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ADULT COMPOSITION INSTRUCTION IN A NORTHERN NATIVE COMMUNITY:
A CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

by

ELEANOR RAE MILLARD

B. A., University of B. C., 1965
M. Ad. Ed., St. Francis Xavier, 1983

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Department of Language Education

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Jan 23/91

ABSTRACT

This thesis reports an interpretive case study of adult composition instruction in a native community in northern Canada. Although the existing literature contains much theory about literacy and cross-cultural relations, little research has examined particular contexts of writing instruction, especially for native populations. The present research focused on students' responses to specific approaches to composition, using participant-observation by the author and an emergent research design which considered classroom events in relation to the local community and its history. The study found much behaviour by the students which was described as resistance to the instruction, behaviours which were consonant with details of the community context. Interpretations of these student behaviours were first made in reference to theories of cross-cultural differences, which proved to be less satisfactory to account for them than theories which would characterize the behaviours as ideologically-based. The thesis suggests that possible explanations for this specific population's lack of success and nonparticipation in literacy education would be too narrowly defined as cross-cultural differences. Understanding both the cultural and ideological foundations of resistance behaviour may help to guide literacy pedagogy in northern native adult instruction.

FOREWORD

It should be noted that this thesis uses the terms "the north" and "northern" to mean the areas of Canada north of the 60th parallel, which also comprise the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. Much of the detail of the thesis can, however, be applied to similar situations in the north of the provinces and to Indian reserves further south. The actual research location in the Yukon Territory has been disguised by a pseudonym as have the people involved.

The choice of composition instruction for the research rather than a broader approach to literacy which included reading was deliberate. It was felt that writing required more active involvement by students, allowing for more choice on the student's part which would reflect more accurately than reading the response to innovative techniques. The written products in composition also give more readily accessible data whereas reading skills are measured indirectly.

Distinguishing between the terms "culture" and "ideology" was not a simple task, since elements of one include those of the other, depending on how broadly used they are. It was recognized that there is a modern culture which is as pervasive as any traditional one in Bear River.

To help separate these terms, "culture" was used in its strict anthropological sense and cultural behaviour was defined as behaviour described as Athapaskan in various anthropological and sociolinguistic texts only. The thesis analyses focus on behaviour taking an emergent interpretive approach rather than one of scientific measurement or based on any one theory of behaviour. Because of this, a strict delineation between "culture" and "ideology" was useful in keeping the data and analyses as clear as possible.

The research and writing for this thesis has been a personal journey of professional development for me. I have experienced a positive change of attitude toward the teaching of composition to native students. The intellectual framework offered by the process of analysis in the thesis has made sense of the resistance that I had previously seen only as an unsurmountable obstruction to learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Problem

This first chapter introduces the research problem, defines basic terminology used in the thesis, and outlines the thesis chapters.

Across northern Canada a free, compulsory school system has existed for two or three generations. Despite this, low rates of literacy prevail for the Indian and Inuit peoples living there. Composition (planned written discourse) is perceived as being especially difficult for most northern native students (Stairs, 1990). With these issues in mind, the present researcher set out to offer instruction through pilot classes to native adult ESL literacy students using a traditional text-oriented approach to composition pedagogy and a more innovative process-oriented approach. Both approaches were offered to all students. To describe how students in the one particular community responded to these instructional approaches their classroom behaviours were documented and an emergent research design was developed to interpret the local situation as a case study. The basic question researched was: how do native adult ESL literacy students in the particular context of the research respond to innovative composition pedagogy? Explanations for their responses were sought to interpret the data gathered.

