99
3. Dispositional barriers	100
B. Description of workers' opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities	105
1. Workplace	106
a. Employer-provided educational opportunities	106
b. Union-provided opportunities	112
2. Community	113
C. Workers' conceptions of opportunities to participate	115
1. Conception I: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are other-determined	116
a. Level 1: Those in authority grant opportunities to participate	117
b. Level 2: Those in authority impose opportunities to participate	119
2. Conception II: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are self-determined	120
3. Discussion	122
D. Summary	130
VI. Participation in organized adult education activities	131
A. Current research about uses of participation in organized adult education activities	131
1. Nominated reasons for participation	133
2. Orientations	134
B. Description of workers' participation in organized adult education activities	138
C. Workers' conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities	144

1. Conception I: The skills and information acquired through participation in organized adult education activities are used in their practical application	145
2. Conception II: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to satisfy workplace criteria .	147
a. Level 1: Participation satisfies explicit educational criteria in the workplace	147
b. Level 2: Participation satisfies implicit criteria in the workplace	149
3. Conception III: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to allocate status	150
4. Conception IV: Through participation in organized adult education activities one acquires a personal possession	152
5. Discussion	154
D. Summary	164
VII. Integration of findings and implications of this study	165
A. Role of the workplace in relation to workers' views of participation in organized adult education activities	166
B. The participant/non-participant distinction	171
C. Themes underlying workers' views of participation in organized adult education activities	177
D. Conclusion	181
VIII. Bibliography	183
IX. Appendix I: Interview schedule and questionnaire	197
A. Interview schedule	197
B. Questionnaire	200
X. Appendix II: Results of independent judge reliability test	203
XI. Appendix III: Respondents' participation	205
XII. Appendix IV: Employer-provided organized adult education activities	211

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I. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is concerned with why some adults participate in organized adult education while others do not. Although the following chapters discuss this study in detail, this particular chapter serves as a basic introduction to the research question and the approaches which guided this research project. The specific research question which provided the focus for this study was:

What are the conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities held by those in the workplace who have attained a high school diploma or less?

This question was derived from hints in the research literature which suggested that adults' conceptions of the *uses* of participation in adult education are related to their participation and non-participation. For example, Mahere, at the 1972 United Nations conference which focussed on the "forgotten people", spoke of adults who "do not sufficiently feel the need for education" (p. 19). Similarly, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) wrote of those who make "negative evaluations of the usefulness, appropriateness and pleasurability of engaging in adult education" (p. 139). Cropley (1985) discussed those who see adult education as "irrelevant to their lives or boring or snobbish" (p. 3788). From these comments, a theme emerged which forms the basis of the problem studied here: people's conceptions of the uses of participating in adult education are basic to their participation or non-participation in those activities.

At first glance, one might well question the advantages of adding to the plethora of adult education research findings related to the issue of

participation. After all, since the early 1920's there has been intensive and systematic research into the area. That work has, however, yielded results that are frustrating in their consistency. For over six decades, researchers have been able to state with confidence that the majority of North Americans do not participate in organized adult education and that the characteristics of those who do participate are identifiable and tend to differ from those who do not. Nonetheless, throughout those years, peoples' reasonings beneath those findings have remained mainly hidden from researchers (Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner & Newberry, 1959; Cross, 1981). A comprehensive review of the existing literature revealed a characteristic of those studies which may be related to the phenomenon of non-participation. It was clear that from the earliest research into participation in organized adult education activities up to the most recent studies, particular approaches dominated the research. Studies tended to replicate a particular focus, perspective and technique. In contrast, this research study explored its research question from a different focus, perspective and technique in the hopes of contributing to adult education researchers' understandings of the phenomenon of participation. It aimed to 'reframe' those approaches--that is, it redirected the research focus, perspective and technique away from prevailing and toward less dominant research approaches.

In the first instance, this study reframed the research *focus* and explored the varied conceptions of the uses of organized adult education held within a group who are most frequently identified as non-participants--those who have attained a high school diploma or less.

This is in contrast to the dominant research focus which has identified particular demographic characteristics as typical of participants and others as typical of non-participants. That focus thus de-emphasized similarities and dissimilarities within groups who share certain demographic characteristics. This study also differs from the dominant research focus which tends to centre on those who participate and to present non-participants as somehow deficient.

In the second instance, this study adopted an interpretive *perspective* on the problem. It thus sought out the meanings that people attach to objects and activities. Since interpretive work also emphasizes the importance of considering the context within which the phenomenon occurs, this study is conducted within a specific context--the workplace. That particular setting was chosen because studies have suggested for some time that the nature of the workplace is closely related to adults' participation in organized adult education activities (Bergsten, 1977; Larsson & Helmstad, 1985; Rubenson, 1975; Wilensky, 1960). Adopting the interpretive perspective represented a shift away from the dominant perspective which has guided much of the participation research to date. That perspective, based in the physical and biological sciences, has been an empirical/analytic one.

In the third and final instance, a qualitative research *technique* was used rather than the dominant quantitative technique. Not only is the qualitative technique congruent with the epistemological foundations of the interpretive perspective, it also guides the data collection and analysis of a study. Over the years, quantitative survey research techniques and statistical

analyses have clearly provided adult educators with abundant information about the participation issue. However, both conceptually and methodologically, the quantitative approach has not proven entirely satisfactory in uncovering the reasons behind why some adults participate while others do not.

In the following five parts of this dissertation, this study attempts to develop the knowledge base of the field of adult education. To the extent that findings from this study are analyzed and compared to existing findings, theories and models of participation, they provide alternate understandings, interpretations and guidance for future adult education research, theory-building, practice and policy development. Consequently, this research took an initial step in addressing a major limitation of current participation research--its atheoretical nature (Boshier, 1973; Courtney, 1984; Dickinson & Clark, 1975; Houle, 1979; Mezirow, 1971; Rubenson, 1976; 1980), and thus began to address the "greatest challenge adult education confronts" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 31).

Chapter II details the development of the research question as introduced in Chapter I. First, the research question is developed in general terms using approaches different from ones dominant in the existing participation literature. It is then refined to the specific question which guided this study.

Chapter III discusses the research design. It begins by examining the particular kind of interpretive perspective, phenomenography, which this study used and the related notion of conceptions. It discusses data collection and analysis procedures, and outlines limitations of the study.

Chapter IV first provides a "thick description" of the research context's setting, educational opportunities and subjects. It then goes on to present the workers' conceptions about the workplace around the theme areas of control of workplace opportunities, outcomes of work and impact of technology on the workplace.

Chapters V presents the respondents' conceptions about opportunities for participating in organized adult education activities. A review of the current relevant literature is followed by information about the respondents' opportunities for participation and by descriptions of the workers' conceptions. The chapter concludes with discussion and interpretations of the conceptions. Chapter VI follows the form of Chapter V, but focusses on the respondents' conceptions about the uses of participation in organized adult education activities.

Chapter VII interprets the findings which are of most relevance to the study of the issue of participation and examines them and their implications for research and practice.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The focus, perspective and technique which are chosen to guide a research project have far reaching impacts. They influence the nature of the problem, and the research design and implementation. They have consequences for the findings of the study and their interpretation. It follows that policies and recommendations for further research and practice which are based on the research are affected as well. Thus, this part of this dissertation identifies the dominant research approaches associated with research into why some adults participate in adult education while others do not. It examines the issues that make those approaches problematic. It suggests alternate approaches as a possible means to illuminate the phenomenon of participation in different ways. These discussions of dominant and alternate approaches lead to the development of a basic research question. That question is further refined in the concluding portions of the chapter.

A. THE RESEARCH FOCUS

Even a superficial reading of the participation literature indicates that there is a particular focus which has dominated the research to date. Researchers have concentrated their attention on participants rather than on non-participants. To some extent, this is understandable, given that those who participate are more often and more easily contacted than those who seldom or never participate. Enrolled in programs sponsored by identifiable organizations and institutions, participants are a captive audience which can be easily located, observed and investigated. As well, in many instances

organizations and institutions routinely collect data about participants and make them available to researchers for analyses. Finally, there are fewer findings concerning non-participants since those who respond that they are not interested in adult education activities are frequently eliminated from further study.

This is not to suggest that studies which examine both participants and non-participants, or non-participants exclusively, have not been conducted. Indeed, some of the larger national surveys in both Canada and the United States have formulated their findings based on data from both participants and non-participants, and, although far less frequently, some studies have been conducted solely with non-participants. These kinds of studies have certainly informed the field of adult education about the phenomenon of participation. In the former case, descriptive data from large scale surveys have pointed to the differences between those who participate and those who do not. Further, those studies have focussed discussions regarding those disparities. In the latter case, studies focussing exclusively on non-participants have depicted more fully the characteristics of non-participants for adult educators. Both these kinds of studies have primarily answered questions of whom and how many with regard to participation. Fundamentally, however, they have neglected to explore the reasoning behind adults' participation or non-participation.

Three consequences flow from researchers' preoccupation with participants and participation. First, the interpretation of the data has proven somewhat problematic for researchers' understandings of non-participants. As the following example illustrates, it is not possible to simply reverse

the interpretation of these findings to represent non-participants: "Adult courses are more apt to be taken by persons who have had enough education before leaving school to appreciate the value of keeping on with their studies" (Lorimer, 1931, p. 50). Implicit in this statement is some comment about those who do not take courses. To untangle that comment and rephrase it in terms of non-participants is a linguistic challenge. Is it that: Adult courses are *less* apt to be taken by persons who have had *less* education before leaving school to appreciate the value of keeping on with their studies? Perhaps it is that: Adult courses are *less* apt to be taken by persons who have had enough education *after* leaving school to appreciate the value of keeping on with their studies? Alternately, it may be that: Adult courses are *less* apt to be taken by persons who have *not* had enough education *after* leaving school to appreciate the value of keeping on with their studies? Clearly, research which focusses on participation and participants does not necessarily lead to clear insights into non-participation and those who do not participate.

A second consequence of researchers' pre-occupation with participants and participation concerns the resultant view of the non-participant in relation to the participant. The participant is seen to be the norm and the non-participant is, in some way, deficient. The term *non-participant* is itself evocative of this notion and certainly there are researchers who label non-participants unfavorably. Non-participants have variously been called "the withdrawn, indifferent people" (Douglass, 1970, p. 89), "passive" (Rohan, 1979, p. 50), and those who have "an absence of any moral commitment in regard to the opportunities offered" (Lorenzetto, 1979, p. 58).

Underlying these comments is the view that non-participants have lower levels of motivation than participants. As Boshier (1983) argues, however, this perspective may be merely a rationalization that adult educators use to explain the undesired behaviour of non-participants; an explanation that conveniently lets adult education "off the hook" by blaming the non-participants. Adult educators thus shift the responsibility to redress inequalities in participation from themselves to the non-participants. To the extent that inequalities in participation in adult education activities result in social inequalities, adult educators thus relegate the responsibility for social inequalities to the individuals.

The third and final consequence which flows from researchers' pre-occupation with participants has been the dichotomization of the notions of participant and non-participant. Participants have been portrayed as unique and different from non-participants and the differences and similarities between the two groups have been stressed. In that process, the differences and similarities *within* each group have been deemphasized. Yet statistics reveal that within each group which is usually identified as typical participants or typical non-participants, there are atypical adults. For example, among those who are most frequently identified as non-participants, those with less than grade nine, five percent (5%) *do* participate. Even among those who most frequently participate--those with university degrees--the majority (59%) do not participate (Devereaux, 1985).

The focus of North American participation research literature has been on participants. That has fostered the notions that participants and participation are the preferred norms and that the important differences and

similarities to be studied are between participants and non-participants, rather than within those groups. Altering the research focus to converge on non-participants rather than participants would thus redirect current research. Indeed, there have been frequent calls in the adult education literature for such a shift (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Douglass & Moss, 1968; Long, 1983). These calls have even been made in international forums such as the 1972 United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conference on "the forgotten people" and the 1979 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication on the "non-participation issue." Simply adjusting the focus to the non-participant and the issue of non-participation would, however, be incomplete. Indeed, such a research project could merely serve to reinforce the notion that non-participants are unique and different from participants. Thus, this study examined the variations within a particular group which is usually considered to be less likely to participate. This alternate approach highlighted the differences and similarities within that group and explored its assumed homogeneity.

B. THE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

As has been noted, research into the phenomenon of participation in adult education activities has been extensive. Like all social science research, those studies have tried to make sense of particular phenomena. Further, they have been dominated by a particular research perspective. That perspective, with its epistemological foundations has guided the kinds of questions asked, the methodological techniques used and the interpretation

of data collected. Although some researchers are more purist in their analyses than others (see Tibbetts, 1982), most would agree that there are basic tenets which can be classified into relatively distinct research perspectives. Popkewitz (1984) has named three categories--empirical/analytic, interpretive and critical--which represent those major perspectives. Although his categories are artificially tidy and present the characteristics of each perspective in an overly-simple form, they nonetheless provide a useful framework to discuss research perspectives.

In Popkewitz's (1984) terms, all social science research and thus research into participation has been dominated by the empirical/analytic perspective. This perspective is based on the physical and biological sciences in which observation of phenomena has played a key role. This perspective assumes that it is possible to determine law-like regularities which are universally generalizable. In its pure form, the empirical/analytic perspective is said to be committed to a disinterested 'objective' science which separates the 'facts' from the contexts in which those 'facts' exist. This view of facts as pristine items or activities is paralleled by the notion that the social world consists of interacting variables which are different from each other and can thus be studied independently of each other. These views of facts and variables support the empirical/analytic researchers' preferences for precise and distinct definitions of variables. Using those formalized variables, empirical/analytic researchers seek to determine law-like regularities which ideally allow for predictive statements about causal relationships. This is done by establishing relationships between and among variables within samples which are said to be

statistically representative of a population. Empirical/analytic researchers then argue that the causal relationships and predictions made within the sample can be generalized to the wider population which it represents. This notion of generalizability, combined with the precision of definitions and the idea of a disinterested science, lends itself to a reliance on mathematical techniques for analyses of the data. This tendency has been fostered in recent years by the development of sophisticated statistical programs which can manipulate large data bases in a myriad of complex ways.

These then, are the basic, ideal tenets of the empirical/analytical research perspective which have dominated the social sciences in general and research into the phenomenon of participation in particular. In North America, since the 1960's and 1970's however, there has been a growing disenchantment with the empirical/analytic approach to the social sciences (Cronbach, 1975; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and attention has shifted to alternate research perspectives.

Researchers seeking to reframe the perspective of participation research can, in Popkewitz's terms, turn to either interpretive or critical perspectives. Basically, the interpretive perspective is concerned with the meanings that people attach to objects and activities, while the critical perspective contains normative political visions which guide its inquiries. The perspective this research study has adopted is the interpretive view of research. This is not to suggest that the interpretive perspective in any way provides a 'better' view of research than the critical perspective. Rather, given that "no one framework provides the royal road to truth"

(Phillips, 1983, p. 9), this study responded to those calls in the adult education literature to investigate the participation issue via an interpretive perspective (London, Wenkert & Hagstrom, 1963; Mezirow, 1971; Rockhill, 1982). Ultimately, the adequacy of research viewpoints is "most usefully determined by what they enable us to do" (Eisner, 1983, p. 14).

The shift of interest from the empirical/analytic to interpretive perspective has redirected attention from "the invariant nature of behavior" (Popkewitz, 1984, p. 40) to the notion that people's behaviors are guided by their interpretations of their social worlds and of the symbols within those worlds. These researchers' primary aim is to uncover the meanings that people attach to objects and activities. The intent is to look beneath peoples' observable actions and to find the meaning structures or 'rules' which govern them, that is, to seek the ways in which people interpret, create and sustain their worlds through human negotiations, interactions and communications. For interpretive researchers it is these rules, not the law-like generalizations of the empirical/analytic researchers, which make and sustain the social world. Thus, facts are re-defined by interpretive researchers as consensual, mutually defined understandings. Similarly, objectivity of findings is redefined as an expression of social agreement among researchers that enables them to interpret findings in a particular way.

Although there has been increasing interest and enthusiasm for the interpretive perspective, it is not without its critics. Criticisms tend to be of two kinds. Some objections are based in the empirical/analytic perspective and concern issues of validity, reliability and objectivity. Since

these are generally considered to be issues related to evaluation of the research technique, they are discussed in the next section.

Other objections arise from those who accept the basic premises of the interpretive perspective yet challenge certain aspects of that viewpoint. One of the major criticisms of this kind is that interpretive research neglects the crucial issues of social conflict and social change. The argument suggests that when the search for subjective meanings dominates, the relations between individuals' interpretations and actions, and social factors and circumstances are too easily neglected. This criticism of the interpretive perspective ignores, however, that the range of possible interpretations of the objects and activities, rather than being removed from social factors and circumstances, is inevitably "limited and constrained" by social structures (Carr & Kemmis, 1984, p. 95). In other words, people create and maintain the social structures through their mutually derived understandings, and at the same time social structures create and maintain peoples' commonsense understandings (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Two additional criticisms of the interpretive perspective also stress the tendency of the view to de-emphasize the relationship of peoples' meanings to social systems. For example, interpretive researchers' major concern is with peoples' understandings of their intentions and purposes. This is not the same, the argument goes, as asking people to explore the unintended consequences of their views and subsequent actions. Thus, the relationship between peoples' views and the consequences of those views on the social system are lost. This criticism is linked to the view that adults may have understandings that reflect dominant ideologies in the

social system. The critics thus suggest that researchers' interpretations of respondents' views would not necessarily be expected to be compatible with the peoples' own accounts. This is so since the respondents may exclude those interpretations which may be obscured by their ideological stances.

The interpretive research perspective may be fruitful in giving insights into the participation issue. It is important to make one cautionary comment before concluding this section, however. Interpretive research can, after all, be conducted with a traditional focus. Such an approach would merely reinforce the portrait of 'typical' participants who are unique from non-participants and would continue to dichotomize those notions. It was not the intention of this study to merely duplicate current investigations into participation from a different research perspective. Rather, it has examined the participation issue from an interpretive perspective which also concerns itself with the similarities and dissimilarities of those who are usually identified as those less likely to participate.

C. THE RESEARCH TECHNIQUE

The discussion above has reframed research into the participation issue in terms of both its focus and perspective. The discussion below reorientates the quantitative research technique which dominates current research into the participation issue in the field of adult education. It is difficult to separate a research technique from the epistemological foundations it shares with a particular approach since the practice of the technique and the perspective which guides it tend to be congruent.

Fundamentally, as will become evident in the discourse that follows, quantitative techniques are intertwined with the empirical/analytic perspective and qualitative techniques are congruent with the interpretive perspective.

Quantitative and qualitative techniques guide the research design and implementation in different ways. The term "quantitative" is used in the social sciences research literature in a confusing number of ways. Researchers use the term to indicate any one of a research perspective, its goals, or underlying philosophies. In the discussion that follows, the term is used specifically to denote a research technique, based on formal instruments to collect data, that uses numbers to express properties or qualities of a phenomenon numerically. Given that definition, few adult education researchers would deny that the majority of studies into participation have used quantitative techniques. Survey research techniques and statistical analyses dominate the research which seeks to uncover why some adults participate while others do not.

The quantitative technique has not proven entirely satisfactory, however. It is, after all, difficult to deal with the many variables associated with participation since they are conceptually complex and intertwined. For example, statements suggesting that level of education or years of school completed are the most significant variables related to participation are common in the participation literature. Those statements do not, however, reveal the complexities embedded within the notion of education, such as its close inter-correlations with other factors like income, age, race and occupational status. Thus, it is difficult to determine the *separate* effects of education or the individual effects of other related

factors on participation. In one respect, multivariate analysis is well suited to research into the participation issue. It allows for the concurrent analysis of numerous independent and one or more dependent variables and as a result, is conceptually congruent with the interdependent nature of factors associated with participation. Although the use of such a sophisticated statistical technique allows the data to be manipulated efficiently, it has not in its own terms explained much of the variance in participation. Indeed, Anderson and Darkenwald's (1979) study is typical of much research in its findings that, using a total of eleven independent (demographic) variables, it explained only ten percent of the variance in participation in organized adult education activities.

Quantitative research techniques have proven less than satisfactory for studying the participation issue in a second way. Since those techniques reduce data into statistical representations, they tend to capture the similar and homogeneous nature of groups of participants or non-participants. This in turn creates a picture of participants as members of one homogeneous group and conversely of non-participants as members of a different homogeneous group.

Qualitative techniques are different from quantitative techniques in that they tend to use researchers in more interactive ways to collect the data. Further, the data collected are frequently expressed in descriptive rather than numerical forms. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have written in detail elsewhere about the characteristics that qualify humans as excellent data collection instruments. In summary, they suggest that humans' sensitivity, responsiveness and adaptability make them particularly able to probe and

collect information about multiple factors at various levels simultaneously. Further, humans can, with their ability to process information as they hear it, ask for clarification, correction and amplification to achieve a higher level of understanding than might otherwise be possible.

Qualitative techniques are not without their critics. Many of those criticisms revolve around the questions of validity, reliability and objectivity. Although these notions are often presented as critiques of the research technique, they are, as the following discussion will illuminate, issues related more closely to the perspective than the technique. Fundamentally, the dominant understandings of the issues of validity, reliability and objectivity reflect the empirical/analytic perspective. There are some basic tenets associated with the terms which are generally agreed upon within that empirical/analytic framework and which have been used in the discussion below.

Validity is concerned with the accuracy of research findings. Internal validity is a measure of the confidence in the 'truth' of the findings from the particular inquiry about subjects within the specific context of the inquiry. In other words, internal validity exists if the findings authentically represent the area of inquiry. External validity, on the other hand, addresses the degree to which such representations may be compared legitimately across groups--their generalizability.

Reliability addresses design problems. It is concerned with the replicability of results. It is synonymous with "dependability, stability, consistency, predictability and accuracy" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 442).

Objectivity in the empirical/analytic sense, is achieved when multiple

observers agree on the phenomenon. Objectivity concerns itself less with replicability as in the concern for reliability, and more with establishing findings that result from the subjects and conditions of the research, not from the biases, motivations or interests of the researcher. Methodologies are used which distance the observer and observed and attempts are made to conduct value-free inquiries. It is "agreement among 'expert' judges on what is observed or what is to be done or what has been done in research" (Kerlinger, 1979, p. 9). In other words, objectivity has been achieved when independent researchers' observations agree. Objectivity is established by ensuring that methods "render the study beyond contamination by human foibles" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 293).

The interpretive researcher may address concerns for validity, reliability and objectivity in two ways. It is possible to argue that the notions are themselves flawed--that they are constructs which are problematic and not useful in *any* research setting. A more conventional position, which this study followed, acknowledges that research data gain relevance if their trustworthiness is established. Clearly, however, the notions of validity, reliability and objectivity as discussed above have been framed by the empirical/analytic perspective and are guided by the assumptions underlying that perspective. This study, however, is conducted from an interpretive perspective. Such studies address the issues of trustworthiness by reinterpreting the notions of validity, reliability, and objectivity in ways that reflect the underlying assumptions of the interpretive perspective. In a classic work, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have reconceptualized internal validity as credibility, external validity as

transferability, reliability as dependability, and objectivity as confirmability. It is important to note that Lincoln and Guba have not simply renamed validity, reliability and objectivity. They have reconstructed them using the epistemological foundations of the interpretive perspective. Rather than discuss all the varied means which are available to establish trustworthiness, the discussion that follows presents only those applicable to this study.

Credibility then, becomes not the isomorphic relationship between findings and a single, tangible reality as internal validity would name it, but rather the plausible credible representation of multiple realities. Credibility is achieved by carrying out the inquiry so that there is a high probability that the findings will be found plausible and believable. Certain activities by the researcher ensure that credible findings and interpretations will be produced. The activities noted below were used in this study. First, researchers require a period of contact that allows them to learn the context, minimize distortions and to build trust with the respondents. Second, an external check on the credibility of the research is 'peer debriefing' which ensures that researchers explore their biases and assumptions underlying their interpretations. Finally, credibility of findings is enhanced when there can be a direct test of findings and interpretations against the raw data. This may be accomplished by ensuring that the data are fully recorded and archived for any tests of adequacy and that the process of inquiry and reporting of findings are done in such a way that the research can be examined publicly.

Transferability is an interpretive researcher's analagous form of the

empirical/analytic researcher's external validity. Interpretive researchers do not concern themselves with making statements about generalizability based on statistical confidence limits. Rather, they have considered Cronbach's (1975) classic argument that generalizations do not endure, that they break down over time and suggest that transferability rather than generalizability is important. They thus are concerned with relating findings to clearly defined times and contexts. They suggest that the notion of generalizability should reside in knowing not only the context from which the generalization originates (sending context) but the context against which it is to be compared (receiving context). This 'transferability' of findings is best accomplished by providing a description which is 'thick' enough (Geertz, 1973) to enable others interested in making a transfer to judge whether or not that transfer is possible. The development of that 'thick description' may require careful observation, corroboration of information and the collection of reference materials. The intention is to describe the context in such a way as to "take the reader there" (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982, p. 10). Clearly the context within which a study is conducted is important to researchers who use an interpretive perspective and qualitative technique. The exact nature of the context of this study is discussed and refined in the next part of this dissertation.

Dependability suggests the empirical/analytical notion of reliability, but redefines it from the interpretive perspective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) make the point that "since there can be no validity without reliability (nor credibility without dependability) a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter" (p. 316). They go on to state, however, that "while

this argument has merit, it is also weak" (p. 316). Lincoln and Guba then suggest the better way to establish dependability is to conduct an inquiry audit which ensures what they, with tongue-in-cheek, call "creative accounting" has not been conducted. This audit procedure examines in detail both the process and product of the inquiry for trustworthy judgments.

The final concern for research trustworthiness is expressed as objectivity from the empirical/analytic perspective and confirmability from the interpretive perspective. Confirmability focusses the notion of objectivity away from the biases, preferences and assumptions of the researcher to the data and its factualness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss at some length the process for undertaking the 'audit process.' This process makes visible the procedures of the research so that its consistency and credibility can be confirmed by independent auditors. Simultaneously, this ensures the study's dependability.

Credibility, which was discussed earlier, enhances both the dependability of the research and its confirmability (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). It is concerned with the process of inquiry and the sureness of the representation of the data, findings and interpretation. Since researchers seeking to establish credibility make visible the processes of the research design and of their interpretation, they concurrently establish the dependability and confirmability of their findings.

A research technique undertaken with the qualitative rather than quantitative approach addresses issues of validity, reliability and objectivity from a different epistemological basis and stresses the importance of the research context. The qualitative technique uses the researcher as an active

data collection instrument and allows for flexible, probing inquiries which complement this study's concern for adults' conceptions.