1.2. Resistance, Culture and Ideology Defined

It was found that the students who participated in the classes displayed a variety of unco-operative, oppositional behaviours to both composition approaches, broadly labelled as "resistance behaviour". A major purpose of this thesis is to explain the resistance behaviours documented in response to the instruction. As described (rather than defined) by Freire and Shor (1987), and Freire and Macedo (1987) resistance is: antagonism, conflict, rejection, contradiction, and generally covert unco-operative behaviour by students. Quigley (1990) defines resistance as: "a struggle to become free in the eyes, mind and heart of the resister on the basis of a specific liberty which had to be attained and held at any cost" (p.113). The definition closest to that adopted in the present study is McLaren's (1986): "oppositional student behaviour that has both symbolic, historical and 'lived' meaning and which contests the legitimacy, power and significance of school culture in general and instruction in particular" (p.143). Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) critique the lack of clear definition in resistance theory in their analysis of resistance behaviour, offering a more exacting one. Their theories of ideology and education are discussed in Chapter 5.

In contrast to these concepts are notions of "culture"

in the traditional anthropological sense, which is the definition of culture generally favoured by native peoples. The present study considers behaviours to be of cultural origin when they fit into known values and activities in relevant anthropological and sociolinguistic texts. Behaviours that did not display traditional cultural patterns and which fit into a more general pattern of response to social, economic, historical and political pressures and values were presumed to derive from ideological influences.

1.3. Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical and research literature on literacy and pedagogy to identify current ideas of the relation between theory and practice in this field. The chapter relates ideas of theory and practice to student resistance and the northern native context of the study. The review uses the framework of Street's (1984) description of two conceptual models of literacy: the "autonomous" and the "ideological". Examination of the literature revealed that some literacy theory and practice appears to reproduce and reinforce domination of minority students and that that may be expected to produce resistance in educational situations. The literature review also shows that although there is considerable theoretical research on the phenomenon of resistance in education, little work has been done to date to document local community and classroom contexts or processes

of resistance behaviour, particularly in view of issues unique to northern Canadian aboriginal populations.

The first part of Chapter 3 explains the research approach used for this case study and describes the methodologies used for data collection and analyses. The difficulties of accounting for the researcher's values in the present case study are assessed using Lather's (1986) criteria for ideologically-based research. The second part of Chapter 3 outlines the instructional approach used in the pilot classes, presenting the design, content and conditions of the instruction on which the research was based.

Chapter 4 describes the community and cultural context of the research. In order to situate students' behaviours in their local, social context, this chapter first describes the history and present day setting, then the educational and cultural background of the community in which the research took place.

Chapter 5 reports the findings from the classroom context of the case study, presenting these as three categories of behaviour: (1) individual, (2) group and (3) literate and scholarly.

Chapter 6 interprets the findings of resistance behaviours first by considering cultural differences.

However, this explanation of resistant behaviour because of cultural forces fails to explain fully the phenomena documented. A second interpretation reconsiders the data on resistance behaviour as ideological action rejecting social domination, following Giroux and Aronowitz (1985).

Chapter 7 summarizes the thesis findings and interpretations, briefly presents a personal response to the to the resistance behaviour found from the viewpoint of the instructor, then discusses implications of the research for northern native literacy pedagogy and for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This review examines the relationship between theory and practice in minority literacy education, looking critically at recent publications on this topic from the perspective of cultural and ideological domination and resistance. The analysis is framed by the distinction between literacy models proposed by Street (1984), who posits that either "autonomous" or "ideological" concepts inform current ideas of theory and practice in literacy education and research. The autonomous model is evident in much cross-cultural theory of pedagogical practice, whereas the ideological model points toward assessment of power relations in literacy classrooms. Examination of the literature reveals that some literacy theory and practices appear to reinforce domination which may lead to student and group resistance. The review concludes that although relations between literacy and resistance have been studied from a theoretical perspective, there is need for research which is based in the interactions and perceptions of classroom situations, particularly for native Canadians.

Brian Street (1984) defines literacy as the social

practices and conceptions of reading and writing. He describes two models of literacy theory and practice: the "autonomous" and the "ideological". The autonomous model, after which many literacy campaigns have been designed, views literacy as a value-free neutral technology, detached from its social context. This perspective presumes there is a causal relationship between literacy and economic development and between literacy and change in human processes of thought and social organization. Learning to read and write, both for individuals and societies, results in the expansion of logical, abstract thinking. A "great divide" between literate and non-literate societies is assumed from this perspective.