D. TOWARD A RESEARCH QUESTION

To this point in the discussion, it has been suggested that the current research is dominated by a particular focus, perspective and technique. If one were to formulate a research question from a reframed approach, it would ask those who are usually typified as non-participants about their conceptions of adult education activities. The research question would be stated as:

What are the conceptions about adult education activities held by those within a particular context who are less likely to participate?

It would be conducted from the interpretive perspective and use qualitative techniques. Clearly, such a question would be broadly-based and ambiguous. After all, the notion of 'conceptions about adult education activities' could encompass a confusing array of concerns for goals, teaching techniques, admitting policies, philosophies, barriers and so on. Similarly, there are numerous and varied ways to define 'a particular context' and 'those who are less likely to participate.' Consequently, the remainder of this part of this dissertation refines this study's area of investigation in terms of the notions of adult education activities, conceptions of adult education activities, context and those who are less likely to participate. In each of these areas, it provides the definition which guides this study. Even as these terms are refined, however, they are problematic, for there is no

consensus in the field concerning the 'best' definitions. Yet, to follow the discussions in this dissertation, it is important that the readers and the researcher share similar understandings of the terms. Thus the following discussions attempt to provide the reader with full information about the terms used in this study.

1. Adult education activities

Before discussing the term 'adult education activities', it is necessary to clarify the notion of 'adult education.' That the term adult education is problematic is evidenced by the lack of any universally acceptable definition in the adult education research literature. It is possible, however, to clarify its meaning by establishing parameters around the concept via two mechanisms. First, the concept can be refined by distinguishing between adult education and youth education. Second, the confusion surrounding adult education in relation to adult learning requires examination. This latter step also helped clarify which activities were the focus of this research.

In the first instance, distinctions between adult and youth education frequently centre on the nature of adulthood and the characteristics of adult learners in comparison to childhood and the characteristics of young learners. Age, physical maturity or social role are the categories most often used to define adulthood and to distinguish adult learners from non-adult learners (Verner, 1964). These three classifications all lack clarity and specificity, however. For example, what constitutes an adult according to age varies widely according to legal definitions which permit one to

vote, drink, drive or be drafted into the armed forces. Similarly, adult physical maturity is a biological classification which is defined so differently by diverse individuals, groups or societies that it is of little use to the researcher.

Finally, social roles, although intuitively suggestive of the meaning of adult, offer no more precise or clear definition to the researcher. There is general agreement that adults in their social roles display judgment, autonomy, responsibility and productivity which is different from non-adults, but there is little agreement as to what constitutes an adult level of those attributes. An alternate approach to defining adult learners via their social roles is to define them in terms of the balance between their social and student roles. Thus, Verner (1964) refers to someone "whose attainment of learning...is subsidiary to a primary productive role of being an adult" (p. 29). This kind of definition, however, is vague and imprecise. Further, in its application, it requires philosophical and value-ridden interpretations of the meanings of subsidiary versus primary and productive roles.

Obviously, operationalization of the concepts of adulthood and adult learner for research purposes is difficult. This study followed the definition of adult learner determined by Statistics Canada. They combine the age and social role categories and define adult learners as those who are over the age of 17 and who no longer attend school, college or university on a regular full-time basis. Such a definition facilitates data collection and analysis, yet retains the idea that adult learners have primary roles beyond that of student, and that they have come to the adult education learning situation with value systems, biases and a knowledge of the world based

on their life experiences.

The second means by which the term adult education can be clarified is by examining it in relation to adult learning with which it is sometimes confused. In common usage, 'education' suggests an "element of design, of human contrivance....[It is a] deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values or skills" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 6). As an integral part of the concept of lifelong education, adult education encompasses many forms of learning which occur throughout life. Those diverse educative experiences display different degrees of design and human contrivance and are classified as formal, non-formal and informal education.

The distinctions between education and learning become blurred, however, when those three different forms of education are examined. The most clearly defined form of education is formal education. It is a "hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'educational system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training" (Coombs, 1973, p. 10). Nonformal education, on the other hand, is "...any organized educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children" (Coombs, 1973, p. 11). This definition reflects both the acceptance of learning as a lifelong process, and the importance of a wide range of organizational options.

The third category of educative experiences is identified as informal

education. It displays the least design and human contrivance. It occurs in unorganized, unsystematic and incidental ways (Paulston & LeRoy, 1980) and refers to "the lifelong process of acquiring and accumulating knowledge, skills and attitudes from one's environment" (Coombs, 1974, p. 8). At first glance, self-directed learning (Coolican, 1974; Penland, 1979; Tough, 1971) appears to fit into the category of non-formal education. However, self-directed learning can be either autodidactic learning, which implies intended learning carried on with one's own resources without assistance from outside authorities, or independent learning, in which learners exercise some control over the objectives, pacing, content, method and evaluation of the learning within instructional settings (Candy, 1987). Thus, as with the notion of informal education, self-directed learning confuses the distinction between education as a system and learning as a process.

The acceptance of self-directed or informal kinds of learning as forms of adult education is problematic because of that confusion. For example, it is possible to argue that most adults do participate in adult education activities--they merely involve themselves in informal and self-directed kinds of learning rather than organized adult education activities (Penland, 1979; Tough, 1978). Further, the argument continues, since there is almost universal participation in self-directed activities, the clear class differences between participants and non-participants are not apparent. This approach to the issue of participation ignores two things, however. First, although participation in self-directed learning is comprehensive (79%-100%) (Penland, 1979; Coolican, 1974) class biases do exist in self-directed learning projects at the level of number of projects and hours

spent on projects (Hiemstra, 1975; Penland, 1979). Second, although the almost universal participation rates in self-directed learning activities hint at equality, it is important to note that those with lower socio-economic levels participate in them the most often. To the extent that self-directed activities are informal activities, they create less resources for their participants than formal or non-formal activities (Rubenson, 1980). Consequently, the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' continues to widen. The issue of concern to researchers then becomes not "Why do those adults not participate?" but rather "Why do adults not participate in those forms of adult education--the formal and nonformal education--which can better allocate them resources?" This study thus focussed on formal and non-formal education activities--activities which are organized; that is there is "a learner-teacher relationship in which the learner is supervised or directed in learning experiences over a specified period of time for a recognized purpose" (Boag, 1978 in Cross, 1981). The teacher may be remote, as in the case of correspondence courses, but the opportunity for learner/teacher inter-action exists.

2. Conceptions about organized adult education activities

There are many conceptions about organized adult education activities which could concern a researcher--conceptions about the goals, underlying philosophy, processes, institutional organization, problems, future directions. As noted in Chapter I, adult education literature suggests that adults' conceptions of the *uses* of participation in adult education are related to their participation and non-participation.

The concept of uses is a complex one. It is frequently used interchangeably with such notions of utility, purpose, intention, goal, aim and function. In this study, the concept of uses views adults' understandings as the consequences, implications and results of participation in organized adult education activities. Although such conceptions may be based in past experiences, adults' views of the possible consequences of participating in adult education activities are also forward looking. They are based in a future oriented view of the results of participation. In contrast to 'because' motives, which address the forces or dispositions underlying an action, 'forward looking' motives concern the objects or goals of action (Ordos, 1980).

As has already been noted, some researchers have linked the notion of uses to the issue of participating in organized adult education activities. This view is supported by both empirical and theoretical research. For example, Johansson and Ekerwald (1976) note that non-participants when asked why they do not participate, tend to reply "Why should I?" and so define their non-participation in terms of the end product and its uses. Some researchers (e.g. Bergsten, 1977; Rubenson, 1979) suggest that the value people place on participating in adult education is crucial to their participation. Following that reasoning, some researchers have examined the outcomes of participating which adults anticipate and value in terms of both adults' nominated reasons for participating and their orientations. That literature is discussed in detail in Chapter V, but in general terms, that research has revealed that adults' views of the uses of participating in organized adult education activities may be either positive or negative, and

congruent or incongruent with the stated objectives of the providers. Further, views about the uses of participating in adult education may be expressed at either the micro or macro levels. At the micro level, uses concern the expectations adults have for participation in terms of its implications and results for individuals. At the macro level, uses address the role of adult education in relation to social structures.

3. Non-participants

Recalling that this study sought to focus attention on the similarities and differences within the group that is identified as composed of those who are less likely to participate, that is those who are typified as non-participants, it is important to clarify the term non-participant. The definition of non-participant which dominates the participation literature and which was central to this study, defines non-participants as those individuals who do not enroll in organized adult education activities. This definition distinguishes it from those which concern the non-involvement of adults in the classroom processes or which equate it to notions of non-persistence or drop-out.

It is worth noting here that even a definition which focusses solely on enrollment is interpreted in different ways by different researchers. Thus, the type of activity in which adults enroll may determine if they are non-participants or participants. For example, some researchers define only those who enroll voluntarily as participants. Consequently, those who enroll in mandatory continuing education are classified as non-participants. Researchers also attempt to define non-participants in terms of their

engagement with activities over a certain period of time. Thus, measures of the hours or sessions attended may determine whether one is considered a participant or non-participant. The definition which guided this study identifies people according to their enrollment within a specified period of time. Activities undertaken within the last year identify one as a participant, activities taken outside that time period classify one as a non-participant. This definition duplicates the one used by Statistics Canada (1985) in its major national study of participation in adult education. Since the data from that study currently informs researchers' understandings of participation in Canada, the choice of this definition is particularly appropriate.

Since the early 1920's those who are least likely to participate have been typified as those with a lower educational level, who are older and who occupy manual, blue-collar positions. This study focussed on those who had attained a high school diploma or less. This decision was taken for several reasons. First, of all the variables that have been related to participation, level of education has consistently been determined as one of the most significant (Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner & Newberry, 1959; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Douglass, 1970; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Knox, 1965; London, 1970; London, Wenkert & Hagstrom, 1963; Long, 1983; Verner & Newberry, 1958). Thus, in general terms, those with lower educational levels are of interest to a study concerned with non-participants. Second, and more specifically, those with a high school diploma or less are notably less likely to participate than those who have attained more than that level of education. The 1985 Statistics Canada data

show that those who have completed a high school diploma or less have the highest rates of non-participation (Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1985a). Those rates divide into two clusters. In the first cluster, among those with less than Grade 9, 95% are non-participants. Among those with some high school, and those who had completed high school, 88% and 81% respectively, are non-participants (Devereaux, 1985). At this point, non-participation rates take a noticeable drop. In the second cluster, among those who have some post secondary education, the non-participation rate decreases to 68%, among those with a post-secondary diploma or certificate it is 66% and among those with a university degree, it is 59%. This study concerned itself with the first cluster of non-participants--those who had completed a high school diploma or less.

The third reason this group is of particular interest is related to the increased educational levels of the Canadian population. This group, with its lower educational levels, is now competing against the majority (52.4%) (Statistics Canada, 1986) of workers who have attained more than a high school diploma. Increasingly, members of the group studied are experiencing limited opportunities for entry, positions and promotion in the workplace.

There was a final reason why those with a high school diploma or less were an appropriate group to study here. The existing differential patterns of participation are seen to be "working to increase rather than decrease gaps in Canadian society" (Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1982, p. 9). Some adult educators have thus targeted these groups for recruitment to organized adult education activities. Consequently, a study such as this, which investigated the participation of those with

lower educational levels was congruent with interests in the field.

4. A particular context

To this point, it has been stated that this study explored the conceptions about the uses of participating in organized adult education activities held by those who have attained a high school diploma or less. Such an approach is decontextualized, however. This was particularly problematic for a study which, because of its interpretive perspective, was concerned with transferability. As noted earlier, in interpretive research, findings are related to clearly defined contexts. This enables other researchers to judge whether or not the findings are transferable to other contexts. It was thus important to locate this research within a particular context. This study was conducted within a particular workplace. That context was appropriate for several reasons. First, considerable theoretical and empirical research has linked the nature of paid work and the workplace to workers' subsequent participation or non-participation in leisure time activities. It is important to note that those studies equate adult education activities to leisure time activities in which adults freely choose to participate during their out-of-work hours. Fundamentally, the research suggests that "the individual's preparedness to use his [or her] leisure in an active and enjoying way appears to be laid in the [paid] work role" (Bergsten, 1977, p. 143). There are three basic theoretical approaches which relate work and the workplace to participation in leisure time activities. Some researchers suggest that participation in varied and satisfying leisure time activities compensates for negative work experiences (see Johnstone &

Rivera, 1965; Miller & Weiss, 1982; Rousseau, 1978; Simpson, 1972; Staines, 1980). Other researchers argue that there is a congruence, or "spillover" (Wilensky, 1964) between what occurs in the work environment and leisure activities (see Bergsten, 1977; Kabanoff, 1980; Kabanoff & O'Brien, 1980; Kohn, 1983; Rubenson, 1975; Seeman, 1971). A few researchers state the relationship between work and participation in leisure time activities is a neutral one (Dubin, 1956) while others suggest that the relationship is a complex and blurred one (see Kabanoff & O'Brien, 1980; Larsson & Helmstad, 1985; Miller & Weiss, 1982; Parker, 1971; Rubenson, 1975; Staines, 1980). Although these studies have informed adult educators about the relationship between work and the workplace and participation in such leisure time activities as adult education, they have not, with the exception of Larsson and Helmstad's work (1985) sought workers' conceptions of either their work and the workplace or of organized adult education activities, or of the connections between those views.

The second reason that the workplace was chosen for this study concerned the respondents who identified themselves as having attained a high school diploma or less. To the extent that those with lower levels of education *do* participate, they tend to do so more in employer-provided courses than in those provided by colleges, universities or other organizations (Picot in Rubenson, 1987a). The workplace was thus likely to be a location in which both participants and non-participants could be found among those who are less likely to participate.

The final reason this study was located in the workplace with the less educated workers concerns its similarity to research undertaken in

Sweden (Larsson & Helmstad, 1985) and in New Zealand (Benseman, 1989). Given the similarities, it provided a basis for on-going comparative and collaborative research work (Larsson & Stalker Costin, 1988).

E. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTION

As a result of reframing the research focus, perspective and technique, the research question was earlier presented as "What are the conceptions about adult education activities held by those within a particular context who are less likely to participate?" The foregoing discussion has refined that question considerably. 'Adult education' has been re-defined as a notion which focusses on the non-formal and excludes self-directed and informal education activities. 'Conceptions of adult education' has been refined to 'conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities' and 'within a particular context' has become 'in the workplace'. The category of those who are 'less likely to participate' has been narrowed to 'those who have attained a high school diploma or less.' Thus, the question which this study addressed was:

"What are the conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities held by those in the workplace who have attained a high school diploma or less?"

This study was conducted from the interpretive perspective and used qualitative techniques. Its purpose was to explore why adults do and do not participate in organized adult education activities. More specifically, it examined the diverse and varied conceptions about the uses of participation in organized adult education activities held by those within a particular

context who are usually identified as non-participants. By using a reframed focus, perspective and technique to conduct that enquiry, this study sought to illuminate the issue of participation from a perspective different from that which dominates the current literature.

This dissertation continues in Chapter III by discussing the research design which guided this study. It examines the particular kind of interpretive perspective, phenomenography, which this study used and the notion of conceptions. It discusses data collection and analysis procedures, and outlines limitations of the study.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive understanding (both conceptual and procedural) of the design of this research study and of its implementation. As discussed in Chapter II, this research was guided by an interpretive perspective and a qualitative technique. This part of this dissertation explicates the particular kind of interpretive research used in this study and then examines the details of the data collection and analyses processes.

A. PHENOMENOGRAPHY

Among the various kinds of research undertaken from an interpretive perspective, is one type called phenomenography which has been developed by a group at the University of Goteborg, Sweden. Ference Marton, the "godfather" (Dahlgren, 1987) of phenomenography, makes the distinction between a "first-order" research perspective that orients itself to the world and makes statements about it and a "second-order" perspective that concerns itself with peoples' views and experiences of the world.

A second-order research perspective is fundamental to the notion of phenomenography and has characteristics that distinguish it from a first-order perspective. While a second-order perspective attempts to reveal how things look from the point of view of the respondent, a first-order perspective concentrates on observable behaviours or items. The first-order perspective is "by far the most commonly adopted perspective" (Marton, 1981, p. 178). Using it, researchers orient themselves toward the world and make statements about it. From the second-order perspective, researchers

orient themselves toward "people's ideas about the world (or their experiences of it) and...make statements about people's ideas about the world (or their experiences of it)" (Marton, 1981, p. 178). A second-order perspective seeks to find the different ways in which the respondents understand the world around them. It is not concerned as in the first-order perspective with 'how much' of something is perceived or 'how' the perception is created, but rather it explores 'what' is understood by the respondents. This shift in focus is generally accompanied by a shift from quantitative to qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. Gibbs distinguishes between the two views in this way:

The "how much" question relates exclusively to those situations where that to be studied is already defined. In order to measure something you must know what "it" is. But within the 2nd order perspective, what "it" is, is the focus of attention. Within the 1st order perspective, this is taken for granted. (1982, p. 140)

The second-order perspective can also be described as an experiential, rather than observational, perspective (Marton & Svensson, 1979). It is concerned with the world as the respondents experience it, not as a researcher observes it from the outside. The way in which individuals connect with the world around them, the way in which they experience it, creates an individual-world relationship. That relationship forms the context within which people develop the reasonings around their actions. Respondents' experiences of the world and their individual-world relationships are often taken-for-granted understandings (Marton, 1984). A second-order perspective seeks to make visible those taken-for-granted understandings. Making visible those views is an important task for

researchers since "we tacitly believe that we simply see the world as it is and we also believe--without any further reflection--that our fellow mortals do just the same" (Marton, 1988, p. 2). A second-order perspective, however, gives researchers insights into how things look to the respondents. Rather than look at the respondents and their behaviours, researchers try to look with them and to see the world as they see it. Viewed from a second-order perspective, respondents' reasonings appear "comprehensible" and "logical" (Marton, 1988, p. 7).

According to Marton (1981), the second-order perspective is "a relatively unique field of inquiry" (p. 177), not a new one. He contends that the second-order perspective is shared by a variety of research efforts. Among those efforts is a "research specialization" (Marton, 1988, p. 5) called phenomenography. Phenomenography has four characteristics that distinguish it from other second-order research views. First, phenomenographers argue that it is possible to separate what is experienced from the experience per se. As phenomenographers, their interest is in respondents' views of the latter. Phenomenographers do not have philosophical concerns about the differences between a reality independent of one's perception of it and the reality of one's experience, nor are they concerned with the metaphysical distinction between the real and the apparent. Rather, the separation into first and second-order perspectives is a "pragmatic" (Marton, 1981, p. 178) distinction that results in findings that are different from those derived from the first-order perspective. Thus, the researchers' first-order question "Why do adults participate in adult education?" yields different answers from the

second-order question "What do people think about why adults participate in adult education?"

The second characteristic of phenomenography that distinguishes it, is its search for the variations in peoples' understandings of a phenomenon. This contrasts with approaches that seek for the essence or invariant meanings which people share about a phenomenon. Phenomenographers do not seek common meanings but neither are they concerned with idiosyncratic variations. Rather, between the common and the idiosyncratic, they have empirically determined that there exist a relatively limited number of qualitatively different ways of viewing, experiencing or conceptualizing a phenomenon (Marton, 1981, 1986, 1988; Marton & Saljo, 1976; Saljo, 1981). Variation in conceptions is restricted according to the individual's physical and social world. Thus, since individuals are not entirely free to construct whatever conceptions they want, a limited number are said to exist (Renstrom, 1988).

Larsson is striving to refine the notion of variation and has identified horizontal and vertical forms of variation (S. Larsson, personal communication, Feb. 1988). Horizontal variations give insights into someone else's view of a different world. For example, one gains horizontal insights when visiting foreign cultures. Vertical variations give one a deeper understanding of some familiar phenomenon. They go beyond one's everyday understandings of the phenomenon.

The third characteristic of phenomenography is that it focusses on the person's apprehended, experienced and conceptualized understandings. The emphasis is on whatever individuals feel that they know, rather than on

pre-reflective levels of understanding. Phenomenography thus does not concern itself with the unconscious and the work of interpretational theorists such as Freud or Jung. Rather, it is concerned with peoples' commonsense understandings and logic (Larsson, personal communication, Feb. 1988).

The fourth notable characteristic of phenomenography is its involvement with the notion of conceptions. Fundamentally, conceptions are the major findings of research from a second-order perspective. They are the researchers attempt to interpret the respondents' views of their world. The discussion that follows clarifies the notion of conceptions more fully.

In the adult education literature, a confusing array of terms such as views, attitudes, perceptions, evaluations and beliefs are used interchangeably with the term 'conception'. In this study, conceptions had a meaning peculiar to the work of the Goteborg group. Conceptions are the filters by which individuals interpret their worlds. They are forms of thought or ways of understanding the world. Conceptions are categories of description which reflect a second-order perspective and which, as will become evident in the following sections, give direction to the research technique and data analysis. Basically, conceptions represent different ways in which people experience or understand phenomena in their worlds.

Each conception can be discussed in two different ways--by focussing on its 'what' component or on its 'how' component (Lybeck, Marton, Strombahl & Tullberg, 1987). The former 'what' discussion describes the aspects of the conception in terms of what the person understands. Different dimensions or levels of the conception may form part of that

description. The latter 'how' description details the way in which what is understood is comprehended. It explores the logical relations between conceptions of one phenomenon and conceptions of another phenomenon (Marton, 1984). Although these two aspects can be separated analytically, they are "dialectically intertwined, neither can exist apart from the other" (Lybeck, Marton, Strombahl & Tullberg, 1987, p. 5).

Multiple and contradictory conceptions may be held between and within individuals. Conceptions are "thus frequently not characteristics of the individual, rather they are characteristic of ways of functioning...the intraindividual variation found invites us to think in terms of an abstract system of description, a gigantic space of categories, in which the individuals move--more or less freely--back and forth" (Marton, 1984, p. 62). This space of categories within which the variation of conceptions exists is called an outcome space.

Conceptions are the basis for reasoning and action (Marton, 1981). They constitute both the background or rationalizations for actions and the forward-looking intentions of actions (Larsson, 1984). As units of description which characterize how phenomena appear conceptions are qualitatively different and do not represent different positions on a scale or of a dimension, but instead represent fundamental differences in kind. In other words, different conceptions more closely resemble the differences between ice and water than they do the differences between a litre of water and two litres of water, or salt water and fresh water.

Phenomenographic research into conceptions has been extensive (see Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1984). In their earliest works, the group

tended to stress the importance of arriving at second-order descriptions of conceptions. Conceptions were argued to be findings worthy in and of themselves since they had pedagogical potential and contributed to the field of knowledge in unique ways (Marton, 1981). At the same time that Marton was advocating this "more radical alternative" (Marton & Svensson, 1979, p. 474), he was also stressing the complementary relationship of the first and second-orders and advocating the use of both (Marton, 1981). There was a call for "the adoption of an experiential perspective in the collection of data combined with the use of data in an observational perspective" (Marton & Svensson, 1979, p. 474). Such a dualistic approach was used in this study. It was seen to widen the basis for describing phenomena and to represent "a step forward" (Marton & Svensson, 1979, p. 474). Increasingly, phenomenographers are taking this approach to phenomenography and integrating first-order findings into their studies. Larsson and Helmstad (1985) for example, are using their first-order findings about the workers' educational levels to inform and illuminate their second-order findings about workers' conceptions (Larsson & Stalker Costin, 1988).

In summary, although there has recently been discussion about the philosophical issues surrounding the phenomenographic approach (Marton, 1988, Marton & Neuman, 1988), the notion of conceptions can be used, as it is in this study, as a handy heuristic device to communicate the various ways by which people interpret and make sense of their worlds. The location and systematization of these forms of thought by which people conceptualize a phenomenon are, according to phenomenographers, best

done within an interpretive approach and require data collection and analysis techniques that are qualitative in nature. The following sections discuss these processes in detail.

B. DATA COLLECTION

Before embarking on a description of the data process, it is important to recognize that the data collection and data analysis processes are not discrete activities. Rather, they interact as part of the total research process of collection, analysis and theorizing (Burgess, 1985; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Too often, however, the specific ways in which data are collected and analysed is "mostly implicit, explained only allusively" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 22). Thus the discussion that follows describes fully the selection of setting and subjects, and the data collection and analysis technique.

1. Selection of setting

This study was conducted within one department of a large government municipality in British Columbia. This department was accessible for research purposes throughout the duration of the study, and satisfied several other criteria specific to this research project. First, this setting provided numerous opportunities for participation in employer, union and community adult education activities. Details concerning these offerings appear in Chapter IV, which discusses the context of this study. Since it was judged that the results of the study would depend upon the individuals' exposures to organized adult education activities, this site was

deemed appropriate. Second, the selected setting provided a large reservoir of potential volunteers who had attained a high school diploma or less--that group delimited by the research question. Since the particular department selected had a large number of clerical workers and manual labourers, that criterion was easily met.

Access to the department was initiated by contacting the head of the municipality's Computer Training Centre. A year earlier, this man had co-operated fully with another university based research project. That study examined the impact of the introduction of computers on the municipality's female clerical workers with particular concern for their related learning activities. At that time, extensive interviews of more than thirty clerical workers, trainers and administrators were completed. For this project, the head of the Centre suggested that the appropriate person to contact within the selected department was the deputy department head. After approving the project, the deputy head contacted the heads of divisions within the department and asked for their co-operation with the study. Through follow-up phone calls the study was more fully explained and the division heads confirmed their willingness to allow the employees they supervised to be interviewed.

2. Selection of respondents

Gaining access to respondents presents the researcher with a two-fold dilemma. On one hand, there are the pragmatic problems of finding informants who will agree to give up their time to be interviewed. On the other hand, the researcher faces the problems of accessing the

views of the world held by those informants.

In the first instance, the respondents in this study were initially approached by their division heads and asked if they were interested in volunteering for an interview about why adults do or do not participate in adult education. If the workers responded positively to their supervisors' request for volunteers, they were contacted by phone or in person by the researcher and the project and interview process were more fully explained. Respondents were assured that their participation was intended to be voluntary. If they were interested in being interviewed, mutually convenient times were arranged. These workers also suggested others who they thought might fit the educational criteria and be willing to be interviewed. Workers were, for the most part interested in participating in interviews. Indeed, near the end of this study, workers were *asking* to be interviewed.

Although volunteer subjects are likely to represent a biased selection of respondents, legal and ethical constraints required their use. This is somewhat problematic, since research shows that volunteers differ in their characteristics from non-volunteers. Volunteers tend to be better educated, of higher social class status, more intelligent, higher in need for social approval and more sociable (Borg & Gall, 1979). The degree to which those characteristics affect research results is related to the relationship between those characteristics and the research question. For instance, since it was not the focus of this study to examine any of those characteristics, the impact of using volunteers was minimized. As well, to the extent that volunteers' characteristics are related to higher educational levels one would not expect these volunteers with lower educational levels to display such

characteristics. It is possible, however, that those workers who volunteered to be interviewed about adult education had a positive bias toward it. It is important to note that the researcher made a considerable effort to inform workers that both participants and non-participants were required for the study; that there were no right or wrong answers to questions and that there were no rewards or sanctions attached to participation. These details were discussed with each potential volunteer to minimize bias among those who were interviewed.