In contrast, the ideological model considers the importance of institutional socialization in the process of making individuals and societies literate. Literacy's functions and consequences are seen as embedded in their social contexts. Literacy may be used as a tool of those who control the social and political (ideological) life of a society. Rather than artificially separating literate and non-literate uses of language, the ideological view emphasizes inter-relationships between oral and written language. The differing philosophical positions between the autonomous and ideological views of literacy affect the theory and practice of literacy education profoundly.

2.2. The Autonomous Model of Literacy

2.2.1. Basic Thought in the Autonomous Model

The arguments of Jack Goody (1968, 1977) form one of the foundations of the autonomous model of literacy. By contrasting uses of print technologies in certain literate and non-literate societies, Goody argues that the thinking processes of pre-literate societies are concrete and their language expression reflects basic, personal needs. The introduction of literacy changes societal needs by allowing for permanency of expression which gives rise to the possibility of criticism and logic. Citing recent work in the fields of social anthropology, linguistics and philosophy, Street takes Goody to task by suggesting that Goody overstates the significance of the differences between oral and literate societies. Street claims that literacy is a socially-constructed medium whose influence in a society depends on political and ideological formations. Street further argues that print and all technology itself is not neutral, but arises from political and ideological processes and institutions.

Not mentioned by Street, but equally supportive of the autonomous view is Walter Ong (1982), who proposes that written communication in contrast to oral language is not

dependent on the situation in which it is used and is therefore objective and abstract. Ong argues that these qualities form the basis for the development of science, history, philosophy, and for the explanation of language itself. For both Goody and Ong, literacy is not only equated with but the cause of the "domestication of the savage mind" and the consequent progress of civilization with its economic and social benefits.

2.2.2. Culture and Schooling

The causes of failure to learn literacy through schooling has been a concern of many literacy theorists who have developed the autonomous model of literacy. A common approach is to point to the lack of preparation for schooling in culturally different societies and to the difference in culturally-based learning patterns. A direct relationship between cultural behaviour and literacy acquisition is assumed. This position may appear to place these theorists in Street's ideological model, since socialization through culture is argued as the causal factor for illiteracy. However, these theorists propose a positive relationship between acculturation and literacy acquisition, with no recognition of political, historical or social influences. Moreover, because their distinctions between literate and non-literate groups are based solely on acculturation, they do not take into consideration cross-cultural relationships

of domination and subjugation. These positions indicate that they fit into Street's autonomous model.

Exemplifying this position are sociolinguists such as Jenny Cook-Gumperz and John Gumperz (1986) who focus on the school and home in explaining literacy difficulties. They show that school demands a different communicative approach from the concrete and situation-based discourse used in many homes. Children at school must have the ability to "decontextualize" information to use it. If insufficient literate preparation is done at home (e.g. by introduction of ideas through books and other literate activities) the child suffers in the school setting. Likewise, James Collins and Sarah Michaels (1986) observe that prior knowledge powerfully influences interpretation of discourse. They point out that knowledge of cultural conventions in literate expression provides an important framework for readers' interpretations since the natural feedback resources of face-to-face communication are not available in written discourse (p.209).

Ron Scollon and Suzanne B. K. Scollon (1981, 1984) follow this line of thought in research done with northern Athapaskans in Canada and Alaska, the group which is the subject of the present study. Differentiating between what they call "bush" and "modern consciousness", they explore the inherent opposition that modern life holds for Athapaskans. World views, discourse patterns, and educational approaches

are radically different between Athapaskan and "white" cultures. Contrasting their own child to an Athapaskan child in view of each one's literate activities, Scollon and Scollon argue that their own child's thorough preparation in the decontextualization of ideas and the "fictionalization of self" in their parenting made for a preparation for literacy that was not possible for the Athapaskan child from an oral culture. Scollon and Scollon conclude that the differences between "white" and Athapaskan are so great that literacy may precipitate a crisis in ethnic identity for Athapaskans, a reason to resist it.