In the second instance, gaining access to respondents' views is based on having the workers accept the researcher as a reasonable and safe person with whom they can talk about personal areas of their lives. Although some researchers argue that building such relationships introduces problems of bias, others suggest that relationships are necessary elements in investigating peoples' meanings. Even in this latter case, however, researchers acknowledge that the researcher must maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider in the research setting. In this study, the existence of a trusting relationship with the respondents was evidenced by the workers' openness about personal problems, aspirations and office politics. As well, invitations to departmental farewell parties and warm greetings upon arrival at the research site, seemed to indicate an acceptance of the researcher. The technique used to maintain distance from the research setting was to take "time out" away from the data collection process. During that time, debriefings with colleagues fostered the consideration of conflicting and contradictory views of the data. As noted in Chapter II, these peer debriefings served as external checks on the

credibility of findings by highlighting biases and assumptions which may have underlaid the interpretations of the data.

Respondents were selected to satisfy three criteria. First, in keeping with the research question, interviews were conducted only with those who identified themselves as having attained a highschool diploma or less. Second, equal numbers of both men and women were interviewed. This criterion was established in response to guidelines from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Eichler & Lapointe, 1985). The Council suggests that the female viewpoint requires more consideration than in previous research. Thus this study sought to ensure a symmetrical representation of male and female views.

Third, recalling that this study examined the diverse nature of the group usually viewed as composed of non-participants, interviews were conducted continuously with volunteers until ten workers who identified themselves as participants (5 males, 5 females) and ten workers who identified themselves as non-participants (5 males, 5 females) had been interviewed. Respondents identified themselves according to the same definitions of participant and non-participant that guided the questionnaire (see Appendix I:B). That questionnaire was used to collect detailed information on each respondent (see Appendix III) at the end of the interview process. Briefly, all of the respondents worked for the same department. They held positions as managers, (2), Clerk threes (10), Clerk twos (1), Clerk ones (2) and labourers/unskilled workers (5). Their ages ranged from the 25-34 category to the 55-64 category with fairly equal representations in each category (25-34:5, 35-44:4, 45-54:5, 55-64:6). All but

two of the workers were employed full-time. The incomes of the full-time workers ranged from \$21-25,000 to \$31-35,000 annually. The most frequently earned income fell in the \$26-30,000 range, with 14 of the 20 full-time workers earning that wage.

The selection of a total of twenty respondents was deemed sufficient to ensure credibility. That number of respondents is congruent with similar qualitative and phenomenographic research work conducted by a single researcher (e.g. Dahlgren, 1978; Larsson, 1983). It is important to note that these respondents were not meant to be representative of the general population. As Larsson points out in relation to a similar study "the small number of individuals interviewed make generalizations impossible from the statistical standpoint" (Larsson & Helmstad, 1985, p. 7). Rather, the results of this study highlight areas worthy of more in-depth investigation.

3. Selection of data collection technique

Data for this study were collected in three basic ways. Interviews were used to uncover workers' conceptions. A survey-type questionnaire collected demographic, personal and job classification information about the respondents. Finally, data about educational offerings and the organization were acquired through readily available printed information and through informal interviews with administrators.

In Chapter II the dominant research technique was reframed to a qualitative approach. As noted earlier, the term 'qualitative technique' however, subsumes many kinds of data collection techniques that include participant observation, case study and interviews. A primary data collection

technique used by this study was the interview. Interviews were both congruent with the primary data collection technique used by the phenomenography group, and particularly effective in researching the complex, interwoven and elusive meanings that people attach to activities and items. This was particularly helpful with this study in which the area of non-participation was sensitive and direct questions may have elicited primarily socially acceptable responses (Cross, 1981). Thus, semi-structured interviews were selected as the basic method of data collection. This kind of interview used the same questions for all respondents but was flexible in ordering the questions so a natural and responsive interview resulted. The interviews were composed of open end questions which supplied "a frame of reference for respondents' answers and their expressions" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 483). Such questions had several advantages for the kind of research question posed in this research. They were interactive, flexible and adaptable to individual situations. They permitted probing into ambiguous answers and the context and reasoning behind answers. Thus, they gave insights into the adult's understandings about activities and issues in their worlds, from their own perspectives.

To test the interview guide, three pilot interviews were conducted with volunteers who met the criteria in the selected setting. During those pilot interviews, the interview guide was checked to ensure that the questions asked related to the research question, that the sequence of questions was appropriate and that the questions were clear, unambiguous and not leading (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The structured questionnaire schedule was tested and revised at the same time. The resultant, revised

interview schedules both probed effectively and flowed naturally (see Appendix I:A and I:B).

Because of the difficult and elusive nature of the research question, interview questions began in a general way and attempted to develop a lifestory. Initial questions elicited descriptions of the respondents' views of their life worlds and various aspects of their home and workplace situations. Additional questions focussed on their views of their present and anticipated plans, challenges, problems and possibilities. Final questions specifically concerned the accessibility and usefulness of adult education activities. Throughout the interview, probing questions clarified and elaborated respondents' answers. The 'formal' interview was then declared concluded and further comments about any of the areas discussed were encouraged and recorded.

Data from all the interviews were collected by cassette recorder. The raw data were thus fully recorded and archived and are available for public credibility checks in the future. Individual interviews were conducted over an eight week period. The interviews were held in the workplace setting in a comfortable room where privacy was assured, during the respondents' working hours.

At the conclusion of the three-quarters of an hour, recorded interview, a short structured questionnaire schedule with closed end-questions collected a second kind of information on the respondents. Details of that questionnaire are displayed in Appendix I:B. Briefly, it collected data on sex, age, educational attainment, salary level and details of the respondent's participation in courses classes and instruction taken

during the last 12 months.

The third and final data collection technique focussed on collecting information about the structure and educational offerings of the organization. Printed materials were gathered from the personnel and union offices and in-depth and informal interviews were conducted with the heads of divisions in the workplace.

During this two month period, there was in-depth contact with the workplace and workers. As discussed in Chapter II, this time allowed the researcher to become familiar with the context, minimized distortions and built trust with the respondents.

It is also worth noting here that throughout the eight weeks of data collection, a journal was kept. That journal recorded the methodological decisions made and the reasons for making them. It provided an on-going opportunity for reflection on the research process and aided the process of data analysis discussed below.

C. DATA ANALYSIS

Two data analysis tactics were used. First, three interviews were fully transcribed. The interviews were of the first person interviewed, the fifth male and the fifth female respondents. Analysis of these particular tapes ensured that the interview process flowed smoothly in its early and mid-stages and that the probing techniques were appropriate and effective. This transcribed material also provided the initial raw material for analysis and suggested emergent themes.

The second data analysis technique required that each audiotape be

played completely several times. Each time words, phrases or sentences related to the themes of the interview guide were noted. Care was taken to ensure that the context of the words was not lost. The words, phrases or sentences were written on individual adhesive backed notepaper. This allowed the quotes to be physically placed into groupings on an office wall and sorted several times into various possible groupings of conceptions. The quotes were "brought together into groups on the basis of similarity and the group[s]...[were] 'delimited' from each other in terms of differences" (Marton & Saljo, 1984, p. 55). From the grouping of quotes, core meanings were extracted and criteria for each group established. These meanings were holistic in character, that is, they were interpreted within the totality of the interview data (Renstrom, 1988). Views which were borderline cases were useful to establish the parameters of the categories. Some phrases or sentences represented dual categories. Alternate and contradictory conceptions emerged, but the focus was on categorizing them, not judging them right or wrong. The transcribed interviews and field notes were useful at this stage as an alternate means to identify or reaffirm the existence of those conceptions. After listening to the taped interviews several times to ensure that core meanings had been captured accurately, the categories of description were refined and eventually stabilized.

The conceptions, grounded in the data, were both constructed by the researcher and abstracted from the language of the data. Basically, this process resembled the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and involved "the reduction of unimportant dissimilarities, e.g. terminology or other superficial characteristics, and the integration and

generalization of important similarities, i.e. a specification of the core elements which make up the content and structure of a given category" (Dahlgren, 1984, p. 24). During this process, these conceptions were in a way "lifted out" from the context in which they were discovered (Marton, 1984, p. 63). The characteristics of those who held the conceptions were of no concern to the researcher as the categories of description evolved.

The stability and unique natures of each category of description, or conception, were established by the use of an independent judge. That judge was a graduate student who was both serious about and sensitive to the task--qualities identified by the phenomenographer, Staffan Larsson, as essential to the task (computer communication, November, 1987). The independent judge was given, theme by theme, quotes which had been used to form the conceptions. The general nature of each conception was described to the judge. That description followed the descriptions of the conceptions made in this dissertation. The judge was asked to place each quote on pieces of paper which were labelled with the names of the different conceptions. There was an average of 85% agreement between the judge's and the researcher's placement of the quotes. In one theme area, the impact of technology, the agreement between the independent judge's placement and the researcher's placement was deemed to be a sufficiently low level of agreement that the categories were restructured. Details of that restructuring precede the discussion of workers' conceptions about the impact of technology (Chapter IV) (see Appendix II for specific details of agreements).

D. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research focus, perspective and technique of this study were different from the approaches which dominate the existing adult education participation literature. This proved problematic in ways that may be considered limitations of this research. For example, this study hoped to examine the notion of similarities and dissimilarities within a group which is usually identified as non-participants. However, even as it raised questions about the assumed homogeneous nature of that group, it must be acknowledged that it treated other notions as homogeneous. Organized adult education activities, for example, were treated as a single notion as were the workplace and workers within that setting.

Finally, as has been noted previously, the use of volunteers is usually problematic in any research project. Although concrete steps were taken in this study to minimize the effect of using volunteers, it is important to acknowledge that some distortions in the findings may have occurred as the result of using volunteers.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research design and implementation of this study. Initially, it identified the particular kind of interpretive perspective, phenomenography, which guided the data collection and analysis processes of this study. Conceptions, a notion central to phenomenography, were defined as categories of description which represent people's ways of understanding their worlds. Variations in conceptions are sought in phenomenographic research.

The chapter continued by describing the selection of setting and respondents. Ten male and ten female workers in the department of a large municipality were interviewed. All the respondents had attained a high school diploma or less. A three-quarter hour long, semi-structured interview schedule, and a survey-type questionnaire were used to collect data. As well, printed materials about educational offerings and the organization were collected and informal interviews were conducted with the organization's administrators. Data analysis was based on the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967). This part of the dissertation concluded by discussing the limitations of the study.

IV. CONTEXT

As noted in Chapters II and III, the context plays an important role in forming respondents' understandings. The way in which individuals experience the world around them creates an individual-world relationship that forms the context within which they develop reasonings around their actions. The world that these respondents shared was their workplace situation. As noted in Chapter II, understanding that context is particularly interesting, given the research that suggests there is a relationship between the nature of adults' work and workplaces and their participation in adult education activities. Thus, this chapter first describes in detail the setting which formed the context for respondents of this study. It then describes and discusses workers' conceptions of work and workplace in light of the first-order information.

A. DESCRIPTION OF WORK AND THE WORKPLACE

The information that follows was acquired by several means. As noted in Chapter III, personnel and union offices provided print materials about work and the workplace. These included organizational charts, booklets, pamphlets and mimeographed information sheets. In-depth and informal interviews were conducted with all the heads of divisions throughout the duration of the study. As well, during the interview process, data was collected about each respondents' positions and salaries.

1. Work

As detailed in Appendix III, respondents in this study held positions that included management (2), Clerk three (10), Clerk two (1), Clerk one (2) and labourer/unskilled worker (5). The two managers had private offices and were responsible for supervising the work of Clerk ones, twos, threes, and part-time workers. Each manager was directly responsible for approximately twenty-five workers within their office area. Each also reported to an on-site supervisor. At the Clerk threes, twos and one levels there were no consistently defined responsibilities. Many of the Clerks seemed to be recording information such as what work was being done by which labourers, what materials were available, what materials had been used, what salary payments should be made and so on. Generally speaking, the Clerk threes held jobs that were not as repetitious as those of the Clerk ones. The two Clerk one positions, for example, were of dispatcher and switchboard operator while some of the Clerk threes were developing computer programmes. In some instances, Clerk threes seemed to have more responsibilities. For example, some were responsible for checking and directing others' work.

The Personnel office controlled the hiring and promotion of Clerks and managers. The managers and Clerk threes were required to have a minimum of a high school diploma and usually some additional related courses and work experience. Clerk ones and twos could be required to have the diploma and additional related courses and work experience. There were no stated educational requirements for manual labourers, unskilled workers and part-time workers. These workers were usually hired on the

job site by their immediate supervisors.

Eighteen of the twenty workers were full-time employees in the organization. As noted in Chapter III, the annual incomes of the full-time workers ranged from \$21-25,000 to \$31-35,000 and were not necessarily related to job classifications. One of the labourers, for example, earned as much as a Clerk three. The most frequently earned income fell in the \$26-30,000 range with 14 of the 18 full-time employees earning within that range. The two part-time employees earned within the range of \$16-20,000 and \$6-10,000 per year. All of the workers were union members, but inside workers belonged to a different union than outside workers.

2. The workplace

Interviews were conducted within one department of a large municipality in Canada. This study was conducted in a department which employed a total of approximately 2,500 workers who were responsible for providing and maintaining engineering services to the municipality. A large chart of the organization showed the various layers of authority in the department studied. At the top of the chart were the head and deputy head. These positions were connected laterally to the heads and deputy heads of other departments. Beneath them were six division supervisors. According to the chart, these supervisors were independent of each other but at the same level of authority. Office managers who reported to the division supervisors, clerical workers and labourers were not noted on the chart. Four of these supervisors managed divisions which had branch offices that were located six kilometers away from the administrative offices of

the municipality. The interviews were conducted at that site.

Since the branch offices were responsible for all the 'hands-on' maintenance, installation and repair services for the municipality, the area was notable for the activity that surrounded it. Large trucks rumbled past the office blocks loaded with street repair materials, police motorcycles roared into the yard and lined up for gas, and the two dispatchers were kept busy redirecting field workers to check out problems reported in different areas of the municipality.

Respondents of this study worked in one of two office blocks which were located in the middle of this busy area. Each office block was small, painted a functional grey and surrounded by minimal landscaping. Inside the office blocks, each division had a designated, clearly defined area. Each area was composed of an 'open-plan' arrangement for the clerical workers and private, glassed-in areas which overlooked the workers' areas for the division heads. The workers' areas were crowded with desks, usually placed in rows as in a traditional classroom. Desks were generally covered in files, piles of papers, and in-out trays.

This department had introduced computers to the workplace approximately eighteen months prior to the interviews and had become one of the heaviest users of the Computer Training Centre. More than three-quarters of the desks held the same kind of grey computers. Some were located on ergonomically designed desks, others were simply placed directly on the desks' tops. One of the divisions had recently introduced a second, technological innovation. It had a large separate room which contained sophisticated monitors of the municipality's water system. At the

time of the interviews, one third of the wall space was covered with meters and electronically controlled charting equipment. The division supervisor anticipated the remaining wall space would be filled within two years.

At one side of each divisional area there was a high counter where the public could make enquiries and place complaints. At the opposite side of the office, labourers made enquiries at a similar counter. There was a common, large lunch room in each block where the workers from all the divisions met. During the summer months, a few workers ate their lunches outside on a tiny patch of grass located between the buildings and the parking lot.

The inside workers seemed to know each other well. One division was particularly spirited and during the time interviews were conducted, held farewell and birthday parties to which they invited the workers from other divisions. It became clear that many of the workers had been with the organization for many years and knew the ins and outs of their co-workers' personal and career lives. Although conflicts between individuals were evident, there appeared to be an overall collegiality among the inside workers. This familiarity did not, however, extend to the workers who were employed outside the office block. They worked in repair teams which remained fairly cohesive, but were seldom in contact with those inside the office blocks. Their primary contact with those inside was to straighten out administrative issues such as errors in payroll or holiday calculations.

This part of the dissertation has presented data about the context of

this study from a first-order perspective of "statements-about-reality" (Marton, 1981, p. 188). It has dealt with first-order concerns of "how" and "how much." However, as suggested in the discussion of phenomenography, these findings may not be congruent with the workers' conceptions of work and the workplace--and those conceptions are important since they are assumed to form a basis for workers' actions. It is thus relevant to research work and the workplace from a second-order perspective and to uncover workers' "statements-about-perceived-reality" (Marton, 1981, p. 188). By using both first and second-order approaches, a richer understanding of the workers' context results. Consequently, the following section deals with workers' conceptions of work and the workplace.

Data about workers' conceptions of work and the workplace were collected through the interview process. Workers were asked about the nature of their work situations. Questions probed their worklife histories from the time they had left school to their present positions. They were asked to identify and discuss the way they had dealt with the changes, challenges and problems that they had experienced over the years. They were asked to comment fully on their current work--their level of independence, the use of their capabilities, the changes, challenges and problems they were experiencing or anticipated experiencing. Three themes emerged from workers' answers: Control of workplace opportunities; Outcomes of work; Impact of technology on the workplace. Conceptions within each of these areas are presented below.

B. WORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF CONTROL OF WORKPLACE OPPORTUNITIES

This section discusses workers' views of control of workplace opportunities. As will become evident as these conceptions are described, these workers referred to that control in terms of its location. They identified control as existing at varying levels of abstraction, ranging from themselves to "the times." Opportunities at first glance appeared to equate to chances for advancement and promotion. A more thorough investigation of the workers' responses revealed, however, that the notion included concerns for challenges within existing jobs, improved conditions of work and security and comfort in the present location. Two conceptions related to this theme:

Conception I: Workplace opportunities are other-determined

Conception II: Workplace opportunities are self-determined

Within these conceptions various levels of interpretation existed. Different levels did not represent different hierarchical levels of importance in relation to the conception. Rather, they indicated workers' slightly different interpretations of the same conception. Although these two conceptions attempt to capture the variation of views held by the workers, it should be recognized that they may not exhaust the possibilities of conceptions which could occupy the outcome space. As the independent judge reliability test confirmed, both conceptions with their various levels (where applicable) have clear, identifiable boundaries and unique characteristics. The level of agreement between the independent judge's and the researcher's placements was 100% for Conception I and 96% for Conception II.

1. Conception I: Workplace opportunities are other-determined

Some workers clearly understood that the control of their workplace opportunities lay with others. The notion of other-determined control was a complex one which could be subdivided into levels of control by individuals and groups in authority, by organizational systems and by the economic times. Workers identified these three different dimensions of control by others in terms of their unique characteristics.

a. Level 1: Individuals and groups in authority control workplace opportunities

At one level, some workers clearly viewed their workplace opportunities as controlled by others. Workers identified the individuals who controlled their workplace opportunities as those above them in the workplace hierarchy of authority. These authorities were identified as personnel and management but most frequently simply as "they"--a group of nameless administrators and supervisors who determined their workplace opportunities. This sense of remoteness and distance was captured by Patrick's comments about "the guys up on mahogany row" (Patrick, I-240) who occupied the main buildings' administrative offices. Those in control were clearly a unique group separate from the workers' group. Those with authority not only formed a distinct and remote group, they were also an impenetrable group. As Norris observed:

I'm of the opinion, rightly or wrongly, that decisions are made by others, and it's very difficult to break into that inner circle. (I-407) *

* Throughout this document, indicates that material has been edited out. Quotes from audio tapes are identified by side (I or II) and numerical counter position. Quotes from the typed transcripts are located by page number (p.). All names used are pseudonyms. Names beginning with a P

Certainly the experiences of the workers supported the view that those in authority could shape their workplace chances. Nick, for example, refused to learn computer skills and was supported by his long time friend, the superintendent, in his stand:

I definitely won't operate the computer terminal...so like Bob [the superintendent] there, he says "Ya never mind Nick, we'll always find something to keep you busy." (p. 4)

Similarly, the posting for Paddy's current position had been tailored by his supervisors to match his abilities:

Sometimes too, I think they want a certain person in the job, so when they post it, they post it around that person. Like, for example, it'll say minimum two years experience, you know, on-the-job. Well nobody else had two years experience, but I did. They do that. (p. 6)

Norman, expressed this view most simply:

I've been working so many years, and the bosses they knows me and they put me up themselves. (I-142)

b. Level 2: An organizational system controls workplace opportunities

Some workers had a different view of control by others. Rather than identifying authorities in the workplace as having control of opportunities, they spoke of a workplace "system" which determined their opportunities. The system was made up of rules and regulations which were firmly established and not open to negotiation. Unlike the view that opportunities were other-determined, this view did not include the notion of individuals

*(cont'd) represent those who identified themselves as participants. Names beginning with an N represent those who identified themselves as non-participants.

who had the authority to shape their opportunities. Rather, workers spoke in terms of an independent structure which, although it may have been created by authorities, was an inanimate, self-sustaining regulator of opportunities. Both the organization and the union were identified as defining those rules and regulations. Workers particularly noted the established procedures of workplace entry and promotion. They spoke of a "stepping ladder" (Patsy, II-999) that people "worked their way up" (Percy, I-141) to get to "the top" (Peter, I-460). As workers noted, having competence and ability were not substitutes for fulfilling requirements dictated by the system. Norris was passed over for promotion because he lacked seniority in the Department:

After six months, not knowing all the rules and regulations, I applied for a Clerk four and applied for it and got certified and got interviewed and the manager of the Department said "You've only been with the city six months and I've got somebody else who has been here fourteen years and I have to promote them." (I-329)

Similarly, Patsy could not bypass the steps to a higher position:

There is a stepping ladder. I went for a Clerk three and a Clerk four which I was certainly capable of doing, but they wouldn't certify me because there would be a lot of union hassles....there were a whole bunch of Clerk threes and Clerk twos that were vying for Clerk four and they tell you quite freely "If you haven't been a Clerk three, you can't progress." It's sort of a mental attitude they have up there. (Patsy, I-116; II-999)

Nancy, as a part-time employee, waited in line behind full-time employees for a position:

I wouldn't stand a snowball's chance. Because I'm auxillary even though I can *do* the job, I've *done* the job,

but because permanent employees with the city are applying for the job, that knocks my application right out. (I-390)

The system clearly gave order and prioritized movement in the workplace. Workers consequently entered the workplace wherever there was a point of access. As Nick said, he took a Clerk one's position "to just get my foot in the backdoor" (p. 22). For some, this meant accepting positions which did not use their abilities, experiences and interests. In the comments that follow Patsy describes this phenomenon and Nancy illustrates it:

If you start at a Clerk one and want to go up the ladder and that's the way the system works, you know, from one step to the next, so they'll take a position they're not terribly thrilled about to get the next. (Patsy, I-116)

The only way I get an interview is if it is a real low job like a clerk typist. (Nancy, I-401)

Although some workers viewed the system as a rigid restriction on their workplace opportunities, others appreciated the predictability of the system. Paddy, for example, had been able to plan his future according to the rules and regulations of the workplace:

I knew I would eventually move up because the two fellows that were in there were like, you know, my parents age type thing. They'd eventually retire and [I'd] move up. (Paddy, p. 15)

The views of Nancy and Patricia were slightly different. They noted that the systems' rules and regulations were safeguards that protected

workers from layoffs:

If the job says you have to work on a computer then that Department's going to have to find you something else. They've got the union behind them. If they don't take that position, the one they were doing, the city has to find them something. They can't just lay them off. (Nancy, 11-748)

The city never lays off anyone, they just retrain them. (Patricia, 11-931)

c. Level 3: The times control workplace opportunities

Some workers identified an abstract force as the third and final dimension of this notion of other-determined control of workplace opportunities. They identified this force as "the times." This notion had past, present and future dimensions. Workers spoke of the times as a kind of active agent which had in the past, was presently or would in the future influence their job opportunities. They spoke of these three time dimensions as different and distinct from each other. They contrasted "those days" when "jobs were plentiful" (Percy, 1-101) with "right now" when "the employer can pick whoever he wants" (Nancy, 11-830) and "the competition is really stiff" (Pearl, 1-868) and "the chances of getting a job are pretty thin" (Norman, 1-363) with the future, when "jobs start to dwindle" (Peter, 1-164). As these quotes suggested, concerns basic to the times were the economic situation and issues of supply and demand in the labour market. Workers spoke in terms of employment, unemployment, lay-offs and changed employment situations.

The economic situation acted as an invisible restriction on workplace opportunities. The economic times not only determined opportunities within

the organization, but workers also viewed them as influencing their possible opportunities outside the organization. Workers contrasted their relatively secure positions inside the organization with the risks associated with leaving the organization. Percy's anecdote about his friend's foray into the "outside" illustrates this perspective:

I've often thought I'll go out and find another job, but at my age, going into business for myself...but there's so much of everything. It's awfully risky....[My friend] got his chartered accountants' papers and then he got a good opportunity outside, just as the recession was setting in and he went to a private firm. Of course the recession hit and he lost his job. After that he could only get a part-time job. (Percy, I-405, I-829)

2. Conception II: Workplace opportunities are self-determined

Workers who held this view expressed the opinion that the chances to enter the workplace, be promoted, be retained in employment or influence the nature of their jobs were in the hands of the individual workers. An underlying assumption of this view was that opportunities were not limited. Rather, workers spoke expansively of unlimited opportunities which existed. They were assured and confident that workers could "make it":

We live in Canada. Anybody who wants to make it can make it. (Paul, II-745)

Everybody has the chance to make it. (Ned, II-52)

The way in which workers could make it was seen to be straightforward and very much the responsibility of the individual. Workers suggested that to make it, one merely had to develop certain personal

characteristics which could then be exchanged for opportunities in the workplace. Personal attributes like "drive" (Patricia, I-446), "confidence", "self-assurance" (Patsy, I-238), "persistence" (Patrick, I-604; Noreen, p. 12), and "hard work" (Peter, I-219; Norman, I-142) were noted as desirable characteristics which established an all-important "good reputation" (Peter, I-180). Workers saw a direct relationship between these personal attributes and improved workplace opportunities. As Paul said:

If you've got any initiative at all, you could probably move up pretty good here. (I-225)

The conception by workers that they could control their workplace opportunities was congruent with their views that some workers would realize their opportunities while others would not. Those who did not "make it" were seen as not having developed certain personal attributes. Workplace opportunities existed. One merely had to apply oneself and "keep trying, keep trying. That's all you can do." (Patrick, I-604). As Neil explained, his own lack of promotion resulted from his decision to withhold his ambition from the workplace:

Some people are more ambitious than others....Some people want to spin [climb] the ladder so fast, it would make your head spin. I am ambitious in other areas--just not on the job. (II-871)

3. Discussion

The preceding section has described two conceptions that workers held about the control of workplace opportunities. As noted in Chapter III, these conceptions represent not characteristics of the individuals, but characteristic ways of understanding a phenomenon. Thus, it is possible these two conceptions were held concurrently by workers, despite the unique features of each conception. Although Marton (1981) might argue that the presentation of these conceptions is a worthy research effort in and of itself, he has also noted the complementary relationship of first and second-order perspectives. Thus, the discussion below is informed by the findings presented earlier in this chapter. The following discussion and interpretation of these conceptions suggest some different ways of viewing control of workplace opportunities.

Before examining these two conceptions individually, it is useful to consider the general ways in which workers viewed opportunities. First, it is interesting that these workers actually could identify workplace opportunities. This was so although none of the first-order findings indicated there were formal mechanisms in the organization to evaluate work or the workplace. Nonetheless, workers clearly had evaluated the workplace and made a positive evaluation of the opportunities available. Since the evaluation mechanisms of this process were not clear, research into this area could give useful insights into workers' formation of views of opportunities.

Second, workers saw themselves in a reactive relationship to those

opportunities, that is, they did not speak of their possibilities for creating, improving or changing the opportunities that existed. Indeed, once again there was no first-order evidence that these workers were involved in decision-making at any level beyond the specific nature of their own jobs. The implications of this reactive, rather than proactive relationship to opportunities are unexplored in terms of workers' formation of views about adult education.

Third, different workers defined what was an opportunity in different ways. An opportunity could be any one of advancement, challenges, work conditions, stability and so on. Indeed, as noted, different workers had different advancement opportunities according to their educational levels. Further, work conditions, challenges, and so on varied with different job classifications and sometimes within the same job classification. Some of these opportunities were seen by workers as negative experiences and by others as positive experiences. For example, some workers saw their workplace opportunities as limited and restricted by the control of those in authority. Other workers welcomed this control and the associated predictability of the system. These contrasting interpretations of 'workplace opportunities' to workers' views of organized adult education activities are at present unexplored.

A final feature of workers' views of opportunities was that they were seen to exist within the parameters of their immediate workplace. Workers noted the external limitations imposed by the "tough times." Although workers did not explicitly define tough times, they appeared to be discussing the economic situation at a macro level. This suggests that

workers considered macro-level forces in forming views of their workplaces. These forces may be intertwined with the information that all these respondents were union members and that within their immediate workplace, these workers were assured of certain benefits. Opportunities ensured by the unions included seniority rights for promotion, security against layoffs and pension benefits accumulated by the workers. Considering opportunities in other workplaces could have meant sacrificing those benefits. A study of the inter-relationship of these ensured opportunities and macro economic forces to workers' views of organized adult education activities is as yet an unexplored area of participation research.

When each conception is studied individually, additional insights into workers' views of work and the workplace are acquired. For example, among those who viewed opportunities to participate as other-determined, there was a clear understanding that the control of workplace opportunities resided in hierarchical structures of power that lay outside themselves. As the description of the workplace indicated, decisions in this organization were made, in descending order, by the department head, division head, office managers and clerical workers and labourers. An organizational chart laid out this chain of authority in detail for each department. According to workers' conceptions, however, the workplace hierarchies were a combination of the authorities who held power, job classifications and the times that ensured differential and hierarchical control over the workplace.

Workers also identified a kind of control which was horizontal rather

than vertical. Workers saw themselves not in relation to the total vertical hierarchy of control but rather in relation to the control possible within the level where they were located. Workers noted the control they had over opportunities relative to other workers' control at the same job classification. Auxillary Clerk ones, for example, saw themselves as having less control over their workplace opportunities than full-time Clerk ones. Indeed, auxillary workers had less security and competed in a larger pool of potential employees for positions. Also, as part-time employees, they were assigned on an ad hoc basis for varying lengths of time to positions of many different kinds. The notion that control was different within horizontal levels was congruent with the first-order findings that jobs of the same classification were in practice seldom the same. In summary then, workers' evaluations of workplace control could have been defined by their expectations for control within their location in the hierarchy. This is a subtle, but potentially important distinction.

Another notable feature of this conception concerns workers' view of these various levels of control over workplace opportunities. They saw them as occurring at identifiably different levels of abstraction--from the immediate bosses and supervisors, through the organizational system to the times. These different levels of control represented characteristics of increasing rigidity, remoteness and impenetrability. They located the workers in increasing distances from their ability to influence those who controlled their opportunities. Supervisors and groups of authorities were key individuals who altered the workers' opportunities. They recommended workers for jobs, created jobs for workers, assigned tasks to workers and

so on. The system was a more distant controller of the workers. The rules and regulations of the system were often attributed to the Personnel office. It was seen as a major vehicle to dictate the rules and regulations in the workplace. Indeed, the organization's Personnel office was responsible for creating job postings and doing initial interviews and selections of candidates for all full-time 'inside' workers. It was a more distant controller--even geographically, it was ten kilometers from the worksite. The times were the most distant from the workers' control. They were an abstract concept and workers did not speak as clearly of their functions or their relationship to them as they did about authorities and the system.

Acknowledgement of these varying levels of abstraction adds depth to current discussions of control of the workplace. It shifts the research focus from "Which opportunities are important to workers", to "At what level of abstraction do workers locate the control of workplace opportunities?" Opportunities viewed as controlled at higher levels of abstraction were clearly seen be less malleable than those seen to be controlled by immediate bosses and supervisors. A final interesting feature of this conception concerns workers' view of the highest level of abstraction--the times. This view suggests that these workers recognized the macro-level contexts within which they acted. Further, this study suggested that those macro-level issues formed a parameter which restricted these workers' views of opportunities. These findings all have implications for studies into the relationship of work and the workplace to participation in organized adult education activities.

The second conception had two characteristics which are notable. First, workers who related highly personal characteristics to achieving opportunities in the workplace held a view that was characterized by its individualistic, personal and competitive nature. These workers suggested a straightforward relationship between their own personal efforts, and the realization of opportunities for themselves. They focussed on workers' personal responsibilities to realize their own opportunities. Workers' location of responsibility for opportunities within individuals, and the associated notion of self-blame, changes the dynamics of studies which relate work and the workplace to adults' participation in adult education.

A second feature of this conception concerns the personal characteristics that these workers related to acquiring workplace opportunities. Workers' comments revealed that they viewed those personal attributes as vaguely defined. Consequently, they proposed a wide and diverse range of personal characteristics which, if acquired and displayed, might foster workplace opportunities. Workers also viewed the ways in which those attributes could be exchanged for the realization of various opportunities as ambiguous. It is possible that such ambiguity simultaneously engaged workers in believing they controlled their opportunities at the same time that it ensured that they did not achieve control of those opportunities. These subtle control mechanisms and their relationships to workers' participation in organized adult education activities have not been explored.

Although the two conceptions about workplace control are

qualitatively different, there appeared to be an interdependent relationship between them. Even when workers saw opportunities as self-determined, they ultimately viewed them as constrained by parameters established by others. Self-determined opportunities existed only in relation to other-determined opportunities. For example, workers' efforts to develop and display the required personal characteristics affected workplace opportunities only to the extent that those in authority, the system or the times acknowledged and rewarded them. In other words, workers' approaches to achieving workplace opportunities were defined by others. This interdependent relationship also can be interpreted in the reverse way--that when workers saw opportunities as other-determined, they also viewed themselves as having some measure of control over the situation. There was thus tension between views of the restrictions and the freedoms to acquire opportunities in the workplace. The subtlety of this interdependent relationship is revealed through the second-order research approach of this study. As noted in Chapter II, other studies have suggested is that workers' views of workplace opportunities may influence their participation in organized adult education activities. This study refines that notion and emphasizes the nature of the self/other control relationship as an important part of workers' views of opportunities.

C. WORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE OUTCOMES OF WORK

The second theme about work and the workplace that emerged during the analysis of interview data, concerned workers' two distinct conceptions about the outcomes of work. The two conceptions related to this theme

were:

Conception I: Work has intrinsic outcomes

Conception II: Work has extrinsic outcomes

Within each conception, there were two levels of interpretation. Each conception was viewed both positively and negatively. These different levels did not represent different hierarchical levels of importance in relation to the conception. As noted earlier in this section, different levels indicate workers' slightly different interpretations of the same conceptions. Although these conceptions attempt to capture the variation of views held by the workers, it should be recognized that they may not exhaust the possibilities of conceptions which could occupy the outcome space. As the independent judge reliability test confirmed, both conceptions with their various levels (where applicable) have clear, identifiable boundaries and unique characteristics. The level of agreement between the independent judge's and the researcher's placements was 79% for Conception I and 91% for Conception II.

1. Conception I: Work has intrinsic outcomes

Some workers engaged with work to acquire experiences that had intrinsic outcomes--that is, workers' involvement with work resulted in internalized reactions within the workers. Over time, the workers had assessed and evaluated these internalized views. This conception had two levels. Some workers viewed these outcomes positively, others negatively.

a. Level 1: Work has positive intrinsic outcomes

In some instances, workers related positive intrinsic qualities to work experiences. They spoke of the comfort, enjoyment and satisfaction which resulted from performing jobs. Neil's comments illustrated the views of those who were comfortable in their positions. Clearly he preferred the constancy and stability of his position. As well, he liked the conditions and tasks of the job. He was comfortable:

I haven't given it [career plans] much thought. I'm too comfortable where I am now. I like it, what I'm doing now. (I-208)

Other workers found the challenge of jobs rewarding:

Yah, it [the job] uses all my abilities...I enjoy learning....I'm always asking questions and I'm always learning. That's my main goal in the job...to keep learning and improving and being the best. (Natalie, I-435)

These workers spoke apprehensively of the time when a job would become boring. For Patsy, it was a matter of reaching "a peak" in a job, and then she would have to "branch out or do something different or have to learn something new." (I-444).

b. Level 2: Work has negative intrinsic outcomes

In some instances, workers related negative intrinsic outcomes to their work experiences. The comments of Paul, a labourer, illustrated this dimension clearly:

It gets embarrassing for me when we're sitting alongside the road and everybody driving by sneers at you and I hide my face and turn around. (I-497)

Paul continues to comment wistfully on the kind of intrinsic outcomes he wished his work gave him:

I want a job where I feel responsible, where I'm controlling the situation--I'm not being told to do this, this and this. (I-487)

Peggy also hinted at discomfort with her job, as she acknowledged that others did not value her work:

To me, I often thought others thought they were Joe jobs, not that great a job, but I got a lot of satisfaction out of being able to take shorthand and read it and type it back. (I-382)

Embedded within Peggy's comments was a recurring theme--that it was up to individuals to find the satisfaction, comfort or enjoyment in their work. In other words, work was not inherently a positive experience. Rather, one's attitude to work made the difference. As Norman explained:

The job is always the same, but you have to adjust it to yourself, the person. You gotta try to do the best you can...Jobs come better when you try to do things, enjoy to do it. You're working hard and you see the job progressing well. You're compensated inside. You aren't mad, you're happy inside. (I-298)

2. Conception II: Work has extrinsic outcomes

Some workers viewed the outcomes of work in instrumental, pragmatic terms. The outcomes they noted were external to themselves. Work was not assessed according to the personal satisfactions or dissatisfactions in which it resulted. Rather, it was valued for its practical consequences. Workers' comments reflected their regard for the extrinsic

rather than intrinsic outcomes of work:

I'm only working because I need to make a living....Work is just work for me. (Pearl, I-71)

Work's ok. It doesn't really interest me that much. It's there and it's money, but it doesn't really satisfy me. (Paul, I-65)

The extrinsic outcomes, like the intrinsic ones were at two levels. They were both positive and negative.

a. Level 1: Work has positive extrinsic outcomes

In the first instance, workers noted the financial security that was an outcome of work. In Pearl's case above, financial security was a valued short range immediate outcome of work. For some workers, however, that financial security allowed them to pursue other, long range goals:

I'll just be their good little employee, take my money, and get by. I'm going to use this job to my advantage. I'm secure here for going to school. (Paul, II-531)

The priority workers gave to the financial and security aspects of work was based in their views about "the times." Cast against discussions of unemployment, layoffs and changing job markets, financial security was particularly valued. As Norman astutely noted:

Life today is tough. We're laughing because we got a job. Every fifteen days we get a pay cheque. (II-700)

b. Level 2: Work has negative extrinsic outcomes

At a second level, workers spoke of the conflicts that work created in their lives. They viewed work as an activity that interfered, and created tensions with their out of work situations. Those workers viewed out of work concerns like relationships and interests as "far more important than work" (Pearl, I-255). Workers discussed with concern the detrimental effects of work on their relationships with others. Peggy, for example, saw full-time work as jeopardizing her fulfilment of family responsibilities. In the final analysis, she chose to work part-time rather than disrupt her family:

If I were working full time, I'd run myself ragged and I'd get cranky and...I do have a husband and he's working steady so far, and our girls are getting older now and I feel that it's an important part of my life....My parents are getting older now and I appreciate the time to spend with them...I knew with children, I didn't want to work full time. (I-246, I-85)

Similarly, Patsy, earlier in her career, had felt that work interfered with her relationship with her daughter and so had quit her job (I-395). Both Peggy's and Patsy's comments reflected their views that work and out of work situations were in opposition to each other. The tensions between the two situations required workers to make choices between the conflicting situations. While Patsy's and Peggy's comments illustrated the views of those who had placed relationships above work, others' comments illustrated the views of those who were looking forward to shifting their energy away from work to other interests:

When I retire I want to do a lot of the things I haven't been able to--travel, golf, pleasurable things. (Patrick, I-633)

We [retired people] are doing things we didn't have time to do. I can hardly wait to start doing them. (Norah, II-622; II-892)

3. Discussion

The preceding section has described the two conceptions that workers held about the outcomes of work. The discussion below is informed by the findings presented in the first section of this chapter.

When both conceptions are examined together, some insights into these workers' views are acquired. First, it is important to note that by identifying outcomes as both extrinsic and intrinsic, the study highlighted a subtle distinction within the notion of work outcomes. These were two views of outcomes that were qualitatively different from each other. Research into these areas might reshape the way in which work and the workplace are examined in studies into the relationship of work and the workplace to participation in adult education activities.

A second feature of both conceptions concerns workers' evaluations of the workplace. It was clear that workers had evaluated their workplace situations and could, without hesitation, discuss outcomes of work. As in the case of workplace opportunities, first-order findings did not reveal any formal evaluation mechanisms that were in operation within the organization. Despite that, workers clearly made evaluations and the mechanisms of these evaluations--what was evaluated, when, how, and factors affecting those evaluations--are unknown. These processes have, to date, been taken for granted yet have the potential to yield insights into one part of the

work/participation in adult education relationship.

A third characteristic of both conceptions is that they have both positive and negative levels. Indeed, this study revealed that all workers viewed the outcomes of work as positive in some ways. Some workers viewed work as also negative in some ways. Earlier in this chapter, it was noted that the full-time workers in this study had an average income in the range of \$26,000 - 30,000. One thus could suggest that some workers might identify financial benefits as extrinsic outcomes. Indeed, there was a tendency to equate positive extrinsic outcomes with income. This representation of workers' views of workplace outcomes as both positive and negative is a more complex interpretation of outcomes than commonly discussed in the current literature which relates work and the workplace to adults' participation in adult education. That literature tends to consider outcomes as either negative *or* positive. It usually fails to recognize that workers can hold both negative and positive views of outcomes simultaneously. Research into the relationship of these views to each other and to participation in adult education could yield insights into the participation issue. The relative strengths, duration and creation of negative and positive views are all aspects which could be explored.

The final characteristic which these two conceptions shared was their concern with outcomes at the level of the individual. Workers primarily focussed on acquiring outcomes as individuals, for use in their personal situations or with immediate friends or family members. Workers did not see possible outcomes of work as related to benefiting or inhibiting collective social or organizational issues. Current research has not

recognized or explored the existence or implications of this individualistic focus on workers' views of the outcomes of work and subsequently on the work/participation in leisure time activities relationship.

When each conception is discussed individually, additional insights into workers' views of work and the workplace are acquired. For example, those who viewed the outcomes of work as intrinsic held a highly individualistic view of work. They related work outcomes directly to individuals' senses of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Certainly, in the first-order findings there was no data to suggest these could be expected as outcomes of work and the workplace. Some workers viewed outcomes in such individualistic terms that they placed the ultimate responsibility for outcomes with individuals. They felt it was up to individuals to ensure that they enjoyed their jobs--whatever the nature of those jobs. This located the responsibility for intrinsic outcomes with the workers. It is not clear to what extent locating responsibility for outcomes within themselves influences workers' views of outcomes. This view resembles some workers' understandings, presented in the previous section, that they were responsible for control of workplace opportunities. The similarity between these two views emphasized the way in which the workers saw themselves as responsible for their workplace situations.

A second feature of this conception was that although the intrinsic outcomes named by workers were numerous and varied considerably among the workers, they shared common characteristics of vagueness and ambiguity. Work that brought satisfaction to one worker did not necessarily

bring satisfaction to another. Despite this, some workers evaluated the intrinsic value of their work in relation to others' views of their work.

The second conception that workers held was that the outcomes of work were extrinsic. An interesting feature of this conception concerned the relationship of work to the out-of-workplace situations. Extrinsic outcomes not only were located outside the workers' inner feelings, but they also focussed on out-of-workplace situations and fundamentally supported workers in achieving out of workplace goals. They were practical in utilitarian ways. Income from work was used to buy new homes, security at work allowed re-entry to education, and so on. It was clear that among those who held this view, the out-of-workplace activities and situations had greater priority than those in the workplace. This notion is not addressed in current work/participation in adult education research although the relative importance of workplace and out-of-work place activities may influence workers' participation in adult education.

Another interesting characteristic of extrinsic outcomes is that, unlike intrinsic outcomes, they were evaluated by some workers within the context of the times. Workers contrasted their financial benefits and job security within the organization to "the tough times." This suggested that their awareness of the economic times was important to their evaluation of extrinsic outcomes. The effect of these macro-level economic forces on the workers' views of the workplace and subsequently on their participation in organized adult education activities.

A final characteristic of the extrinsic view, that distinguishes it from

the intrinsic view, concerns its temporal nature. Workers spoke of intrinsic outcomes in immediate terms, but they described extrinsic outcomes in varying degrees of endurance and future orientation. Income, for example, was acquired in the present but was also related to goals in the future. This is a subtle characteristic of outcomes that is not made in the existing work/participation literature.

D. WORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON THE WORKPLACE

During the data analysis it became clear that workers held two distinct conceptions about the impact of technology. The two conceptions related to this theme are:

Conception I: Technology will not affect work in the future

Conception II: Technology will affect work in the future

Within Conception I, there were two levels of interpretation. As the reader would realize by now, these conceptions attempt to capture the variation of views held by the workers, not to exhaust the possibilities of conceptions which could occupy the outcome space. As the independent judge reliability test confirmed, each of these conceptions with its various levels (where applicable), has clear, identifiable boundaries and unique characteristics. The level of agreement between the independent judge and the researcher was 84% for Conception I and 100% for Conception II. As was noted in Chapter II, these categories were restructured after an earlier independent judge reliability test. In that test, the agreement between the judge's placement and the researcher's placement was 60% on the original Conception II. The

original categories were Conception I: The effect of technology is restricted to a few jobs; Conception II: The effect of technology is completed, and Conception III: The effect of technology is comprehensive and on-going.

1. Conception I: Technology will not affect work in the future

This view had two levels. In the first instance, workers spoke of work that had not been affected by technology and would continue to not be affected. In the second instance, workers identified jobs that had been changed but went on to say that those jobs would not be affected by technology in the future.

a. Level 1: Some work has not and will not be affected by technology

In the first instance, workers acknowledged that although some jobs were changing, had changed or would be changed by technology, there were some jobs which were exempt from changes. In other words, the impact of technology was restricted to certain jobs. They spoke of some jobs which were, and would continue to be completely exempt from the influence of technology. They anticipated that those jobs would continue with the "same procedure" and remain unchanged by technology. Ned, a security officer and Neil, a garage mechanic, were two workers who saw that technology was not changing the nature of their jobs:

It'll be the same procedure. There's not much more you can have to the procedure on security. (Ned, II-88)

I don't see it [my job] changing much. The equipment might get a little more advanced and newer, but it's the

same sort of job. (Neil, I-253)

Implicit in these comments were the workers' views that their work could not be duplicated by machines. As Nancy said:

Well, the computer still can't type. (I-597)

This group of workers thus saw certain work situations as static, stable and unthreatened by the impact of technology.

b. Level 2: Some work has been affected by technology but will not be affected again

Some workers held basically this same view, that technology would not affect work in the future, but from a slightly different viewpoint. They stated that some jobs had been changed by technology, but suggested that technology would not affect them again. They viewed the adjustments to technology as completed and the workplace as settling down into a routine once again. They acknowledged that the changes had been "pretty major" but stated that "that'll be it for awhile" (Pam, I-360). There might be some minor refinements, but they anticipated that the workplace would return to "normal". As Natalie said:

I don't think it's going to change that much. We basically know, sort of, what I'm going to be doing. It's just a matter of once the system settles down to a normal routine. (I-277)

The introduction of technology was seen to have sent a wave of changes through the workplace, but now it was viewed as "all set up. You

don't have to do anything to it". (Pearl, 1-321) The workplace was viewed as stable and predictable. Workers spoke of now doing "the same thing every day essentially" (Pam, 1-860). Jobs had been computerized and taken on new forms as the result of technology, but now it was merely a matter of using the "codes and everything" which were "practically identical" (Noreen, p. 2). As Paddy said:

There is just more of it [the work]. The same thing. It's not really brand new stuff. It's just that there's more of it now. (p. 11)

2. Conception II: Technology will affect work in the future

Some workers saw that technological changes were affecting the workplace and would have an all pervasive impact into the future. There was an underlying understanding that the new technologies, particularly the computer, would permeate the future workplace. The new technologies were everywhere:

Anywhere I go in the [organization] I'm liable to run into the beast [computer] in a different form. (Patsy, 11-630)

These workers noted the impact of technology in many aspects of work throughout the workplace. For example, promotional opportunities had changed:

You used to be a labourer and work your way up to the top. Now you have to have computers and know more and more. (Peter, 1-460)

Some workers also noted the changed atmosphere of the workplace:

The major change is it's no longer a fun place to work. The computers have computerized people. People have become like robots, part of that computer. They can't talk to you, they can't because the computer's not going to wait. My first attitude to the computers is that they're the best thing that's ever happened. I love computers. I think computers are marvellous. But the people that are in charge have looked at computers as a tool to speed up the process and put out so much more. (Norris, II-706)

Workers spoke in terms of these changes projecting into the future. They observed the current state of the workplace "where things are changing so quickly" (Patricia, II-910) and applied those observations to the future:

Computers are going to be the main thing in every job. You can see it in the workplace right now. Pretty soon all, probably most, or all of private industry and stuff like that. (Natalie, II-889)

Associated with this view was worker's concerns for "keeping up" (Patricia, II-910) and keeping ahead of the on-going technological changes. There was a feeling among the workers that they should take "at least a main [computer] course" to keep up, even if they had "no desire to learn it" (Peggy, I-275). Although the nature of the anticipated technological changes was unclear, workers attempted to outguess which courses might be required of them in "another two or three years" or "ten years down the road":

Further down the line I'd like to take a course in word processing because I think that's what it's all going to come down to in another two or three years. I think you're going to have to have a good background in computer....They're [workers] going to have to have *something* to do with computers because ten years down the road, they're going to have to have *something* to do

with it. (Nancy, I-623; II-816)

3. Discussion

The preceding section has described the two conceptions which workers held about the impact of technology. The discussion below is informed by the findings presented earlier in this part of the dissertation. The interpretations of these conceptions which follow suggest some new ways of understanding workers' views of the impact of technology.

When the two conceptions were examined, it became evident that they shared some interesting characteristics. First, it was evident that workers viewed technological change as an imposed change--created, directed and controlled by others. First-order findings suggested that some workers had helped design programmes for different areas within the departments. There was no evidence, however, that the decision to introduce computers to the divisions' offices had involved any of the workers interviewed. Some workers viewed the imposition of the technological change negatively, while others viewed it positively, but overall workers did not speak of themselves as involved in technology's introduction into the workplace. Rather, they viewed themselves as the recipients of any impact resulting from its introduction.

A second feature shared by the two conceptions concerned workers' interpretation of technology. Generally, workers tended to name the computer as the technology that had influenced the workplace. This view is congruent with information related earlier, that this department was one of

the highest users of the Computer Training Centre, that the computer had been introduced to the workplace eighteen months previously, and that most of the workers had computers on their desks.

A final shared feature of these conceptions focussed on the workers' notion of impact. Rather than discuss the various consequences of the impact, the workers focussed on the persistence and duration of the impact. This time frame for the impact of technology was then used by the workers as a guide to plan their work lives into the future.

Workers who viewed technology as not affecting work in the future basically saw their work situations as stable and unthreatened by the impact of technology. They thus saw no need to prepare themselves for future technological changes. Alternately, those workers who viewed technology as affecting work in the future saw the exact nature of those changes and the criteria for dealing with them as vague and ambiguous. The impact of technology was seen to be unpredictable in its duration, intensity and location.

It is interesting to note that workers did not make assessments of the impact of technology based on any classification of jobs. Indeed, among those who saw technology as all pervasive, there was also no sense of some jobs feeling the impact before others and thus requiring courses and classes before others. This was in contrast to the organization which had a prioritization policy, based on job qualifications, for the computer training of workers. The complexity and changing nature of their jobs seemed to be the criteria they used to assess the impact of

technology. For example, some simplistic jobs were not seen to require use of new technologies while other more complex jobs were seen to require a computer. Some tasks on the computer were seen to be so redundant, however, that workers did not envisage any future adjustments.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter presented the context in which this study was conducted. That presentation served several purposes. First, it was congruent with the interpretive, phenomenographic approach of this study which suggests that the origins, or sending context of a study should be presented in a description that is "thick" enough (Geertz, 1973) to enable other researchers to determine the transferability of these findings to a receiving context. Briefly, first-order data revealed that the workplace was responsible for the hands-on maintenance, installation and repair services for a large urban municipality. The workplace was a busy one with the movement of truck and cars outside and crowded office areas inside. There was an atmosphere of congeniality, although inside and outside workers did not appear to know each other. All the workers were union members but their ages, job classifications and salaries varied. A system of rules and criteria, stated by the Personnel office and supervisors, guided the workplace hiring and promotion.