John Ogbu (1982, 1987) has also used a comparative cultural perspective to address the question of why some minority cultures do well in North American educational systems and some do not. Ogbu classifies minorities into immigrants and involuntary minorities with the latter including American blacks and native Indians. In contrasting the two, Ogbu says that cultural differences of involuntary minorities can be based in opposition to the majority culture, or in "cultural inversion". This often results in involuntary minorities developing different frames of reference and criteria for success, conceiving some behaviour to be appropriate for themselves while other behaviour is appropriate only for the majority culture. A possible implication is that if literacy is valued by the dominant culture, it may not be by involuntary minorities because of

this oppositional social identity.

Oppositional identity may give rise to resistance behaviour. For instance, involuntary minorities may not trust majority institutions such as schools if they perceive their experience of oppression by the dominant group to be lasting and if they view the learning of English as destruction of an original cultural frame of reference. Ogbu claims that cultural differences encountered in school may be seen as indicators of identity to be maintained, not as barriers to be overcome if accommodating the school's attitudes and practices threaten such markers of ethnicity as their language, culture, and identity (1987, p.330). Pressures mitigate against "acting white". These "boundary-maintaining mechanisms" (1987, p.327) work counter to academic success. Ogbu concludes that involuntary minorities have persistently high rates of school failure because they have difficulty crossing these self-imposed cultural boundaries.

2.2.3. Culture and Language Education

Language education's response to the dilemma of cultural differences has been the production of a wide range of innovations in materials and methods which mainly conform to the autonomous model. A long-standing approach focuses on contrastive analysis of languages to reconcile linguistic

differences (e.g. Fisiak, 1981). For North American Indians, considerable research has been done in the Southwest United States with the Navajo and other tribes. Attempts have been made to generalize these findings to all American Indian languages (Fletcher, 1983; Leap, 1974).

Many approaches have attempted to incorporate native language and culture into school curricula in order to minimize the perceived gap between school discourse and that of the home and native community. Bernard Spolsky (1982) described the educational situation at Rock Point where the spoken language has been Navajo, and the written, English. Changes in the school curriculum allowed for Navajo as a written medium in the lower grades with positive results in general literacy. Spolsky cited another example on the Pacific Northwest of the United States which brings specific Indian content to an English reading program, increasing motivation towards reading. Teresa McCarty (1980) detailed similar curriculum changes for the Yavapai-Apache, advocating the use of legends and elders in the school. Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (1988) reported on a program in the Solomon Islands where classroom strategies were developed to be culturally appropriate to the local native societies. The Kamehameha Early Education Program has been successful in raising reading scores on normed tests by introducing reading lessons which are based on a "talk-story" format of narration which was adapted from native Hawaiian culture.

Courtney Cazden and Vera John (1971) and John (1972) exemplify the enthusiasm for native learning styles. They claimed that Indian children learn more visually than verbally and learn best through observation and imitation. They point out that this is in direct contrast to the usual classroom techniques requiring verbal and literate language skills. They stress that Indian learning styles can be used as a foundation for altering language teaching techniques to be more directly responsive to native students.

Nancy Modiano (1974) advocated a direct bilingual approach to language instruction from her work with Indians in the Chiapas Highlands of Mexico. She argued that the most effective language of instruction for beginning reading is the mother tongue. Jeffrey Kобрick (1974) likewise argued that the most fundamental need in Indian education is a change in point of view to seeing bilingual students as advantaged, and to build on that advantage. Jim Cummins and Merrill Swain (1986) have discussed the results of Canadian studies on immigrant students' second language acquisition and studies relating bilingual language use in the home to academic achievement. They posit that a minority student's first language cognitive/academic skills are as important as second language exposure for the development of proficiency and academic skills in the second language.