A description of the workplace was also useful in helping researchers beyond the issue of transferability, for, as noted in Chapter II, there are theoretical and empirical studies which link attributes of adults' work and workplaces to their participation in organized adult education

activities. Certainly the findings in this chapter informed these studies in new ways. They refined terms and notions about the nature of work and the workplace and thus added new dimensions to the study of those attributes in relation to adults' participation in adult education activities. In the chapters that follow, the interrelationship of work and workers' views of organized adult education activities is explored further. That process gives insights into the important role that work and the workplace play in forming workers' views of organized adult education activities. Further, it challenges a fundamental assumption which underlies studies concerned with the work/participation relationship--that organized adult education activities are leisure time activities which are separate from work and are viewed by adults as leisure time activities.

Finally, this chapter provided the reader with an understanding of the particular context shared by the respondents in this study. It is, after all, within particular contexts that people develop the reasonings around their actions (Marton, 1984). The understanding of the context provided by this part of the dissertation provides an important background against which the workers' conceptions are examined in Chapters V and VI which follow.

V. OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION

ACTIVITIES

This chapter is the first of two chapters which explore workers' views of organized adult education activities. This chapter deals specifically with workers' views about their opportunities to participate in organized adult education. It begins with a review of current research about opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities. This is followed by a first-order examination of the educational opportunities available to the workers and a second-order description of the respondents' conceptions about their opportunities to participate. The inclusion of both first and second-order findings provides fuller insights into workers' views of organized adult education activities. As Gibbs (1982) points out "what we can see from one point of view we cannot see from another" (p. 484). This chapter concludes with a discussion of the conceptions as they inform and are informed by the first-order findings and current literature.

A. CURRENT RESEARCH ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The adult education research literature which explores adults' opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities goes beyond a straightforward description of opportunities available to adults. Instead, it treats opportunities in terms of the barriers or obstacles which inhibit adults from realizing their opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities. It classifies adults as "potential learners" (Cross, 1981, p. 99) and deals with them as a homogeneous group. It does not

distinguish between those who are positive to the notion of participation and are hindered by barriers and those who are not interested in participation. That research has usually used a combination of first and second-order approaches in both perspective and technique, that is, researchers define the barrier in terms of 'what' and then measure it in terms of 'how' and 'how much.' By contrast, a second-order, phenomenographic perspective and qualitative technique allows the workers to define their own understandings of opportunities from their own perspectives. As in this study, it can then use findings from a first-order approach to inform the discussions of those views.

Based on a review of current barrier research, Cross (1981) constructed a typology which classified the obstacles to participation as situational, institutional and dispositional. It is important to note here that those categories are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, barrier research has tended to support the notion that adults' non-participation is influenced by the "combined or synergistic effects of multiple deterrents rather than just one or two in isolation" (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985, p. 187).

1. Situational barriers

Situational barriers are "those arising from one's situation in life at a given time" (Cross, 1981, p. 98). The six major barriers selected by potential participants from a prepared list of items were, in descending order: cost, lack of time, home responsibilities, job responsibilities, no child care and lack of transportation (Cross, 1981). Of all barriers, *cost* is nominated most often (53%) as an obstacle to participation (Cross, 1981).

This finding, however, is not as straightforward as it appears at first glance. Indeed, some researchers argue that financial barriers can not explain participation (Anderson & Darkenwald, 1979). As Cross (1981) notes, cost may be mentioned more as a socially acceptable response to questions regarding barriers than as a representation of the non-participants' financial state. Indeed, most who identify cost as a barrier have no idea of the cost of various programs. The importance of cost as an obstacle to participation is also brought into question when the between-group similarities and differences are examined. For example, between groups, one could expect women, who are less often financially supported by employers in their educational endeavours and who tend to be in lower paying jobs, to mention cost as a barrier to their participation more often than men. Such is not the case. Women mention it only in equal, rather than in greater proportions to men (6.4%:6.7%) (Gallup, 1983). Further, even when men and women share the same economic level, women are less willing to pay more money for education (Wilcox, Saltford & Veres, 1975). Finally, adults are willing to pay more for some courses than for others. From a first-order perspective the inconsistencies and contradictions surrounding cost as a barrier are confusing. It is important to recall at this point, however, that Marton (1981) suggests that if researchers look with the respondents rather than at them, their reasonings would appear "comprehensible" and "logical" (p. 7).

The following example gives a second illustration of how findings about situational barriers may appear inconsistent from a first-order perspective. Research shows (Cross, 1981) for example, that the less

educated and those with low income jobs participate less than the highly educated and those with high income jobs. This is so despite the former group's statements that time is not a major barrier for them (Cross & Zusman, 1979). These findings appear to be contradictory, yet if one attempts to reason from the non-participants' point of view, it may be that the less educated and those with low income jobs are simply not interested in participating and thus the amount of available time to participate is irrelevant to them. Such a suggestion is, however, not confirmed by any second-order research into the non-participants' views.

2. Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers "consist of all those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities" (Cross, 1981, p. 98).

The six major institutional barriers selected by potential participants from a prepared list of items were, in descending order: don't want to go to school full time, amount of time to complete programs, courses aren't scheduled when I can attend, no information about offerings, strict attendance requirements, courses I want don't seem to be available (Cross, 1981). As the following examples illustrate, when viewed from a first-order perspective, findings about institutional barriers can appear confusing and sometimes even contradictory. For instance, the most frequently mentioned institutional barriers concern *inconvenient locations* and *schedules*. Women (Gallup, 1983) note accessibility/location as an obstacle to their participation three times more often than men. Despite that, their participation rate is

actually slightly higher than that of men. Potential participants also cite *lack of information* as a barrier to their participation. Although that item is cited fifth as an institutional barrier, Scandinavian research reveals that 24% of all those who are willing to participate are "unhindered non-participants," that is, they are aware of available facilities, desirous of participating and satisfied as to their adequacy, but who still do not participate (Lehtonen & Tuomisto, 1975, p. 32).

It is clear that findings about these two items, although interesting, do not uncover adults' reasonings behind their responses to institutional barriers. In recent years, much has been done to eliminate those barriers and to adult educators who look *at* adults it is perplexing that the participation responses of adults do not reflect those changes. Cross (1981) however, reemphasizes the importance of looking *with* adults when she states that individuals' views of barriers may be more crucial in determining participation than the barriers themselves. Her suggestion supports the need for research from a second-order perspective--research which explores adults' views of barriers to their participation. This study was based on such an approach.

3. Dispositional barriers

The third and final kind of barrier mentioned by potential learners can be categorized as dispositional. The six major dispositional barriers selected by potential participants from a prepared list of items were, in descending order: afraid that I'm too old to begin, low grades in past, not confident of my ability, not enough energy and stamina, don't enjoy

studying, tired of school, tired of classrooms, don't know what to learn or what it would lead to (Cross, 1981). As these items suggest, dispositional barriers are related to attitudes about oneself as a learner and about the learning situation. The third place ranking of this category may be misleading since adults may prefer to give socially desirable answers to questions about their attitudes. This phenomenon hints at the way in which respondents' answers are bounded by their understandings of their worlds and the appropriate acceptable ways of viewing and talking about that world. Alternately, the third place ranking of dispositional barriers may have methodological, mechanistic origins. It may simply be that since individuals who express no interest in adult education are seldom interrogated further, these views receive less attention than those of others.

In one way, research into dispositional barriers appears to take a second-order perspective, since it is concerned with adults' understandings of themselves as learners and of the learning situation. However, most of this research, like research into situational and institutional barriers, muddies the distinction between first and second-order perspective. For example, second-order concerns for acquiring adults' views of factors which foster or inhibit their participation are often combined with data collection instruments which define which views adults might choose to discuss. The resultant findings often present inconsistencies which are perplexing from a first-order perspective. For instance as already noted, research suggests that the dispositional barrier mentioned most frequently by adults is that they view themselves as *too old to begin education activities*. Additional research shows that the majority (56.3%) of those in the oldest age range (50+), do

not consider age a barrier to participation (Gallup, 1983). Similarly, in terms of the second ranking barrier *lack confidence in their abilities to learn*, research supports the notion that those who lack confidence have lower rates of participation. Additional research around this item informs us, but generally fails to reveal the adults' reasons underlying the relationships that are suggested. For example, Botsman's (1975) work hints at the contextually-bound nature of workers' views. He found that blue collar workers who attained more than a high school educational level cited personal inadequacies (lack of confidence, age, inadequate preparation) as obstacles to participation less frequently than non-highschool graduates, and that better educated workers perceived more difficulties with the educational system than with themselves. His research further revealed that these evaluations of self and education were related to the workers' context, that is, their workplace environment and levels of occupational skill. Also working with young blue collar workers, Larsson and Helmstad (1985) found that those workers viewed their failure within the educational system as the result of their own lack of hard work or suitability.

Some researchers try to interpret this kind of data from the respondents' points of view and propose for example that adults' negative self-evaluations of their abilities result in a fear of failure and humiliation which act as obstacles to their participation (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985). Cross (1981) goes further still and suggests that negative self-evaluations are related to early schooling experiences in essentially middle class schools were not congruent with working class styles of thinking, backgrounds and values.

Two more examples will suffice to illustrate the findings about dispositional barriers which from a first-order perspective appear conflicting and contradictory. The first example focusses on the barrier which considers adults' *views of past educational experiences*. The strong statistical correlation between educational attainment and participation in adult education activities suggests that past educational experiences affect adults' current adult education participation. Additional research shows, however, that having liked school during one's youth is only slightly positively associated with participation and general school performance is not significantly related (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). Further, and from a first-order perspective, inexplicably, the response of those who mention low grades as a barrier varies according to their level of educational attainment. Three times more elementary level adults than highschool graduates mention this problem, while no college graduates in the sample consider poor past performance to be a barrier. Some authors, seeking alternate ways of interpreting this barrier, have argued that adults' views of their past schooling experiences are less related to past experiences and more to their social status (Bergsten, 1980; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; London, 1963) or the nature of their work (Larsson & Helmstad, 1985; London, Wenkert & Hagstrom, 1963).

The second example which focusses on adults' *experiences of adult education* to participation illustrates the variety of findings which may result from research and which appear ambiguous from a first-order perspective. Some researchers question that relationship (Grotelueschen & Caulley, 1977; Seaman & Schroeder, 1970) despite the data which reveal that those who

participate once in adult education are most likely to participate again (Garry, 1977; Le Clair, 1969; London, Wenkert & Hagstrom, 1963; Ray, 1979). Research has also shown that positive correlations between adults' views of adult education and participation can result either from a positive attitude toward adult education in general or from previous participation which affected attitudes toward adult education in a positive way (Bergsten, 1977). At the same time, research shows that adults' views of adult education can be related to occupational or social status. For example, manual workers' views of adult education tend to be more negative than those of white collar workers. Adult education is not defined as pleasurable. Indeed, "for the typical lower-class adult, the concepts of 'learning' and 'spare-time enjoyment' convey quite opposite meanings" (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965, p. 21). Typically, manual workers more frequently judge education to be an activity for children and adolescents than for adults (London, Wenkert & Hagstrom, 1963). Together, these findings inform us about barriers to adults realizing their opportunities to participate, but they do not clarify the reasonings behind adults' participation or non-participation.

The above discussion examined the literature related to adults' views of their being able to participate in and to complete an educational activity. In the field of adult education, that literature is known as barrier research. It examines adults' opportunities for participation in terms of the barriers which inhibit or prevent adults' participation. Research into barriers has provided the field of adult education with data that gives some insights into the participation issue. However, as Cross (1981) asserts, what people understand to be obstacles may have as much to do with their

non-participation as the existence of barriers. Research undertaken into those understandings might help to clarify what at present remain as perplexing inconsistencies and contradictions among the findings--incongruencies and tensions which have limited their utility in the areas of further research, practice and policy development. The following section of this chapter first presents findings from a first-order perspective and then undertakes a second-order examination of adults' conceptions of their opportunities to participate. Those findings illuminate the participation issue from a different perspective.

B. DESCRIPTION OF WORKERS' OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

In terms of opportunities available to the workers through the workplace, information was acquired by several means. The Training and Accident Prevention Division, Computer Training Centre, personnel and union offices provided print materials such as booklets, pamphlets and mimeographed information sheets. In-depth interviews were conducted with the directors of the Training and Accident Prevention Division and Computer Training Centre. Several personnel and union officers concerned with education and training in the workplace were interviewed by telephone.

Information about organized adult educational activities provided by the community were available from Statistics Canada. The researcher's familiarity with the community and its offerings supplemented that data base.

1. Workplace

Within the workplace, the employer and unions provided educational opportunities for the workers through the workplace. Before examining the details of the workplace where these interviews occurred, it may be useful to note the Canadian data about these kinds of provisions. In the first instance, Canadian employers provide 18% of all adult education courses. In terms of job related training, 42% of those courses are offered by employers. Indeed, employers almost exclusively offer job-related courses--94% of all their courses are job-related (Devereaux, 1985). Employers provide training courses in a variety of subject areas for their employees. Full time training of four weeks duration or longer provided by other than the employer and part time training including short (less than four weeks) full time training tends to be offered most frequently in the areas of English/math/technology, commerce/management/business administration, and arts/social sciences (Morrison & Rubenson, 1987). In the second instance, 8% of all Canadian adult education courses are provided by unions and professional associations. In terms of job-related training, 15% of those courses are offered by unions. Like employers, unions tend to offer job-related courses, with nearly three-quarters of their courses being job-related (Devereaux, 1985).

a. Employer-provided educational opportunities

Exact data concerning the provision of educational opportunities by the organization studied in this project were limited, however, some information was available. Two providers existed--the Training and Accident

Prevention Division and the Computer Training Centre. The Training and Accident Prevention Division was created in 1972. It offered a diverse selection of twelve courses which ranged from telephone answering techniques to management and supervisory skills (see Appendix IV). A total of 553 employees attended these courses over the period of a year. All the courses were conducted in the Division's two classrooms which were located in the middle of a scenic garden approximately an hour's drive away from the site of this study.

Consultants hired by the Division conducted most courses; a few were presented by the director of the Division. Certificates were given for all courses conducted by the Division. Copies of those certificates were put into the employees' files and viewed by the director of the division as "an asset during the selection process", "a reward system that developed over time and infiltrated the system." He viewed the classroom as "a safe environment in which to speak" and a place where people went "to vent and put their situation out in front of other people." The Training and Accident Prevention Division annually published a course handbook which it distributed to the Department's administrators and division heads.

The Computer Training Centre was a new facility established with the assistance of three years of federal financial support. It was operated through the Computer Services Division in co-operation with the Training and Accident Prevention Division and conducted its classes in two large classrooms. The Centre dominated the main floor of an older building opposite the main administration offices of the municipality. The two

classroom areas were totally refurbished and held 45 new computers and specially designed desks and chairs. The Centre was approximately twenty minutes by car from the site of this study. It was easily accessible by car and bus.

The Centre offered its first courses in February of 1986 and by June 1986, 28 different courses had been offered. This, over a 5 month time span, was more than double the variety offered by the Accident and Training Division during the entire year of 1987. These included courses on the IBM mainframe, IBM-PC, Wang word processing, introduction to computers, LOTUS, FOCUS (beginner, intermediate and advanced levels) and ergonomics. A total of 576 employees attended the courses. This number was slightly more than the total number of those who attended the Accident and Training Prevention Division's courses throughout an entire year. The Department studied here was one of the heaviest users of the Computer Training Centre.

In addition to courses, the Centre provided 'open time' on micro computers and terminals. Between June and April of 1986, over 200 people enrolled in telecourses sponsored by the organization. These courses were related to the nature, use and potential of computers. A VCR was also available for those who wished to view the videotapes for telecourses.

The Centre had a core group of three trained instructors which was heavily supplemented by a wide range of practitioners who worked within the municipality. That latter group tended to have practical but not instructional experience. The Centre infrequently published a newsletter and distributed it to Department heads and division heads. Annually, it published

and distributed to the same people, a training centre calendar which listed all the Centre's courses. That booklet explained that each regular position in the organization was assigned a priority rating for the courses offered by the Centre. Priority A ratings, which guaranteed access, were given to "[1] all positions in the identified departments which are now, or will be, required to do the tasks, or serve as backup for those tasks [for] which training is to be given. The hardware and software must be available to the trainee....[2] those who are now doing the work for which others will be trained and thus may find their jobs in jeopardy or radically changed" (Computer Services, 1987, p. 3). Employees rated as holding Priority B positions were "all others" and could apply to attend designated courses, even if they were not job-related at that time.

A policy existed which dealt with employees who experienced difficulty learning new skills related to the computer. This policy was directed toward employees in the Priority A group who the organization wished to train. There was a three stage approach which was presented as a means to help employees assess their their computer-related learning requirements and undertake the necessary courses. First, the policy suggested that there should be high quality training and orientation of both staff and management levels about the impact of technology. Second, it offered remediation, review and support programmes for those having difficulty learning to use the computer. Finally, it suggested that employees' jobs could be redefined to resolve the need for the employee to learn and practice computer related skills. Where that was impossible, union-management discussions were suggested to resolve the problem of

employees who did not undertake training as required.

The organization also made general policy statements about educational opportunities and their funding which applied to both the Training and Accident Prevention Division and the Computer Centre. Every new employee who was hired full-time by the organization received a handbook which included a one page, very general statement of the training possibilities offered by the organization. The handbook began by encouraging the employees to "increase their knowledge and skills." It continued that "on-the-job training is given in many facets of civic service" and that "this could help you become qualified for promotion." The new employees' handbook suggested that "it is also possible to take seminars during the day locally or outside the [municipality] on leave with pay. These opportunities are more limited and you should see your supervisor for details." Although the statement did not indicate it, further details of this information concerning internal and external training, reimbursement of fees and educational leave were available from the personnel office of the organization upon request.

In this organization, employees usually applied through their division supervisors to attend all courses provided by the organization and for sponsorship to courses provided by other agencies. Those requests then went to the Department heads for approval.

Recalling that 18% of all courses and 42% of all job-related courses are provided by employers (Devereaux, 1985), it was no surprise to find that this organization also sponsored employees to courses that were "undertaken outside of working hours...are related to your work and are

approved in advance." Funding was subject to "certain performance and attendance standards." Personnel officers stated that from 50-100% of the cost of courses were funded by the department. The level of support was proportional to the relevance of the course to their job, as assessed by their Department. Supplementary information (April 1980; regulation 248), which was available upon request from the Personnel office, stated that "once the course is approved by the Department Head, the employee may apply to the [organization's] Treasurer for advancement of 50% of the fees" and that "approved seminars, workshops and other short-term training activities shall be paid by the [organization] in advance." This handout stated that for credit courses an overall standing of 65% was required for full reimbursement of fees. For non-credit courses, a minimum attendance of 80% of the course sessions was required.

Although extensive data were not available concerning this employer's provision of courses, data collected in this study did reveal that among those who identified themselves as participants, 6 respondents had last participated in an employer-provided course. Among those who identified themselves as non-participants, 3 respondents had participated in an employer-provided course at some time in the past.

The final kind of provision of educational opportunities in the workplace occurred when division heads made requests in their budgets for money to send workers to courses offered by the private sector. These situations were infrequent. As in the case of all courses, workers' sponsorship to these courses was dependent upon the recommendation of the division head to the Department head.

b. Union-provided opportunities

The second provider of educational opportunities in the workplace were the unions.

In this organization, there were two unions which provided educational opportunities to the workers. Workers belonged to either the 'inside' or 'outside' workers' union. The union which provided training opportunities for the (523) 'outside' workers (labourers, pipelayers, construction workers) conducted two "College" programmes to which they sponsored 50 employees per year. These colleges focussed on union issues. The local office of the union provided training for shop stewards on an irregular basis. Approximately 35 people were trained annually over a 2 day period. Other courses included retirement and labour history seminars.

Notice of these activities was made through the shop stewards who received information in the form of a newsletter. In addition, announcements were made at union meetings.

Employees made application to the board of the union for days off to attend workshops which were related to their jobs or the union. Employees received course days off with pay plus a per diem of \$25, or \$15 for a half day. Bursaries were available for members and their children to attend local universities.

The union of the (1,700) 'inside' workers (clerks, staff assistants) conducted assertiveness training and union education courses at either the union hall or at a community college some 12 kilometres distance from the city centre. Recently, a committee composed of individuals from an independent outreach community education centre and a community college

was formed to ensure that all of the organizations' workers were literate. Within the union, a specific group existed that was primarily concerned with economic issues. They conducted a summer program of two courses at a downtown location. They also sponsored two people every year to a week long summer residential course in topics such as economics and technological change.

Information regarding educational programs was included in the monthly union newsletter that was distributed to all union members. Further information about the 'inside' union's agreement concerning leave for writing examinations was available upon request from the Personnel office.

Scholarships to attend university and community college were available to union members and their children. Leaves of absences were arranged for such students. Usually, 10 to 12 adults per year took advantage of this program. This represented .7% of their membership in the organization. Loans of up to \$825 per person were available to union members for educational purposes. There was a special child care fund that assisted parents to attend union or union sponsored programmes. For evening courses \$10 per night for a total of three hours was available. For day courses, there was a maximum of \$25 available.

2. Community

Since this study was located in the middle of a large urban area, numerous and varied educational opportunities were offered by the community. They included academic, art, business and secretarial, charm and modelling, correspondence, dancing, drama, language, music, sales, and

technical and trade courses. They were offered by universities, colleges, school boards and voluntary organizations and both public and private, entrepreneurial providers. Two major universities and a university specializing in distance education delivery were within eight kilometers of the workplace site. As one might expect in a large urban area, the courses were promoted in a wide array of ways: newspapers, radio, television, pamphlets, brochures, newspaper inserts and so on.

As an illustration of the number of providers, it is useful to note that the municipality's 'yellow pages' listed 72 providers of trade and technical courses and 27 providers of business and secretarial courses. Although exact data concerning the participation of the respondents was not available, Statistics Canada (Devereaux, 1985) data revealed that the major providers of courses in the municipality were, in order: educational institutions (colleges [17% of all courses provided], school boards [13.3%], private or commercial schools [12%], university [11%]), voluntary organizations (14%), employers (18%), unions and professional associations (8%), churches (2%), and other (5%).

The preceding section has described the educational opportunities available to respondents of this study. In brief, the organization provided educational opportunities through two venues: a Training and Accident Prevention Division and a Computer Training Centre. The Division tended to offer management and supervisory skills courses while the Centre devoted itself specifically to computer-related courses. The newer Computer Training Centre offered twice as many courses as the Division and both areas

publicized their courses in similar fashions--through annual publications and infrequent newsletters. Finally, a few courses were provided through special budgetary allocations made by department heads.

Since all workers were members of unions, they were able to participate in educational opportunities provided by the unions. Those opportunities were varied and specific to training workers for union activities. They were publicized irregularly in newsletters and bulletins. Within the community, the educational opportunities were extensive and typical of a large urban area. There were various public, and private entrepreneurial providers at every level.

C. WORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

Throughout the interviews, the theme of the opportunities to participate in adult education activities was addressed. Questions were phrased so that respondents could answer in terms of factors which fostered or inhibited their participation. Information was gathered through both direct and indirect questions. The twenty workers were asked about their experiences and views of the process of attending or trying to attend adult education activities. Indirect questions which proved particularly effective in probing this area explored the differences between participants and non-participants, and asked the workers to make normative statements about mandatory adult education. Workers' responses to the questions revealed that they discuss their opportunities in ways different from either a description of opportunities or barriers to realizing opportunities to participate. The workers' views of opportunities to participate were

classified as:

Conception I: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are other-determined

Conception II: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are self-determined

Within conception I, different levels indicated workers' slightly different interpretations of the same conception. Although these conceptions attempt to capture the variation of views held by the workers, it should be recognized that they may not exhaust the possibilities of conceptions which could occupy the outcome space. As the independent judge reliability test confirmed, both conceptions with their various levels (where applicable) have clear, identifiable boundaries and unique characteristics. The level of agreement between the independent judge and researcher was 100% for Conception I, and 93% for Conception II.

1. Conception I: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are other-determined

Some workers saw their opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities as other-determined. These workers referred to those with authority who determined which workers would participate. These workers did not see themselves as controlling their decisions to participate:

If you're in a job where there is a [computer] terminal, you're going to go to that sort of thing. It's not something you decide or whatever. (Pam, I-207)

Everybody had to learn about the computer. Everybody had to. (Natalie, I-319)

This conception occurred at two levels. At one level, workers saw those authorities as individuals who could grant the opportunity to participate. At another level, workers saw the authorities as people who imposed those opportunities upon them. In both instances, however, the decision regarding their participation was in the hands of others.

a. Level 1: Those in authority grant opportunities to participate

In the first instance, workers attempted to convince authorities to grant them opportunities to participate. They expended energy in pleading their cases, in the belief that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" (Patricia, II-809).

Workers emphasized the power that others had to grant them the privilege of participating in organized adult education activities. Participation was a matter of asking and being granted permission to enroll in courses:

If they hadn't asked me to go, I would have asked to be allowed to go....I don't see how I could have functioned in my job without taking that [course]....It was necessary. (Norma, I-236)

They were sending all the old guys, the guys about to retire....So I bugged them "Send a young guy, send me." (Peter, I-115)

Implicit in this view was that some would be "allowed" to participate, while others would not. The criteria that distinguished between these two groups was unclear. Some workers spoke of authorities who granted participation according to status in the organization, to those vaguely identified as people "higher up in the system", or to those "who

needed it more":

I think the higher you are in the system, the easier it is for you to get into those [organization] courses. (Patricia, 11-894)

I've heard of the foremen taking the management courses....They always send the foremen though. I'm just a pipelayer so they won't send me to that....I definitely could get benefit out of it. (Peter, 1-323)

Other workers identified limited enrollments or their work content as the criteria on which authorities based their decisions about who would participate and who would not:

There was a sheet came around. We filled out what we'd like to take, but we only were allowed so many per office to go, so probably higher up wanted to go, who needed it more. (Percy, 1-514)

They cut me off on computers. They kept saying well, I don't need to know because I'm not going to be working at terminals. (Norris, 1-340)

Fundamentally, at this level these workers viewed participation as a privilege. It was up to others to determine whether or not they participated:

It's [courses] not the kind of thing you ask to take it. They ask YOU to take it. If they've got somebody been here three years, and he's doing good and he's the kind of guy they want to move up, they'll send you to class for training. (Phillip, 1-410)

It depends on your supervisor whether or not you get it [permission to go to organization sponsored classes] you know. (Patrick, 1-692)

b. Level 2: Those in authority impose opportunities to participate

From a different perspective, workers similarly saw authorities as determining their participation, but spoke of the process as an imposition, rather than a privilege. These workers did not ask to participate, rather they spoke of the inevitability of *having* to participate.

They just told us on such and such a date, we'll be giving you a training course. (Percy, I-249)

Noreen's comments captured the inescapable nature of their participation:

Noreen: The sheet came down and we were asked to go--or told we should take it. We had an option and of course everyone in the office wanted to take it.

Interviewer: What do you think would have happened if you hadn't taken it?

Noreen: We would have had to take it in a length of [within] two years. (Noreen, p. 9)

Opportunities to participate were imposed by external agents in different ways. In some instances, workers responded to certain specified requirements:

In 1984, this paper came out, put out by the [organization]. By such and such a date, to go to the higher levels, you needed these here courses. (Percy, I-965)

I was just motivated [to take the courses] by the fact that I needed to upgrade my typing in order to get the job. You had to have 50 or 60 words per minute. (Natalie, I-106)

In other instances, the nature of the imposition was less clear. The workers viewed their participation as an acceptance of their responsibilities in the workplace and suggested that "naturally", one would attend in order

to learn how to do one's job more efficiently.

He had to take a bit of a course for the computer that's naturally cause we're coming into the computer and it's better than writing them out by hand. Yes, naturally, he'd have to do that. It's a must. (Ned, II-126)

The notion that authorities imposed participation upon the workers was supported by the view that some people needed that extra "little push":

A lot of adults would like to take courses but they're trapped, in one way or another. They need the opportunity or a little help or a little push. (Norma, II-721)

2. Conception II: Opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities are self-determined

A conception which the workers articulated clearly was that it was up to the individual to take advantage of the opportunities for participation in adult education activities. These workers viewed adult education as available to all adults and participation as a matter of personal choice. As the following comments illustrate, this was an inclusive notion that applied to adults in general:

Anybody who wants to go, can go. It's there. It's the same for everybody. (Phillip, I-459)

If you don't take it, it's up to you. Too bad. If you don't want it, it's your choice. (Norman, II-790)

It's all up to the individual. (Patrick, II-324)

A corollary to this view was that participants had chosen to make

the effort to enroll, while non-participants had not. Those who participated were supposedly driven by stronger forces such as greater needs and personal initiative. The following comments illustrate this perspective:

If your need is bad enough, regardless of what you want, you'll get it. (Patrick, II-302)

I think if you are given the opportunity [to go to courses] you should at least try....It's up to YOU to make sure you've got the qualifications....You've got to take the initiative yourself. (Nancy, II-076)

Consequently, workers blamed themselves for their lack of participation in organized adult education activities. Penny clearly had this perspective about her own situation when she commented on her four year wait to attend a supervisor's course offered by the organization:

It did stop me for awhile when I couldn't get on to them [courses]. But I thought I better keep trying. I'll only have myself to blame if a few years down the road I think "Gee, I should have taken that" but I didn't push it. (Penny, II-665)

Similarly, Norman accepted personal responsibility for his failure to take advantage of educational opportunities:

I tried to go to night school a couple of times and things didn't work--or maybe I was lazy. (I-83)

Congruent with this perspective was the view that some would inevitably not participate in adult education activities. Explanations for their non-participation were once again placed with the individual:

Some people just aren't inclined [to participate]. (Percy, I-109)

I think they [non-participants] are pretty happy with their lives. They're pretty happy to have anything, to do the same thing everyday. They feel safe, safer that way I guess. (Paul, II-537)

A theme which ran throughout this view was that workers were not responsible for those who did not participate. Since non-participation was seen as a choice by the non-participating individual, other workers did not feel it was their "fault" if some did not participate:

If you don't wish to avail yourself of the services offered it's not my fault. There's room in the classroom for you. (Patricia, II-009)

They've got the choice to take it. Whether they do use that choice or not--it's their fault if they don't. (Nancy, II-917)

3. Discussion

The preceding section has described two conceptions that workers held about opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities. The discussion below is informed by the findings presented earlier in this chapter. That discussion and the subsequent interpretations of those conceptions suggested some new ways to understand workers' views of their opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities.

Before examining these conceptions individually, it is interesting to present findings related to both conceptions. The first finding related to both conceptions concerns the workers' views of opportunities to participate. From the nature of the literature reviewed above, one might

expect the workers to express their conceptions of opportunities for participation in terms of situational, institutional and dispositional barriers. Clearly this was not the case. Although the interview schedule was structured to allow answers in terms of barriers and obstacles, workers instead discussed their expectations for participation in terms of their views of their relative control over those opportunities to participate. This finding reveals a way of viewing opportunities to participate that is neither descriptive of nor based in barriers. Rather, it extends barrier research beyond concerns for mechanistic situational and institutional barriers and individualistic dispositional barriers. It highlights the potential importance of workers' views of who controls their opportunities. This is an area which current barrier research does not address.

A second finding related to both conceptions concerns workers' abilities to identify opportunities to participate in one particular kind of organized adult education activity--employer-provided adult education activities. This high visibility of the employer-provided courses among these workers does not reflect the statistical data about the provision of educational opportunities. As noted in Chapter IV, fewer adult education courses are provided by employers (18%) than by educational institutions (53%). Research has revealed, however, that although those who least often participate in organized adult education activities are consistently least likely to participate, they are more likely to participate in workplace educational activities than in other organized adult education activities (Picot in Rubenson, 1987). Indeed, of the 19 workers who had at some time in the past participated in organized adult education activities, 13 had last

participated in an employer-provided or sponsored activity. These workers were aware of employer-provided courses offered by both of the organization's two training locations--the Computer Training Centre and the Training and Accident Prevention Division. This is also interesting, since at the time of the interviews the Centre was only one and one half years old and the Training and Accident Prevention Division was fifteen years old. Traditionally, one might suspect that workers' awareness resulted from the Centre distributing information about their courses more efficiently than the Division. However, as noted earlier, both areas appeared to publish and distribute fairly equivalent information. The notable difference between the two training areas was that the Centre was training more than twice as many workers as the Accident and Training Division in half the time. It is worth recalling as well that the particular department studied in this project was one of the heaviest users of the Centre. This suggests that these workers' views of opportunities may have been shaped by their experiences of participation rather than by information provided to them. Workers' tendency to identify opportunities to participate in terms of employer-provided opportunities gives new insights into the traditional work/participation relationship discussed in Chapter III. Traditionally, organized adult education activities are viewed by researchers as non-work, leisure time activities. This initial finding illustrates, however, that organized adult education activities may be intertwined with work and the workplace.

If each conception is examined individually, interesting insights are gained into workers' views of their opportunities to participate. For

example, among those who viewed opportunities to participate as other-determined, there was an understanding that the control of opportunities for participation lay with others. This conception thus challenges a basic assumption underlying work/participation in adult education studies--that participation in adult education has connotations of both freedom and choice. Clearly, those who viewed opportunities to participate as either a privilege or imposed saw organized adult education activities as restricted. The implications of this finding for work/participation in adult education in adult education studies have yet to be explored.

This conception resembles workers' conception of control of workplace opportunities as other determined in several ways. First, in both conceptions workers viewed the control by others as hierarchically structured. Indeed, in terms of this conception, new employees were referred, in a one page summary of training opportunities, to their supervisors to obtain further details and to make formal application to participate. Their applications then went to their immediate supervisors, division heads and ultimately Department heads. Second, in conceptions of both participation and workplace opportunities, the identities of the controlling authorities and their criteria for imposing or rewarding opportunities were unclear. The workers had only vague and ambiguous understandings of ways to influence their opportunities to participate. As noted in Chapter IV, such ambiguity might encourage workers to believe they had some control over their opportunities. At the same time, it ensured that workers did not achieve control of the opportunities since the

criteria to obtain control could be easily redefined. The close congruence between workers' views of their control of the workplace and their views of their control over opportunities to participate suggest a congruent, or as noted in Chapter II "generalized" relationship between the two conceptions. This is, however, a different interpretation of the notion of generalized. Traditionally, that term concerns the "spillover" of work into participation in adult education activities. In this instance, it is suggested that there could be a relationship between the nature of these adults' work and their views of their opportunities to participate. This relationship and its influence on workers' participation are not explored in the current adult education literature.

A second researchable feature of this conception concerned the workers' views of opportunities as either a privilege or imposed. This distinction is not made in the current literature, yet it challenges a fundamental notion of research into the relationship of work to participation in adult education--that participation is an act of freedom and choice. Indeed, much of the participation research assumes that, with the exception of participation in mandatory adult education, participation is such an act of freedom and choice. In the first instance, workers spoke of opportunities to participate as a privilege granted to select groups such as supervisors and those with computers. Indeed, the organization's data did show considerable attention was given to some groups. For example, over half of the participants enrolled in the Training and Accident Prevention Division were taking courses designed for supervisors and managers (see Appendix IV). As well, there were priority ratings for computer courses

which were designed to ensure some workers would participate before others. It is possible that workers who saw participation as a privilege viewed opportunities to participate as non-existent if they were not members of specific groups. The effects of this view on their recruitment have not been explored.

In the second instance, workers spoke of opportunities to participate as imposed. They did not see that they had any choice about their participation. This view was held although there was clearly no policy which stated that workers had to participate in specific adult education activities. In the case of computer training, there was actually a detailed policy to deal with those who did not undertake training. The final approaches in that policy were to redesign the workers' job and enter into union-management discussions. It is interesting to note that this policy addressed workers' non-participation as issues of the workers' misunderstanding their workplace learning requirements or of workers not recognizing their own learning deficiencies. This policy approach was congruent with workers' views of those who did not participate in employer-provided adult education. Both placed the fundamental responsibility for adjustment to computers with the workers.

A final feature which is embedded within this conception concerns the extent to which workers' viewed themselves as recipients of their opportunities for participation. It may be that those who saw themselves as primarily recipients extended that notion to include barriers. To the extent that they did not see themselves as initiators, they may have placed control for removing barriers with others. These workers might thus remain

non-participants until they were selected to participate and barriers were removed for them. Their non-participation could be related to their view of others who determined their opportunities and also had the responsibility for removing barriers. These possibilities are not explored in the current participation literature.

The second conception that workers held was that opportunities to participate were self-determined rather than other-determined. Once again, this conception closely resembles workers' conceptions of control of workplace opportunities as self-determined and suggests a congruence between workers' views of the control of the workplace and their views of opportunities to participate. In both cases, workers focussed on workers' personal responsibility to ensure that they acquired their own opportunities. Workers' views of opportunities to participate as self-determined were not entirely congruent with the workplace policies as stated by the organization. There were a limited number of spaces in courses provided by the employer and priority ratings for the computer courses stated that certain groups of workers would participate before other groups. Despite this, workers who saw opportunities as self-determined placed the responsibility for realizing opportunities with the individual worker.

This finding redefines the notion of dispositional barriers. Currently, research into dispositional barriers relates potential learners' attitudes about themselves and the learning situation to participation. While that research focusses on adults' evaluations of themselves relative to their past educational experiences, self-confidence levels, preparation and so on, this

study revealed that those workers evaluated themselves relative to the effort they made to participate. They judged their own lack of drive, ambition and so on, to be the barriers which prevented their participation. External institutional and situational barriers were conquerable. It was merely a matter of choosing to make the effort to overcome barriers. This finding adds a different dimension to dispositional barriers by suggesting that the element of self-blame could play a role in inhibiting or fostering participation. An important characteristic of self-blame was the differentiation that workers made between their level of effort to participate and their level of effort in other circumstances. This distinction is not always evident in research into dispositional barriers. It tends to explore adults' lack of confidence, negative self-evaluations and personal inadequacies in general terms and relate those characteristics to participation. This study suggests, however, that these workers held certain views about themselves which were specific to their control over their opportunities to participate and different from their views about themselves in other circumstances.

Although each of the two conceptions discussed above are qualitatively different, there was an inter-dependent relationship between them. Self-determination of opportunities, for example, did not occur within a void. The notion was intertwined with the understanding that through one's efforts, one could influence the "others" who determine opportunities. Individual effort was effective only in relation to the others who controlled opportunities. The "self" acquired opportunities only to the extent that

others created and provided them. Similarly, the conception that opportunities were other-determined was limited by the extent to which individuals accepted others' determination of their participation. The interactions of these two spheres and their relative importance to subsequent participation or non-participation are not explored in current participation literature.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter was the first of two chapters dealing with organized adult education activities. It examined opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities. It first described current research on the topic and presented the workers' conceptions of their opportunities to participate. It then examined the opportunities available to the respondents in this study and the participation of those workers. Finally, it concluded by discussing those conceptions in light of the earlier descriptive information and current research. That discussion highlighted the importance of the workplace context in these workers' views. It suggested different dimensions in the work/participation in adult education relationship and identified areas for further research. The next chapter continues to deal with organized adult education activities.

VI. PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

This is the second of two chapters which explore workers' views of organized adult education activities. Following the format of Chapter V, it begins with a review of current research related to the uses of participation in organized adult education activities. This is followed by a first-order examination of the workers' participation and a second-order description of the respondents' conceptions about the uses of organized adult education activities. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the conceptions as they inform and are informed by the first-order findings and current literature.

A. CURRENT RESEARCH ABOUT USES OF PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Recalling from Chapter II that this study is concerned with adults' conceptions of the *uses* of participating in organized adult education activities, this review of the literature examines the forward-looking goals which adults associate with their participation. That research relates adults' views of the possible future anticipated consequences of participating in organized adult education activities to their participation. This relationship is represented in models of participation which incorporate the notion of expectancy-valence (Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Groteleuschen & Caulley, 1977; Lehtonen & Tuomisto, 1974; Rubenson, 1983). Expectancy is both the expectations that an educational activity will have certain desirable consequences and the expectation of being able to participate in and complete the educational activity. Valence refers to the varying values

people place on the consequences of participating in education. It considers the future-oriented uses of participating. Expectations, combined with this valuing of the consequences of participation, create the force which determines adults' participation or non-participation. Together, these two elements are "the crucial factors for actual participation" (Bergsten, 1977, p. 127).

In the field of adult education, there currently exists research which explores adults' forward-looking expectations of consequences for participation in organized adult education activities. That research has been conducted in two streams. In the first instance, researchers survey adults to determine the reasons why they participate. In the second instance, researchers focus on the work of Houle, who discussed adults' participation in terms of their orientations. The first stream has been characterized by large and small scale surveys that seek to determine how many hold a certain view, the demographic characteristics of those holding a certain view and so on. The second stream of research was initiated by Houle's work. He sought the meanings held by adults about the values and purposes of continuing education. Subsequent work based on his research tended to focus on 'how' and 'how much.' As the following discussion shows, these two streams of research have informed the field of adult education yet left unclear the reasoning behind adults' views of the uses of participating in adult education.

1. Nominated reasons for participation

It is clear from the literature that adults participate in educational activities for different and multiple reasons. Canadian data (Gallup, 1983) collected via large scale survey techniques give insights into the most important reasons adults take courses (based on those 17 and over who have taken courses in the past 3 years). They are, in descending order:

- to acquire new skills that will help them to keep up with their jobs (25%)
- for personal enjoyment, including recreation, development of mental, physical, artistic ability or craftsmanship (20.7%)
- to get a job and/or improve their employment prospects (17.8%)
- to obtain a promotion, a better job and/or to increase their income (14.2%)
- to improve their ability to communicate with others and be more effective in their relationships with family and others (10.4%)
- to increase their capacity to understand and participate in work and/or union affairs (8.6%)

At first glance, these data appear straightforward. Additional data highlight interesting disparities related to income and sex. Those with the very lowest incomes (under \$10,000 in 1983) view adult education as a means to get a job and improve their employment prospects, while those with the highest incomes (\$40,000+ in 1983) view it as a means to acquire new skills to keep their job. In terms of gender, 60% of male participants enrolled to improve their job opportunities and 40% for personal interest. Among women, the reverse occurred: 34% enrolled for job-related reasons while the majority (66%) enrolled for personal interest (Devereaux, 1985).

Although these data are interesting in and of themselves, and indeed by looking 'at' these adults' patterns of behaviour the participation issue is illuminated in one way, looking 'with' the adults from a second-order research perspective could reveal adults' reasonings behind these behaviours.

Cross' (1981) work in the United States reveals the same kinds of disparities among the findings. Her analysis was based on surveys slightly different from the Canadian study and she found that fundamentally most adults give practical and pragmatic reasons for learning. Her study highlights slightly different reasons that people give about why they participate in organized adult education activities. For example, between 10 to 39 percent of potential learners identify 'knowledge for its own sake' as their primary motive and 50 percent cite it as one among other reasons for learning. What is interesting is the variation in the kind of knowledge which different kinds of adults seek. More of those with high educational attainment than those with lower educational attainment prefer liberal arts and traditional, discipline based subjects. The younger and more educated also tend to enroll to obtain a certificate or degree. Approximately 8 to 28% of all potential learners have as a goal such attainment of formal credentials. These disparities in the United States data although interesting have remained, as in Canada, unresolved by first-order research approaches.

2. Orientations

The second main stream of research into adults' goals and participation centres on the work of Houle (1961). Houle's work focussed on 22 men and women who were "so conspicuously involved in various forms

of continuing learning that they could be readily identified" (p. 13). He categorized the learners' perceptions of the values and purposes of continuing education into three orientations. Goal-oriented learners use adult education activities to achieve specific purposes. According to Houle, these learners initiate participation after identifying a need or interest. Activity-oriented learners participate for the sake of the activity itself. The content or announced purpose of the activity does not influence their participation. Learning-oriented learners are a fairly homogeneous group who view learning as a way of life. Learning is pursued for its own sake and these learners enrol in learning activities constantly throughout their lives.

Houle's work spawned numerous studies which analyzed, reproduced and extended his typology (Boshier, 1971; Burgess, 1971; Dickinson & Clark, 1975; Morstain & Smart, 1974; Sheffield, 1962). For the most part, these studies addressed first-order 'how' and 'how much' concerns around orientations. Courtney (1984) reviewed twenty four such studies and concluded three things:

First, with some few exceptions, most of the discovered factors appear to conform to the structure of Houle's original typology. Second, every researcher since Houle has discovered more than three factors. At the same time, no one has claimed to have refuted or "falsified" the typology. Third, which factors get discovered and how they are named depends on which scale [Sheffield's continuing learning orientation index, 1962; Boshier's educational participation scale, 1971; Burgess's reasons for educational participation scale, 1971] was used and whose theory was being followed. (p. 135)

The twenty four studies conducted since Houle's original typology emerged, have most consistently re-discovered the existence of learning orientations.

Goal orientations may be re-defined in more complex ways as either personal or social goals. Personal goals benefit the individual--often in work related ways. Adults with a social goal orientation participate in order to benefit the community or society at large. These orientations may result from outside influences or pressures rather than feelings of attraction or necessity (Courtney, 1984; Cross, 1981). The activity orientation may similarly be divided into the need to get away from boredom and the desire to cultivate new friends (Courtney, 1984; Cross, 1981).

Houle's work is suggestive of why adults participate in organized adult education activities. Other researchers, in an attempt to understand 'how' these orientations form, have examined the relationships between adults' orientations and the particular characteristics of adults such as those studied in this project. Morstain and Smart (1974), for example, noted a slight tendency for younger, more than older participants, to place importance on the social relationships factor; men more than women to note the external expectations dimension and women, more than men, to indicate the cognitive interest factor. Boshier (1985) found younger adults enrol as the result of external expectations, older adults for cognitive interest and people with less education and lower occupational status for professional advancement reasons. Seldom identified as the main reason, but nonetheless mentioned as reasons for participation were "to obtain a certificate" and "to escape."

Once again, these findings prove interesting, but adults' reasonings behind the discrepancies remain unclear. Furthermore, the findings are not as straightforward as they first appear. The research is problematic in several

ways (Boshier, 1976; Courtney, 1984; Ordos, 1980). First, there are methodological weaknesses in the data collection processes. For example, in the case of surveys in which respondents choose from a list of pre-determined alternatives, random and subjective impressions about adult education activities may not be captured. As well, some items can be so broadly interpreted that they have a greater chance of being selected by respondents. This could partially explain why reasons like 'to become better informed' are less frequently noted as reasons for participation than reasons like 'to be a better parent, spouse' (Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974). Further, among items there is frequently conceptual confusion. This results from the lack of distinction between items which represent "because" or "in-order-to" forces. Finally, results are less straightforward than one might assume since people tend to choose socially desirable reasons to explain their participation. This could partially explain why reasons like 'to get away from personal problems' are considerably less popular as answers than reasons like 'to become a better citizen' (11%:26%) (Cross, 1981).

Second, there are statistical confusions in the data analyses processes. The factor analysis technique is used frequently in studies based on Houle's work, but as Courtney (1984) and Long (1983) point out, this technique usually requires a sample size ten times the number of items in the measuring scale, yet few of the studies meet that criterion.

Third, it is important to note that the research studies examined above were designed to elicit responses from participants. Thus, although the findings are informative, they give little insight into those who have no interest in participating in organized adult education activities. It remains

unclear to what extent non-participants have interests in achieving the goals or to what extent they share the orientations of participants.

In summary, current research, about adults' reasons for orientations toward participation has provided interesting information to the field of adult education. These findings however, have embedded within them methodological, conceptual and statistical problems. Finally, current research has failed to provide an understanding of the reasonings behind adults' statements about the uses of adult education. A second-order approach such as this study adopted, might be expected to clarify some of the reasonings behind the inconsistencies which, from a first-order perspective are perplexing. The following section presents findings from such a second-order examination of adults' conceptions of the uses of participating in organized adult education activities. As one might expect, those findings, developed from a different research perspective, illuminate the participation issue in different ways.

B. DESCRIPTION OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Since data about the workers' participation were not kept by the organization, information about the workers' participation was collected by a questionnaire completed at the end of the interview (see Appendix I). That questionnaire focussed on the courses, classes or instruction the worker took during the twelve months prior to the interview--the type of course taken and the reasons why it was taken. A final question asked workers to identify the last three courses, classes or instruction they had taken.

Findings from the questionnaire are presented below.

In terms of courses that workers had taken during the previous twelve months, among those who identified themselves as participants, 5 had received instruction or training to upgrade job skills, 3 had taken courses to upgrade academic qualifications and 3 had enrolled for personal interest or develop practical knowledge such as an art or craft class (workers could identify one or more reasons). In total, these workers had taken an average of 2.8 courses during the last 12 months. For 8 workers, their last course was job-related, for 3 workers it was a personal development or general interest course; for 2 workers it was an academic course (workers could identify more than one characteristic of the course). The most important reason these participants took their last course was to improve job opportunities (5) and for personal interest and development (4). One person did not know why he took the course. There were an average of 11.05 hours of instruction per week in the workers' last courses and 4.4 weeks of instruction. The workers themselves or their families (5) paid the tuition or fee for the course as did the employer (4). One worker did not know who paid and one worker said there was no fee payable.

The definition of non-participant that guided this study was that the respondent had not taken any courses, classes or instruction during the last twelve months. These included instruction to improve job skills, upgrade academic qualifications, for personal development or for recreation and leisure. Given that definition one might reasonably expect to find no data about courses taken during the last 12 months from those 10 workers who identified themselves as non-participants. Such was not the case. Among

those who identified themselves as non-participants, 3 workers said they had received classes, instruction or training to upgrade job skills, 1 had enrolled for personal interest or to develop practical knowledge such as an art or craft class and 1 had enrolled in some other kind of course. None had enrolled to upgrade their academic qualifications. In other words, those who identified themselves as non-participants, but who actually did participate, participated in a particular *kind* of organized adult education activity--that is, courses to upgrade job skills. In total, the 5 "non-participants" took an average of 4.8 courses during the last 12 months. That was actually more than the average number of total courses noted by participants (2.8). For 3 of these non-participants, their last course, like that of participants was job-related. Two of the non-participants identified the course as "other." Their more important reason for taking their last course was for personal interest and development (4) and to improve job opportunities (2). The hours of instruction per week (4.6) was less than half that of the participants' courses (11.05) but the weeks of instruction were more (6.3:4.4). Unlike participants, more non-participants tended to have their fee/tuition paid by the employer (3) than by themselves or their families (1).

Clearly, those who identified themselves as non-participants did not necessarily fit tidily into the definition of "those who have not enrolled in courses, classes or taken instruction over the last 12 months." As the data suggest, among workers who had enrolled in courses, classes and or instruction within the last 12 months were those who called themselves non-participants. One might assume that the workers were unclear on the

difference between a participant and non-participant and 'mis-identified' themselves as a result of their confusion. During the interview process, however, when the discrepancies were probed, it became evident that the workers had heard the researchers' definition, but reinterpreted it. In some instances, workers identified themselves as non-participants if their participation was required by their job, if it were located in the workplace, if it was not job-related, if it was job-related. It was obvious that workers' views of participation and non-participation subsumed the traditional definitions that guided this study. Workers listened closely to the study's definitions of participation and non-participation and then identified themselves as either a participant or non-participant. It was only during the interview process that the subtleties of their interpretations of the terms became evident. Natalia, for example, identified herself as a non-participant but during the course of the interview revealed that she had attended a day long, employer-provided course about computers. When her reasons for classifying herself as a non-participant were probed, she responded that she discounted the computer course since it was one which she *had* to attend.

This finding highlights the problems inherent in studies into participation which assume the respondent and researcher share similar understandings of the notion of participation and non-participation. It is interesting to note that among those who identified themselves as non-participants, there was only one individual who said he had never enrolled in any adult education activity. This meant that 19 of 20 workers interviewed in this study had actually experienced an adult education

activity at some time in their lives. Among those who identified themselves as non-participants, participation had ranged in times from 11 months to 22 years previous to the interview. This finding continues to put into question current findings about participation based on what are assumed to be clear categories of participants and non-participants.

A second characteristic evident in these workers' participation was the importance of work and the workplace in relation to their participation. Over the 12 months prior to the interview, more workers (8) participated in courses to upgrade job skills than to upgrade academic qualifications (3), for personal interest or to develop practical knowledge (4) or for some other kind of instruction (3). For 11 of the workers, their last course had been job-related. Although 8 workers had taken courses for personal interest and development, almost as many (7) had taken them to improve their job opportunities. The employer had paid the fee or tuition for 7 of the workers, compared to 6 of the workers who themselves or their families had paid the fees.

Workers' participation can also be considered in terms of the workers' last three courses taken. When those data were considered, work and the workplace continued to dominate their participation. For example, among the 10 respondents who identified themselves as participants, 9 workers had taken a job-related course at some time among their last three courses (This included two workers who had taken academic upgrading for promotional purposes). Six of these 9 workers had completed a course specific to the use of the computer. This finding is congruent with the

data in Chapter IV, which noted that this department was one of the heaviest users of the organization's Computer Training Centre. The sole worker who had not taken a job-related course among her last three courses had taken courses generally termed personal development (Alanon; parent training). The eight workers whose *last* course was job-related, actually recalled *nothing but* job-related courses when they identified the last three courses they had taken.

Among the 10 respondents who identified themselves as non-participants, 8 workers had taken a job-related course among their last three courses (This included one worker who had taken academic upgrading for promotional purposes). Two of the workers had completed courses specific to the computer. Of the 2 workers who had not taken a job-related course among their last three courses, 1 had taken a course generally termed interest (banjo) and 1 had never taken any courses. Of the eight workers whose *last* course was job-related at some time in the past, 7 recalled *nothing but* job-related courses when they identified the last three courses they had taken. For four of the 8 workers a job-related course was the only course in which they had ever participated.

The preceding section has presented first-order findings about workers' participation. Further insights into workers' uses of participation can be obtained by exploring workers' second-order conceptions of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities. A discussion of those conceptions, informed by those first-order findings and the current research literature provides insights into the participation issue from a different perspective.

C. WORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF THE USES OF PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

This study sought to uncover the workers' views of the uses of adult education activities in both direct and indirect ways during the interview process. The issue of the uses of adult education was approached indirectly in the interview process by beginning in a general way and attempting to develop the adults' lifestory. Initial questions elicited information about their present life situations. Further questions explored their plans and expectations for future situations and possibilities. This provided indirect information about the views of the future held by both participants and non-participants and gave insight into their conceptions of the uses of adult education in achieving that future. Additional indirect questions which explored the workers' views of participants and non-participants and different kinds of courses and classes also provided insight into this area.

Near the conclusion of the interview, several specific questions directly examined the workers' views of the uses of adult education for themselves, others, the organization and society. As well, throughout the interview, there were direct questions which probed the workers' views of the uses of adult education in relation to workplace and out-of workplace plans, changes, problems and challenges.

The workers' views of the uses of participating were classified as:

Conception I: The skills and information acquired through participation in organized adult education activities are used in their practical application

Conception II: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to

satisfy workplace criteria

Conception III: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to allocate status

Conception IV: Through participation in organized adult education activities one acquires a personal possession.

Although these conceptions attempt to capture the variation of views held by the workers, it should be recognized that they may not exhaust the possibilities of conceptions which could occupy the outcome space. As the independent judge reliability test confirmed, each of these conceptions with its various levels has clear, identifiable boundaries and unique characteristics. The level of agreement between the independent judge and the researcher was 89% for Conception I, 67% for Conception II, 89% for Conception III, and 89% for Conception IV.

1. Conception I: The skills and information acquired through participation in organized adult education activities are used in their practical application

One conception held by the workers was that adult education was used in its application. They engaged in adult education activities to acquire skills and information that could be put to practical use. These workers had a very utilitarian view of the consequences of participation in adult education. There was a straightforward connection between taking courses and their application. Participants learned the "proper ins and outs" (Nancy, I-630) that could be applied to specific workplace or out-of-workplace situations. One took computer courses to learn how to be more efficient and productive at the computer terminal or took Dutch courses to speak

with visiting relatives. Participation in adult education was used in pragmatic, concrete, instrumental ways. For example, Patrick was adamant that "ninety-nine percent of the time" he would not take a course unless it pertained to what he was doing. He had little hesitation in stating that any other kind of participation would be "wasting" his time (I1-61). Noreen was equally clear about the importance of putting acquired skills and information into use. She had taken introductory courses in computers from the computer training centre and used that information to execute her daily tasks as a payroll clerk. In explaining her disinterest in the wider range of more complex courses at the centre, she was forthright:

What is the use of taking a course if you can't come back and use it? (I-414)

Workers' attention could be so closely focussed on the instrumental value of adult education activities that activities not directly involved with their situations were dismissed as not useful. Thus, Neil barely noticed the information about courses and classes that were not related to his job. His comments made that clear:

If somebody mentions something about that [courses] it just kinda goes right through. I listen and I don't really listen. Unless it involves me and my job or something, I don't really pay attention. (I-411)

Ned had a similar view of the instrumental value of adult education activities but located those views in relation to the limited nature of his work. As a security officer who had held exactly the same position for ten years, Ned could not think of courses either for himself or for manual

workers that would improve the accomplishment of their daily tasks.

What course would a fellow on the streets take? And on my job, what would I take? I can't see any course beneficial to them. (II-356)

Similarly, Patrick surveyed the organization for work opportunities in the area of budgeting. He concluded that there were no positions available and thus he did not see "the sense" in taking such courses. In his own words:

We can't all work in budgets, so there's no sense taking budgetary type courses. (II-912)

2. Conception II: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to satisfy workplace criteria

As the interviews were analyzed, it became clear that the workers viewed their participation in adult education activities as a means to satisfy criteria in the workplace. Participation influenced their entry to the workplace, promotion, retention in employment or nature of their jobs. Participating was affective at two levels. It met both explicit and implicit requirements in the workplace.

a. Level 1: Participation satisfies explicit educational criteria in the workplace

In the first instance, participation in adult education activities satisfied stated, explicit educational criteria which were needed to compete for positions in the workplace. Participation in adult education activities resembled a payment of a membership fee to a running club, in which a set fee was exchanged for the privilege of entering the club's race and possibly winning the prizes. In other words, participation in adult education

activities was exchanged for the privilege of entering the competition for entry to the workplace, promotion, retention of employment or improvement in the nature of the job.

This notion, that participation in adult education was used to fulfil job requirements, did not imply that the position required the skills, information or knowledge acquired through that participation. Rather, participation in adult education meant that by meeting the posted criteria, the participants were in a position to compete. These criteria ranged from the vague to specific. For example, some job specifications required applicants to take "management courses" but no distinctions were made among employer-provided, college or university management courses. Other jobs required specific minimum formal educational levels. Norah's experiences were based in this latter situation.

After several years performing tasks similar to those of a Clerk three, Norah applied formally for the position of Clerk three in her office. The Clerk three educational criteria meant that she could not be awarded the position because of her grade ten educational level. Since her boss strongly supported her application, the competition was deferred for a year until she had completed her grade twelve. She was then awarded the position. It was hardly a surprise to hear her say:

Personnel didn't care about experience, they just wanted a grade twelve. (II-427)

The credentials acquired through participation were viewed as tokens or vouchers which had symbolic exchange value in the workplace. The content of the educational activities was de-emphasized. Instead, as Norah

explained, the acquisition of credentials was viewed as just a starting point:

Now companies are advertising for the highest possible education level that they can. It's simply there are so many people on the market. It doesn't mean that job particularly requires that education. It really doesn't. It's just they have such a choice and it eliminates an awful lot of applications by saying you must have your grade twelve or you must have your first year university or whatever. It's just a point to start at. (I-298)

b. Level 2: Participation satisfies implicit criteria in the workplace

Workers also viewed participation in adult education activities as a means to meet implicit requirements in the workplace. It represented their positive characteristics as workers to their supervisors and Personnel Officers. It served as a testimonial which assisted them in the workplace. Fundamentally, it suggested they had "initiative" (Nancy, I-644) and that they were "making an effort" (Pearl, I-11).

Peter, a young carpenter actively involved in taking vocational training courses, obviously saw his participation as a means to represent himself in a positive way to Personnel Officers and management:

They [Personnel Officers] said "You should go and take some courses just to show you're improving yourself." They like to hire people who are trying to do something....It shows you want to get somewhere yourself. You're showing you want something. Management will look and say "He's taking courses. He doesn't want to be in the ditches all his life. He wants to be a foreman or a supervisor"....Just to show you've done something....I think they look at that. Management will look and think "He wants to better himself and he seems responsible enough." (I-80, 360)

Natalie's comments below illustrate the symbolic nature of her

participation in adult education. Note that the information, skills or knowledge acquired through her participation are not of primary value to Natalie. Rather, participation was a means to demonstrate desirable personal characteristics to others:

Personnel looks and they say "Ok, she was a Clerk in Treasury [Department]. Hey, she took two accounting courses. She's interested enough she will upgrade herself if she needs to....If you're in accounting and you took a couple of accounting courses, that's good. Even though it may not have anything to do what you're hiring this person for, at least you were interested enough to take it....It helped me, because of Personnel. In their estimation, it means something." (I-165; II-710, 982)

3. Conception III: Participation in organized adult education activities is used to allocate status

Another conception held by some workers was that participation in adult education activities was a means to acquire symbolic status, prestige and social standing. It thus differentiated between groups of adults and established a hierarchical relationship between social groups. Those who participated in adult education activities acquired a social distinction that separated them from those who did not. As Peter's comments below illustrate, the distinctions that were created were clear. Those who had participated in more adult education acquired higher social standings in relation to those who participated less:

Everyone says "Oh, you're a [manual] worker. You're stupid." It's that attitude. There's a different attitude for those people who're uneducated....It [education] was just a power trip for them [university students]. They thought they were better. (Peter, I-423; II-886)

Participation in adult education activities created differences that resulted in an "us" and "them." As Norman, an older-aged labourer said:

They [participants in adult education] think more....You can see the way they looks and the way they [the bosses] treats them....the way they talk. They no rough talking. We're labourers, sometimes we talk rough. They don't....The educated people, the bosses, they talk different, more level. (I-474)

The expression of this notion of separation between those who participated and those who did not, was captured in Norma's comments of "plateaus....up here" and Patricia's identification of "a division":

I think there's a plateau around when you graduate....Well, I'm up here and they're still back there. I find it very hard to put up with them sometimes. They're amusing and they're pleasant, but they're very narrow and they don't tend to be interested in taking courses. (Norma, I-808)

There's like this division. The ones who do take courses talk about what's happening and the ones who don't, of course they don't comment because they don't take courses. (Patricia, I-574)

It was clear that for some workers, there was a tension between their inclusion in the group of the 'educated' and their membership in other groups. Education set them apart from their fellow workers. It identified them as having a particular attitude, and deserving of special attention. For example, Phillip, a young labourer was approached by his boss, singled out for attention and told:

We've been talking about you and you don't seem the kind of guy who's going to hang around here. Anyway, I can help you. Time off for school or anything, just come and see me. (I-382)

At the same time, Phillip struggled to maintain his membership with his fellow labourers by relating his past manual work experience:

They have this attitude that guys who go to [University] are a bunch of whoosies or whatever you want to call them but they don't really think of me that way because I'm an ex-logger. (I-112)

The comments of the workers suggested that not only did inequalities result from participation in adult education, but that inequalities performed a necessary function by maintaining an essential balance in our society. After all, as Norman said:

We can't all be the same. Somebody's got to be different. (II-693)

Patsy elaborated on the same point:

You have to have the balance. There's always people in the place that you work with. There's the grounding people who seem quite happy and don't do anything [courses] and there's the other people. You'd end up having too many people too similar and the balance would be lost and that's the balance of life. Some people do [take courses] and some don't. If everyone did the same thing, it's like tipping the scales. (II-437)

4. Conception IV: Through participation in organized adult education activities one acquires a personal possession

Some workers viewed the consequences of participation in adult education activities as assets similar in nature to personal property or wealth. They were possessions which could not be expropriated by others. Indeed, there was a hint that participation was in opposition to the demands and control of others. There was a tone of ownership and

propriatorship in the workers' voices when they discussed this view. Patricia's words illustrate this notion:

Interviewer: What will you do with these courses when you finish them?

Patricia: Just get a degree....I will have it. I'm not doing it for anyone else, I'm doing it *for me*. (I-516)

The commodity which the workers possessed took the form of acquired skills, information and knowledge. It was clear from their statements that the workers viewed their possession of those attributes as a demonstration of their mastery over a difficult situation. Participation in adult education activities was a way to "prove" something to themselves. This view went beyond the notion of personal growth and suggested control, command and power over the situation. The following comments illustrate both the proprietorial and controlling views of the workers toward the consequences of their participation:

I have a few courses that I want to go back and take more so just to keep my mind, you know, prove to myself that I can understand it, that I can keep up with it. (Noreen, pg. 8)

If I get a feeling of satisfaction, that I can master something that I have never done before or understand something that I've never thought about before, that I consider has done me good. (Norma, I-460)

Interviewer: Who were you taking the course for?

Patsy: I think myself. It was something---I have this quest and when I've achieved that, I feel really good and that. You know, I was thirty-seven when I got my bronze [swimming] medallion, and you know most people don't think of doing that....I wanted *to prove* that I could do it. It was an accomplishment. (II-590).

Implicit in these comments is a sense that workers viewed their participation as an expression of their ability to exercise their freedom in making choices.

5. Discussion

The preceding section has described four conceptions that workers held about the uses of participating in organized adult education activities. The following discussion and interpretations of those conceptions suggest alternate ways to understand workers' views of the uses of participation in organized adult education activities. This discussion is informed by the findings presented earlier in this chapter.

Before examining each of these conceptions more closely, it is important to present here a finding related to all conceptions. It became clear as the data were analyzed that each worker could identify uses for participation in organized adult education activities. None felt participation was useless. None dismissed it as irrelevant. All spoke of ways in which participating could be used in adults' lives. One distinction that did arise was that some workers saw participation as having uses in terms of their own situations, while some workers defined those uses in terms of other workers who would benefit. This dimension is not always acknowledged in research into adults' views of the uses of participation in adult education. Often researchers assume that workers' statements can be related to those workers' situations. This study suggests workers' views may also relate to others' situations. Some workers also introduced a time dimension to the

notion of uses. They did not anticipate participating at the present time, but could envisage future circumstances in which participating would have uses for themselves. The reverse view was also held--present participation was seen as having uses but future participation was seen to have no uses. This finding suggests there might be a different and fruitful way of exploring workers' views of the uses of participation.

At first glance, these four conceptions about the uses of participation appear to resemble findings that already exist in the adult education literature. If each of these four conceptions are studied closely, it is clear that the second-order approach of this study captured some subtleties of workers' views of the uses of participation in adult education activities.

The conception that through participation in adult education one acquires skills and information that are used in their practical application appears to merely substantiate existing work that notes the practical and pragmatic orientation of adults' participation. Further, although this conception concerned skills and information, both inside and outside the workplace, its location in the workplace supported current research that emphasizes job-related reasons for taking courses. This conception, however, goes beyond confirming those aspects of existing research in three ways. First, it points out the strong one-to-one relationship that can exist between adults' views of the content of an adult education activity and their participation. In some instances, that relationship was so direct that any additional skills and information which were taught were regarded as a waste of time. For adults holding this view, adult education activities had

use only to the extent that they taught directly applicable skills and knowledge. Adult education activities not exactly related to the required skills and information were barely acknowledged. This may provide adult educators with a different perspective on the issue of participation. Such adults may only be potential participants for those activities with content which has direct application to specific situations in either their inside or outside of work lives.

This conception reveals a second subtlety about adults' views of the practical application of participation in organized adult education activities. Obvious in the description of this conception was the importance of the skills and knowledge for application in the workplace. It followed that those workers who could perform their tasks and saw no opportunities for advancement into more complex jobs and who saw no shift of the nature of their jobs through the impact of technology would see little use for participation. Further, those who saw their opportunities to participate as other-determined could place the responsibility for their participation in such programmes with those at a higher level in the workplace hierarchy.

There is a third and final feature of this conception which is revealed by a second-order approach. It is concerned with the workers' relationship to the skills and information acquired through their participation in organized adult education activities. They viewed their learning as a process of assimilating discrete pieces of information rather than gaining broader more holistic or contextualized understandings. Further, they saw themselves as the recipients of skills and information passed on by others. Fundamentally, they spoke of themselves as the receptacles or containers

into which adult education deposited the gifts of skills and information. They located themselves in a relationship to skills and information in which others created, disseminated and controlled access to the skills and knowledge.

This notion is reminiscent of workers' views of their workplace opportunities and opportunities to participate as other-determined. In discussions of those conceptions, it was noted that these workers assumed proactive relationships to the creation, improvement or change of opportunities. The congruency among these views has not been explored in adult education research into participation.

It is possible to suggest connections between this conception, the workers' other conceptions and their participation or non-participation. These connections are made on the basis of what Larsson (personal communication, Feb. 1988) calls logical connections--connections based on commonsense understandings and reasonings. For example, to the extent that skills and information fulfil criteria determined by others who control opportunities to participate and opportunities in the workplace then these workers might be expected to participate in organized adult education activities. Alternately, to the extent that workers do not view the acquisition of skills and information as a way to fulfil criteria which are linked to participation and workplace opportunities, or to the extent that the workers are not interested in attaining those opportunities or to the extent that they see no opportunities existing, they may not participate. In terms of the impact of technology, to the extent that workers see technology affecting work in the future and requiring new skills and information, they

may participate in adult education that provides the practical skills and information which can be directly applied. Alternately, among those workers who do not see an impact from technology in the future, it follows that they may not see the need for participation in an activity which gives skills and information.

The second conception that these respondents held was that participation in organized adult education activities was used to satisfy workplace criteria. Although this conception appears to merely support research that suggests adults take courses primarily for job-related reasons, this second-order research went behind that reason and provided some interesting insights into the participation issue. What it revealed were the ways in which adult education played that job-related role.

Participation was used to satisfy workplace criteria at both an implicit and explicit level. In both levels there was a clear element of the symbolic use of participation. At the implicit level, this symbolic value was evident. Participation represented positive characteristics which in negotiation with those in authority, were exchanged for an improved workplace situation. This improvement was often defined as promotion, but also included lateral transfers, assured employment and positive regard from those in authority. At the explicit level, the symbolic value of participation was less evident. On the surface, the criteria to be met were clearly stated. For example, specific courses and grade levels were required for certain levels of work. Upon closer examination, however, it was obvious that different course providers, durations and contents could satisfy the

same explicit criteria. Once again, the symbolic nature of the adults' participation appeared to be as important if not more important than the skills, information or knowledge acquired. Workers spoke as if there were a shared understanding among participants and workplace authorities of this symbolic value of participating. Further, workers assumed that authorities accepted, noted and positively valued the symbolic nature of participating. Indeed, every new employee received a handbook which stated that on-the-job-training "could help you become qualified for promotion." The unspecific symbolic value of participation noted here was congruent with the vague and ambiguous criteria which workers viewed as necessary to control opportunities in the workplace and to participate. Like those criteria, this symbolic characteristic of the use of participation could be at the same time both a means for workers to control their opportunities and a means to be controlled in the workplace. In the first instance, workers exchanged the symbolic value of participating for enhanced opportunities in the workplace and for participation. In the second instance, workers engaged in an on-going attempt to identify and acquire symbols to fulfil ever-changing, ambiguous criteria to realize opportunities in the workplace and to participate. Since the origins and endurance of the preferred symbolic criteria were unknown, and their control resided with others, workers could only guess which kind of participation would improve their opportunities.

This interpretation of participation lends different meanings to the notion of goal orientation. Goal-orientation may be more an on-going, cyclical process in which workers seek to acquire the symbolic value of

participation in order to fulfil ambiguous and poorly defined criteria. It may not be the linear, unidirectional notion presented in the current literature. In some ways, workers' concerns for the symbolic value of participating also resembled an activity-orientation in which learners participated for the sake of the activity itself and the content or announced purpose of the activity did not influence their participation. Workers' concern for the symbolic value of participating may also be embedded within a learning orientation in which learning is pursued for its own sake. Clearly, the tidy categories created by Houle and extended by other researchers do not acknowledge the subtle but important notion of symbolic values of participation.

As with the previous conception, it is possible to suggest connections between this conception, the workers' other conceptions and their participation or non-participation. For example, to the extent that those criteria are linked to desired workplace opportunities and outcomes, and to the extent that workers see those opportunities and outcomes as available to them workers may be interested in participation in organized adult education activities. Alternately, to the extent that workplace criteria are not linked to desired workplace opportunities and outcomes, or to the extent that workers do not see those opportunities and outcomes as available to them, they may not be interested in participation. Further, participation may appeal to those workers who view the effects of technology in terms of changed criteria in the workplace but may not appeal to those who see themselves as meeting the criteria and the workplace, and do not see the workplace or technology as changing those criteria.

A third conception held by some workers was that participation in organized adult education activities was used to allocate status. This conception does not find a close parallel in the existing participation literature. Workers who held this view saw participation as a means to improve their status. The acquisition of status was seen as a desirable, positive outcome of participation in organized adult education activities. Although that use was located both inside and outside the workplace, the latter situation once again dominated. As noted in the second section of Chapter IV, these workers clearly acknowledged the workplace hierarchical divisions of control, status, authority, prestige and social standings, and measured their status in relation to "the bosses."

Participation allocated status in both direct and symbolic ways. First, in the workplace, it could qualify workers for higher status positions in the workplace. From Chapter IV, it is clear that higher educational requirements were necessary for some positions than for others. Managers and Clerk III's for example, required a grade twelve diploma, while Clerk I's and labourers could be hired with less than a grade twelve diploma. For the workers who sought intrinsic outcomes from the workplace, participation could thus be seen to have a use.

Participating also allocated status in a second, more symbolic way by creating distance between those who participated and others who did not. In the workplace, among those who held the conception that they had no control over their opportunities to be promoted, participation thus offered an alternate means to acquire status. Participation thus resulted in tensions which widened the gap between those who shared similar

positions. This in turn may have fostered workers' individualistic and competitive interpretations of this conception. Workers who held this view did not discuss participation's uses in terms of collective issues. They were not concerned with improving the status of others who shared, for example, their job classification, educational or income levels. Although there was an acknowledgement that status groups and hierarchical groups of power and authority existed, the uses of participation were discussed solely in terms of the individual advancing within those groups. This focus on the 'self' echoes the themes of self-determination and self-blame found in workers' views of opportunities in the workplace, intrinsic outcomes in the workplace and opportunities to participate.

As in the previous conception, the acquisition of the symbolic outcomes of participating was both a means for workers to control their workplace situation and at the same time, a means for the workplace authorities to maintain control of the workers and the workplace. Participating and acquiring symbolic status allowed workers to improve their workplace chances, but it also engaged them in an on-going attempt to identify and acquire ever-changing ambiguous criteria. Once again, the notions of goal, activity and learning orientations are cast in a different light by the examination of a conception derived from a second-order approach. As well, one can suggest that, to the extent that symbolic characteristics satisfied criteria to obtain opportunities in the workplace and for participation, workers may have been interested in participation.

The fourth and final conception, like the previous three conceptions

goes beyond merely confirming existing research findings. This conception states that through participation in organized adult education activities one acquires a personal possession. At first glance, this conception appears to be congruent with findings that adults participate for personal enjoyment (including recreation, and development of mental, physical, artistic ability or craftsmanship). It also resembles findings which suggest that adults participate for the sake of the activity itself or who view learning as a way of life. This conception, however, has embedded within it subtleties which are not evident in the existing findings. For example, these workers spoke of their personal enjoyment not merely as a goal for themselves. Rather, they located their enjoyment and achievement in relation to others. Acquired skills, information and knowledge were viewed as things which others could not appropriate. Their acquisition of those assets was in isolation from others. Indeed, there was an implicit rejection of the notion that skills, information and knowledge might be used to the benefit of others. The previous three conceptions were dominated by individualistic, self-blame and competitive overtones and the notion of control by others. This conception illustrates how workers relocated control within themselves. The idea of mastery and control, so evident in this conception is not discussed in current research literature.

Recalling that it is possible to suggest connections between a conception, the workers' other conceptions and their participation or non-participation, it follows that if they view opportunities to participate or workplace opportunities as based on one's status, workers may participate if they are interested in acquiring either participation or workplace

opportunities. If, however, these workers view those same opportunities as attainable through other means like hard work, drive, extra effort or ambition, then it follows that they might not participate in activities which they view as allocating status to acquire those opportunities.

D. SUMMARY

This discussion has highlighted the subtle distinctions that this second-order approach uncovered about the uses of participation. Findings which at first glance resembled those in the current literature were shown to have complex dimensions which, to date, have not been explored by adult education researchers. Connections based on commonsense understandings and reasonings were suggested among conceptions. These connections although not exhaustive, illustrated the relationships which might determine these workers' participation or non-participation.

In conclusion, this and the preceding chapters have detailed the conceptions of these twenty workers in the areas of work and the workplace, opportunities to participate in organized adult education activities and uses of participation in organized adult education activities. The following chapter integrates those many and varied findings into a cohesive presentation.

VII. INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

At the beginning of this dissertation, it was noted that the adequacy of research viewpoints is "most usefully determined by what they enable us to do" (Eisner, 1983, p. 14). The time has come to assess what using a different focus, an interpretive viewpoint and a qualitative technique have enabled this study to do. This is particularly so since, as noted earlier, there have been calls in the adult education literature to investigate the participation issue using these approaches. The preceding chapters have shown that shifts of focus, perspective and technique resulted in insights into adults' reasonings about organized adult education activities. The intention of this chapter is not to repeat those insights, but rather, to integrate and highlight the findings most relevant to the study of participation. Those findings are discussed under three headings: the role of the workplace in relation to workers' views of participation in organized adult education activities; the non-participation/participation distinction and themes underlying workers' views of participation in organized adult education. Within each of those sections the implications for future research and practice are discussed. Those implications can only be made with caution, given the limitations on the transferability of these findings. Nonetheless, an attempt will be made to extrapolate the findings to the broader field of research and practice in adult education. Since numerous areas for future research were noted throughout this dissertation, discussions will be limited to implications based on the integrated findings.

A. ROLE OF THE WORKPLACE IN RELATION TO WORKERS' VIEWS OF PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

It was not intended that this study be limited to an examination of adult education in relation to the workplace. Rather, the intention was to study views of organized adult education activities held by adults within the workplace context. Nonetheless, as this study progressed, it became clear that workers' relationship to organized adult education activities was strongly shaped by the workplace. These workers participated primarily in work-related adult education for job-related reasons. The mechanisms by which the workplace fostered this kind of relationship between the workplace and adult education were both straightforward and subtle.

In the first instance, the workplace defined educational requirements for the workplace. Certain workplace opportunities were realized only to the extent that workers satisfied certain educational criteria. Sometimes the workplace defined explicitly *which* adult education activities were useful in the workplace. In the case of promotional criteria, for example, there could be clearly defined educational requirements which could be met by taking specific courses or classes to acquire specific skills or information. Other times, the organization defined *which provider* of adult education was legitimate in the workplace. For example, workers could be required to have information about computers acquired through a university rather than the organization's Computer Training Centre.

Sometimes the criteria to acquire workplace opportunities were less specific about which educational criteria or which providers could satisfy workplace requirements. Criteria were stated vaguely as "courses to increase

their knowledge and skills" (see p. 104). In this case, the origins of the required skills and information were not an issue. It is important to note here a characteristic underlying the workplace's educational criteria. They were primarily satisfied by participation in vocational education oriented in instrumental, and symbolic ways to occupational ends. The kinds of adult education activities which satisfied those criteria were related to the more efficient and effective role of the worker in the workplace. They were not seen as avenues to acquire "comprehensive development of the mind" (Jarvis, 1985, p. 35) through a liberal education. They did not include the human sciences, fine arts, history, math, the physical sciences, religion, literature or philosophy. In other words, the educational criteria stated by the workplace demanded participation in a particular kind of adult education and the acquisition of a narrow kind of knowledge.

The above were illustrations of the straightforward ways in which the workplace fostered an interaction between the workplace and workers' views of adult education. There was also a second, more subtle way this occurred. As noted in Chapter IV, all of these workers were familiar with employer-provided adult education activities. They held a kind of baseline understanding (Larsson & Stalker Costin, 1988) about organized adult education activities which was related to those employer-provided offerings. To that view, some of the workers added understandings about other kinds of adult education activities. Although it was not possible to determine from this study if the employers' provision of organized adult education activities was the primary creator of workers' views about adult education, it did appear that connections existed. This was evident in the discussions

in Chapter V and VI, in which workers' views of the opportunities and uses of organized adult education activities were clearly related to their experiences of the adult education activities provided by the employer. Although it was not possible in this study to determine the extent of the impact of the employer's provision of adult education activities on the workers' views of adult education, it is possible to speculate theoretically on those relationships.

Given the congruence between workers' views of organized adult education activities and the employer-provided offerings, it may be that employer-provided activities have an impact on workers' views as noted in Chapter IV, that the workplace has a "long arm" (Meissner, 1971) and influences workers' participation in leisure time activities. In other words, workers' experiences of employer-provided adult education activities "spill over" (Wilensky, 1960) into workers' views of organized adult education activities provided outside the workplace. Thus, those uninvolved with adult education in the workplace are not involved with it outside the workplace; those who see others as responsible for their participation in the workplace claim no responsibility for their own participation outside the workplace; those who see adult education as used for vocational ends in the workplace view adult education as used for vocational ends outside the workplace.

Alternate interpretations could exist of the impact of employer-provided organized adult education activities on workers' views of organized adult education activities. It may be that a compensatory relationship exists--a relationship which would be similar to the

work/participation relationship discussed in Chapter IV. In that instance, participation in workplace adult education would result in non-participation in adult education activities outside the workplace. Participation in work-oriented adult education activities in the workplace could foster participation in non-work adult education activities outside the workplace; control by others of opportunities to participate in the workplace could discourage workers from seeking opportunities to participate in adult education outside the workplace.

If one continues to draw a parallel between the work/leisure relationships discussed in Chapter II and the employer-provided organized adult education/workers' views of organized adult education activities relationship, it is also possible that these spheres do not interact--that there is a neutral relationship between them. In the terms of the work/participation studies, organized adult education activities are different from employer-provided ones, but not deliberately so. Finally, it may be that the employer-provided adult education/workers' views of organized adult education activities relationship contains elements of all three relationships mentioned above. Although this study hinted at the long arm of employer-provided adult education, only further research can confirm or deny these theoretical speculations. This study has, however, highlighted the potential importance of employer-provided adult education in relation to workers' views of adult education activities outside the workplace.

Clearly the above discussion suggests the need for theoretical and empirical studies of the relationship of adult education activities provided in the workplace to workers' views and participation in organized adult

education activities. Informed by this research, those studies would not assume organized adult education activities are inevitably leisure time activities in which adults freely choose to participate. Rather, they would seek the inter-relationships among work and the workplace, outside the workplace adult education activities and employer-provided adult education activities. Such multi-dimensional studies would provide new insights into the issue of non-participation.

Given the importance of the workplace in these respondents' views of adult education, educational providers might well examine their role in relationship to employer-provided adult education. They might consider to what extent they want to complement or counterbalance the vocational orientation of employer-provided adult education. This would require adult educators to define their roles in relation to the demands of our industrial, technological society. Recalling that these workers held a workplace oriented baseline view, adult educators might also wish to develop, deliver and manage their courses in different ways. For example, in the case of recruitment, adults who see their opportunities to participate as controlled by others--as an imposition or privilege--clearly would be recruited in different ways than those who might see participation as a right. Such recruitment decisions might, of course, require adult educators to declare their own views of participation as an imposition, privilege or right. Finally, given the potential impact of employer-provided adult education activities on workers' participation in out-of-workplace adult education, adult educators might wish to define the relationship of practitioners in the

workplace to professional adult education organizations, institutions and certification programmes.

B. THE PARTICIPANT/NON-PARTICIPANT DISTINCTION

As noted in Chapter II, studies into the participation issue traditionally have distinguished between participants and non-participants as a basic step in the research process. What this study revealed was that these classifications are artificially tidy and hide the complexities of those notions. This study challenged the traditional distinction between participants and non-participants at two levels.

In the first instance, this study reemphasized diversity *within* the group where participation rates are lowest--those who had attained a high school diploma or less. From the early 1920's participation research has revealed this diversity and current research substantiates it. For example, Statistics Canada states that 12% of those with some high school education participate, but 88% of that same sample do not participate in organized adult education activities (Devereaux, 1985). Thus, it was not a surprise that this study could locate within a group that is usually labelled "non-participants" those who identified themselves as participants. This finding, although not new, did refocus attention on the within-group diversity--a diversity which is not emphasized in the literature. That shift of focus made problematic literature which portrays participants as constituting a homogeneous group which is unique and different from a similarly homogeneous group of non-participants.

This study challenged the distinction between the notions of participant and non-participant in a second way. That challenge focussed on the basic distinction that is usually made *between* participants and non-participants. The adult education literature traditionally has used these two terms to distinguish between those who participate and those who do not. For example, the definition of non-participants used in this study followed the definition used by Statistics Canada (Devereaux, 1985)—ones who had not received any courses, classes or instruction during the last 12 months. Conversely, participants were defined as those who had received courses, classes or instruction during the last 12 months. This use of a time limitation as the demarcation between participants and non-participants is a popular one in the existing literature. What this study revealed was that these distinctions are often artificially tidy and static.

First, it became clear that the workers did not necessarily define themselves as participants or non-participants according to the stated definitions. Given the discussion above about the impact of the workplace on workers' views of adult education, it was not surprising to note that, although the workers' reasonings around their identification of themselves as non-participants varied, their reasons tended to relate to the workplace. Some workers, for example, identified themselves as non-participants if they had participated in adult education that was job-related, while others identified themselves as non-participants if they had participated in adult education which was not job-related. Such findings illustrated ways in which respondents self-identified themselves as non-participants despite their qualification as participants according to the stated definition. As

noted in Chapter VI, this phenomenon was not likely the result of errors in the research technique. Rather, what this study suggested was that this 'crossover' of participants into the category of non-participants related to the contextually based interpretations of those notions. This suggestion thus represents the terms of participation and non-participation as dynamic in nature. It also makes problematic the findings from studies which assume the terms are static and have decontextualized meanings that are shared between the researcher and the respondent. Further, since the implications of these assumptions have not been investigated, the impact of 'crossover' on participation research remains unclear.

This study challenged the between-group distinction by highlighting the more-or-less, rather than either-or nature of participation. In Chapter VI, it was noted that 19 of the 20 workers had participated at some time in the past in organized adult education activities. Consequently, the usual distinction between participants and non-participants becomes a forced one and the issue of participation becomes a concern for patterns of participation. The research emphasis shifts from one of adults either participating or not participating, to one of some adults participating more or less than other adults. This emphasis in turn suggests the potential of longitudinal research studies into the participation issue.

Given these challenges to the categorization of adults as participants or non-participants, some might suggest that concern over the issue of non-participation is misplaced. After all, it could appear that since most people participate in organized adult education activities at some time in their lives, everyone is a participant to some extent. This argument,

however, ignores the data which suggest that different groups of adults participate in different activities provided by different organizations. Thus, if one assumes that some kinds of adult education improve participants' life chances, while other kinds do not, some adults are improving the quality of their lives while others are not. By assuming that everyone is a participant to some extent, adult educators do not address the issue that differential participation may be widening the gap between the haves and have-nots.

The third way in which this study challenged the tidy categorization of adults as participants or non-participants is related to the conceptions these workers held. In this study, no clear distinctions were found between the conceptions of participants and those of non-participants. Several explanations for this phenomenon are possible and have been discussed earlier in this dissertation. To briefly reiterate: the lack of identifiable differences between participants' and non-participants' conceptions may result from participants classifying themselves as non-participants and thus confusing the findings. It may be that the similarities between their conceptions reflected the way in which the workers held conceptions since they simultaneously held views that were contradictory. Alternately, since the total number of respondents was 20, it may be that differences between the conceptions of participants and non-participants were not evident and if the conceptions of a larger number of workers had been examined trends would have been revealed. Finally, it may be that the distinction to be found between who holds certain conceptions and who does not, rests somewhere other than with the respondents' participation or non-participation. For example, it is possible that certain conceptions would

be held by this group with its educational level and different conceptions would be held by another group with a higher educational level.

Although each of these explanations is possible, they will only be substantiated or disproven by further research. Never-the-less, the data revealed that the conceptions held by these workers were shared by both those who identified themselves as non-participants as well as those who identified themselves as participants and in this respect this study challenged the distinction usually made between these two groups.

This study has clearly brought into question adult education researchers' tendency to treat participation and non-participation as decontextualized terms which have been cleanly and clearly operationalized. By doing so, it has cast the findings presented in existing studies in a different way. After all, measurements and relationships formulated from the researchers' understandings of participation and non-participation, but answered from the respondents' different understandings of the same terms clearly lack an important congruency. It is thus important at this point in participation research to deal seriously with the complexities of the notions of participation and non-participation. One way to begin that process would be to acquire a fuller understanding of the diversity of meanings which adults hold about the terms participation and non-participation. This kind of research problem lends itself ideally to the phenomenographic approach.

Adult educators could further enrich their understandings of those terms by exploring their contextualized natures. This could happen in two ways. Researchers could retain the workplace context of this study, but examine variations within it. For example, they could explore the different

conceptions held by workers of different educational levels, geographic locations, genders or social contexts. Researchers could enrich their understandings of the contextualized nature of views around participants and non-participants in a second way. They could change the context in which this study was conducted. As suggested earlier, it may be that respondents' understandings around adult education are located in context-related baseline views. Thus, studies located in non-work situations with non-workers might provide researchers with different categorizations of how adult education terms are understood by respondents. Such studies could very well restructure the ways in which adult educators explore and discuss participation and non-participation. For example, they could reframe the ways in which adult educators would present participation theories or the ways in which they would measure participation and non-participation.

Like researchers, adult education practitioners could be influenced by the findings of this study. For example, practitioners are advised to explore the assumptions which guide their practice in relation to those who are less likely to participate. If further research confirms that most of that group have participated at some time in their lives, the view that non-participants are somehow deficient and that participants are the norm, becomes problematic. As well, adults' contextually bound view of themselves as participants or non-participants, indicates that adult education practitioners need to consider the context within which adults make their decisions about participation. After all, those who view themselves to be participants in a particular context may also view themselves to be

potential participants in that situation. The above two examples illustrate how this study reshaped views of participants and non-participants. These findings have the potential to shift adult educators' practice in areas such as the development, delivery and management of programs.

C. THEMES UNDERLYING WORKERS' VIEWS OF PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Throughout this dissertation, certain themes repeatedly emerged in discussions of workers' conceptions of participation in organized adult education activities. The purpose of this discussion is to focus on the three themes which underlay workers' views of organized adult education activities.

First, views of organized adult education activities focussed on the individual. This individualism was evident in workers' views of both their opportunities to participate and the uses of participation. Both opportunities and uses were seen as specific to the particular concerns of the individual worker. Concern for the collective acquisition of opportunities or the application of uses to the benefit of the organization or society were not evident in these workers' views.

The theme of individualism had several dimensions. It not only focussed on individuals, but it emphasized the individual effort required to realize opportunities and uses. There was a fundamental notion that "you can make it if you try hard enough" and there was a sense that the effort and responsibility to 'make it' rested with the individual. Conversely, failure to realize opportunities resulted in blame placed on the individual or

self-blame. Another dimension concerned the competitive nature of workers' views. Opportunities and uses were acquired alone, and other workers tended to be viewed as rivals competing for the same rewards. Realizing opportunities to participate was seen as a highly individualized, competitive situation in which some would win while others lost. Interwoven with these two dimensions was the view of the individual as isolated and powerless. Opportunities and uses were realized only to the extent that others controlled them. Individuals' effort and competitiveness achieved goals only within the parameters established and maintained by others.

The second theme which underlay the workers' views of organized adult education activities concerned the overall satisfaction that workers expressed about adult education. Workers' proactive rather than reactive relationship to adult education was congruent with this theme. For example, in terms of opportunities to participate, these workers had no doubt that ample opportunities existed. They saw the opportunities as plentiful. Even in those cases where opportunities were seen to be imposed or granted, workers were confident that there were numerous opportunities available. It was merely that the selection process excluded them from participation. Likewise, among workers who held the conception that opportunities to participate were self-determined, there was no sense that those opportunities were restricted or had limited availability. In terms of uses for participation, workers were similarly positive. Every worker could discuss some uses for participation. Some workers qualified those uses according to such things as workers' jobs, ages or career ambitions, but

nonetheless, they freely identified uses of participation. There was no worker who dismissed participation in organized adult education activities as having no use. Indeed, every worker except the one who had never participated in organized adult education activities named ways in which participation had had uses or could have uses in their own lives.

The third and final theme which underlay workers' views of organized adult education activities concerned their recognition of the symbolism which surrounded their views of both opportunities to participate and the uses of participation in organized adult education activities. Opportunities and uses were acquired in symbolic ways, to meet equally vague and ambiguous workplace criteria. As well, workers expressed their views in symbolic and abstract ways. In terms of workers' views of opportunities to participate, both the mechanisms of exchange and the criteria for acquiring opportunities to participate were vague and ambiguous and sometimes symbolic. Although individual effort was seen to influence others' determination of who would participate, the details of what would be successful individual effort were ambiguous.

In terms of workers' views of the uses of participation, of the four uses noted by the workers, only one did *not* have symbolic overtones. This was so although this view was potentially incongruent with the vocational, skills orientation of the employer-provided adult education. For example, participation met workplace criteria in symbolic ways. In terms of implicit criteria, participation was regarded as symbolic of positive characteristics which could be used to negotiate improved workplace situations. In terms

of explicit criteria, although the criteria to be met were clearly stated, the providers, durations and contents of the adult education were often vague. As in the case of implicit criteria, the symbolic nature of the adults' participation seemed to be as important as the acquisition of skills and information.

Participation also was used symbolically to allocate status--that is, it created distance between those who participated and others who did not. It thus could create a gap among those who shared similar job classifications or tasks. Finally, participation was used to acquire personal possessions which were largely symbolic in nature. Senses of mastery and control dominated but were defined in a variety of ways by individuals.

Since these themes have not been explicitly named before, much research can be done in this area. Each of the themes could be researched in a multiplicity of ways. For example, the conditions of their origins, various dimensions, magnitude and endurance are currently unknown. Researchers could seek to establish relationships between the themes and adults' subsequent participation in organized adult education activities. Alternately, they might investigate the ways in which the forms and processes of adult education foster or inhibit notions of individualism, competitiveness and self-blame. Finally, researchers might consider restructuring models of participation to incorporate these three themes as factors in the participation process.

Practitioners might consider the role they wish to play in addressing

these issues--if, for example, they wish to foster or alter notions of individualistic competition and views of adult education as an elitist activity. Given the theme that these workers were satisfied with the opportunities to participate, practitioners might reconsider views that adults' non-participation depends on the effective distribution of information. Energy previously put into the promotion of courses might be shifted, for example, to dealing with workers' views of adult education as an imposition rather than a right. Alternately, practitioners might consider if they wish to foster adults' more proactive rather than reactive involvement with organized adult education activities. The third theme of symbolism might indicate that practitioners could redirect their concerns for course content and form, to achieving the goals that workers seek.

D. CONCLUSION

This dissertation began by noting that since the 1920's there has been intensive and systematic research into the issue of participation in adult education. This study, with its reframed focus, perspective and technique conducted an inquiry that had approaches which were different from those which dominate that literature. As a result of that reframing, it illuminated the issue from a different perspective and contributed new understandings about the participation issue. It refined familiar terms and defined new ones. It highlighted different dimensions of the issue and challenged traditional assumptions which have guided research into participation. Finally, this dissertation raised questions that could direct a future agenda for researchers and practitioners. In the final analysis, the

extent to which adult educators address that agenda may indicate their sincerity in proclaiming a concern for the issue of participation in adult education.

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IX. APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What is the official title of your job?
What do you do?

How long have you been working for the organization?
What did you start out as?
Can you trace your worklife from when you left school to now?

How did you get this job?

If you had to advise someone on how to get this job, what would you tell them?

Has your work changed much while you have been with the organization?
Yes: How have you dealt with those changes?

Does this job use all your capabilities?
Which ones does/doesn't it use?

Are you independent in your job?
Do you usually make the decisions about how to do your work, your hours, breaks, when the job is done well enough?
What do you do with your time outside the workplace?
Has that changed over the years?

How have you dealt with changes, challenges, problems in your life outside of work?

What plans do you have for your home/work life?
How will you go about getting that?
Are there any particular courses or classes which you think could help you?
Yes: In which way?

Do you think your home/work life is going to change or present any new problems/challenges for you over the next years?
Yes: What will those changes be?
Do you think you will need additional knowledge, information/skills to deal with those changes? Yes: How will you get them?
Are there any particular courses or classes which you think will help you?
Yes: Which ones, in what ways?

Have you taken courses during work/your time outside of work?
Yes: Which ones?

How did you hear about them?
 What did you hear?
 Why did you take the courses?
 What did you expect to get from the courses?
 Did you get what you expected?
 No: How do you learn what you want to know?

Has anyone encouraged/discouraged you about taking courses?
 What did they say to you?

Outside city hall, many of the same courses can be offered by any one of the universities, community colleges, YWCA, unions, churches, libraries and so on.
 How would you decide which course to take?
 Who would care which kind of course you chose or where you took it?
 What kind of difference would it make?

Do you remember making a specific decision to take/not take courses?
 How did that happen?

Has taking courses made any difference at home, to your work, your relationship with fellow workers.
 Yes: In what ways?

Do you know people who have/have not taken courses?
 Who are they?
 What are they like?

Is there a particular kind/level of person who takes/does not take courses?
 Is their participation/non-participation making any difference to them do you think? In what way?

Among those who are taking courses:
 What kinds of courses are they taking?
 Are different kinds of people taking different kinds of courses?

Do you think that everyone who takes the same course benefits to the same degree? Why/why not?

In Canada, only one in five adults take courses and classes. Do you think more adults should take courses/classes?
 Why/why not?
 Yes: Which courses should people take? Why?

Do you think there is one particular course that everyone should take?
 Why/Why not?

What do you think would happen if everyone enrolled in courses and

classes?

Do you think it would make for a more equal society?

Who benefits when you take courses [you, your employer, your family, society in general or somebody else]?

In what way do they benefit?

If it were your responsibility to get more adults into courses, classes how would you do that?

What would convince people to go?

Do you think adult educators should pay more attention to one special group than another [for example; single parents the handicapped, the unemployed]?

Why/Why not?

If you were given \$100 and your task was to divide it between a youth and an adult, for their education, how would you do that?

Because only 1 in 5 participate in adult education, some people end up paying but not attending.

What do you think about that? Is it fair?

Those are my 'official' questions. Do you have any further comments, anything you would like to add or change?

B. QUESTIONNAIRE

First name:

Last name:

Phone number:	Home	Work
Sex:	Female	Male
Age:	17-24	45-54
	25-34	55-64
	35-44	65+
Education attained:	0-8 years of schooling	Post secondary diploma or certificate
	High school	University degree
	Some post secondary	
Annual salary level:	\$16-20,000	\$21-25,000
	\$26-30,000	\$31-35,000

THESE QUESTIONS CONCERN ANY COURSES, CLASSES OR INSTRUCTION WHICH YOU HAVE TAKEN DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS. THESE INCLUDE INSTRUCTION TO IMPROVE YOUR JOB SKILLS, UPGRADE YOUR ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OR FOR RECREATION AND LEISURE.

1. During the last 12 months, did you enroll in any courses to upgrade academic qualifications?

yes.....was it full-time or part-time
no
don't know

2. During the last 12 months, did you receive any instruction or training to upgrade job skills, including courses taken at work?

yes.....was it full-time or part-time
no
don't know

3. Did you enroll in any class or course for personal interest or to develop practical knowledge such as an art or craft class, during the last 12 months?

yes.....was it full-time or part-time

no
don't know

4. During the last 12 months did you enroll in any other kind of course class or program of instruction?

yes.....was it full-time or part-time
no
don't know

5. In total, how many part time courses did you take during the last 12 months?

number.....
don't know

THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS CONCERN THE LAST COURSE YOU TOOK DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

a. What was the title or name of the last course you took. Please be specific:

b. Was that course:

An academic course
A job-related course
A hobby, craft, or recreation course
A personal development, general interest course
Other
Don't know

c. Which was the more important reason for taking this course:

Improve job opportunities
Personal interest and development
Don't know

d. How many hours of instruction were there in each week?

hours.....
don't know

e. How many weeks of instruction were there?

weeks.....
don't know

- f. Who paid the fee or tuition for the course?
self or family
employer
other (please specify)
no fee
don't know

**THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS CONCERN THE LAST THREE COURSES YOU
HAVE TAKEN AT ANY TIME IN THE PAST.**

- a. What were the titles or names of the last three courses you took. Be specific.

- b. How many hours of instruction were there in each week?
hours.....
don't know

- c. How many weeks of instruction were there?
weeks.....
don't know

X. APPENDIX II: RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT JUDGE RELIABILITY TEST

Table 1

Independent judge's categorization of conceptions

Area/conceptions	Possible number of placements	Judge's number of placements correct	Agreement as %
Workplace opportunities			
Other-determined	28	26	96
Self-determined	13	13	100
Outcomes of work			
Intrinsic	14	11	79
Extrinsic	11	10	91
Impact of technology			
Restricted	8	8	100
Completed	5	3	60
Comprehensive	15	15	100
Impact of technology (revised)			
Not in the future	13	11	84
In the future	15	15	100
Opportunities to participate			
Other-determined	17	17	100
Self-determined	15	14	93

Uses of participation			
Application	19	17	89
Workplace			
criteria	15	10	67
Status	9	8	89
Possession	9	8	89

XI. APPENDIX III: RESPONDENTS' PARTICIPATION

Table 1

Participation in organized adult education activities by respondents who identified themselves as participants:

Name	Position	Age	Income
	Last 3 courses	Date of enrollment	Name of course and duration
Patricia	Manager	35-44	\$31-35,000
	Last 3 courses:	January-May 1987 (concurrently)	**PC Computers (1 day [8 hours]) **LOTUS (4 days [32 hours]) **Accounting (2x/week for 2 terms)
Pearl	Clerk III	35-44	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	June 1987 March 1987 April 1986	**Introduction to FOCUS (1 day [8 hours]) **Introduction to computers (1 day [8 hours]) **Introduction to LOTUS (3 day [24 hours])
Patsy	Clerk III	45-54	\$26-30,000

	Last 3 courses:	June 1987	**Young drivers course (2 1/2 months)
		Sept 1986	**Calligraphy (8 weeks [16 hr])
		Sept 1986	**Basic Focus (1 week [40 hr])
Peggy	Clerk I	45-54	\$6-10,000
	Last 3 courses:	1987	**Alanon (on-going)
		Sept 1986	**Parenting in the teen years (6 hours)
Pam	Clerk III	25-34	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	Oct 1986	**FOCUS (Intermediate) (1 day [8 hours])
		July 1986	**FOCUS (Intermediate) (3 day [24 hour])
		May 1986	**OCC (3 day [24 hour])
Peter	Labourer/unskilled	25-34	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	Jan 1987	**Math 061 (10 weeks [5 hrs])
Paddy	Manager	45-54	\$31-35,000
	Last 3 courses:	May 1987	**Stress Management (1 day [hr])
		spring 1986	**Letter writing
		spring 1979	**Supervisors' course (1 week)

Patrick	Clerk III	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	spring 1986	**Ergonomics (1 week [40 hr])
Percy	Clerk II	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1986	**Intro to computers (4 hours) **Accounting (3 hours)
Paul	Labourer/unskilled	25-34	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1987	**Industrial First Aid (2 weeks [40 hr])
		Sept 1986-June 1987	**College foundations (10 months [15 hr/week])

Table 2

Participation in organized adult education activities by respondents who identified themselves as non-participants:

Name	Position	Age	Income
	Last 3 courses	Date of enrollment	Name of course and duration
Norah	Clerk III	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	Jan-May 1981 1979	**Gr. 12 upgrading (20 weeks [20 hr/wk]) **Macrame (10 weeks [35 hr])
Nancy	Clerk I	35-44	\$16-20,000
	Last 3 courses:	Jan-May 1986	**Accounting I (6 months [20 hr/week])
Noreen	Clerk III	45-54	\$21-25,000
	Last 3 courses:	Sept 1986	**Intro to computers (4 hours)
		Feb 1986	**Career counselling 5 days (40 hr)
		Fall 1986	**Career counselling 5 days (40 hr)
Norma	Clerk III	35-44	\$21-25,000

	Last 3 courses:	1986	**Fleet management 1 day (8 hrs)
Natalia	Clerk III	25-34	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	Aug-Dec 1986 1982- 1983	**Computer (1 day [8 hours]) **Accounting (3 months [6 hours/week])
Neil	Labourer/unskilled	25-34	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1986	**Pre-apprenticeship (8 weeks [20 hr/week])
Norman	Labourer/unskilled	45-54	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1955	**Night school
Ned	Labourer/unskilled	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	none	
Nick	Clerk III	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1977 1976	**Banjo 52 weeks (1 hr/wk) **Defensive driving 2 weeks (6 hr)
Norris	Clerk III	55-64	\$26-30,000
	Last 3 courses:	1975-1976 1974-1975	**Accounting 2 years (4 hr/wk) **Accounting 2 years (4 hr/wk)

1956-1957

**Insurance
underwriting
2 years (4
hr/wk)

**XII. APPENDIX IV: EMPLOYER-PROVIDED ORGANIZED ADULT
EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**

Table 1

Training and Accident Prevention Division courses 1987

Course	Times offered per year	Participants per course	Total no. of participants	Programme format
**Management and supervisory skills	5	20	100	5 days
**Career planning and work effectiveness	3	16	48	1 day for supervisors 3 days others
**Stress management	3	3	9	1 day
**Interpersonal skills for career enhancement	4	16	64	1 week
**Customer contact	2	18	36	3 days
** Selection and interviewing skills	2	18	36	3 days
**Management and technological change	7	24	168	1 day managment & supervisors only
**By-law administration and enforcement	2	15	30	2 day inspectors only
**Telephone answering techniques	2	7	14	1 day

**Memo, letter and report writing	4	16	64	4 days
**Time management	3	18	48	1 day
**Performance planning, coaching and review	in process of development			