2.2.4. Culture and Socialization

The autonomous model supports the idea of social conditioning through education, or "lifeskills" components to literacy education. These skills are assumed to be technically-based and not bound to social or political influences. Some educators advocate a conscious effort to teach the expected modes of oral and literate interaction and life styles so that the Indian child in particular will know what is expected by the majority culture and will have a choice of access to appropriate action. Judith Kleinfeld (1979) in Alaska has claimed that resistance responses in education by another culture can best be dealt with by an approach which promotes "cultural fusion at least in such areas as values and attitudes" (p.135). She advocated a system where students would analyse value conflicts and learn how to apply traditional native values in contemporary life. Anything short of that, says Susan Philips (1972), would result in learning difficulties and feelings of inferiority amongst native students.

2.2.5. Community Inclusion in Schooling

Theorists and practitioners have proposed reform not only to the content and methodology of minority education but also to broader educational and community structures. Jim

Cummins (1986) documents the persistence of minority students' school failure and contends that most attempts at curriculum change have failed to alter the relationship between teachers and students and the school and the community. He proposes "institutional redefinitions" (p.19) to reverse this pattern, and directions for change for policymakers "at all levels of the educational hierarchy" (ibid.). These include the incorporation of minority students' culture and language in the curriculum, the changing of pedagogical assumptions and practices especially in assessment, and the incorporation of minority communities into the education of their children.

Cummins' proposals draw on numerous accounts of minority education internationally. Ralph Folds (1989) argues that bilingual programs for aboriginal Australians have had mixed results because too little attention has been paid to the socio-cultural conditions surrounding the programs. Folds claims that sociolinguistic information has been ignored and the Aboriginal communities have been subjugated rather than involved in the programs. Luis Moll and Stephen Diaz (1987) and H. Trueba (1984) reported case studies which appear to counter these tendencies among Hispanic students, teachers and communities in the United States by implementing reading and writing instruction courses which are culturally relevant to the local social context. They describe the community setting through microethnographic techniques, then integrate

their findings into classroom methods and curricula. They have established what they call "educational laboratories" where research on specific educational issues is done through full involvement of the community members, students, and teachers.

Kleinfeld (1979) would similarly enhance socialization in native schools in Alaska by promoting community esteem on the sides of minority and majority cultures alike and by central institutions fusing elements of both cultures rather than separating them. Seeing an increasing problem with "cultural politics" she noted that such an approach might help "prevent school subjects or ways of behaviour that bring access to modern life from becoming politicized" (p.135). However, the proposals advanced by this influential educator in Alaska have not emerged in the decade since she wrote, despite the enormous impact of a land claims settlement. Indeed, the native emphasis has been strongly political, and the decade has seen instead firm resistance to established institutions and promotion of self-determination. Rather than a "fusion", a further separation between majority and minority society appears to have been reinforced on all fronts, including education.

2.2.6. Reform in Northern Native Literacy and Education

Cultural reforms to syllabus content and methodology

have been advocated for many years in Indian pedagogy but have not been implemented to any great degree. In a few cases aboriginal languages are being incorporated into school syllabi to a minimal degree (Shearwood 1987) and courses in adult aboriginal language instruction have begun to emerge. Where such supplementary curricula have been used, they still confront a general situation where dropout of native students from schools and adult illiteracy rates are exceptionally high. The 1986 Census Canada reports the percentage of registered Indians with less than grade nine in the Northwest Territories as 60.4 while the percentage of the same category for the general population is 28.8. The same statistics for the Yukon Territory are 35.6% registered Indians with less than grade nine and 7.5% for the general population. Non-recognition or outright rejection of aboriginal language, values and learning systems by the dominant culture have been met by resistance in native communities (Haig-Brown, 1988). Today this is often expressed through independent political and educational structures.

2.3. The Ideological Model of Literacy

2.3.1. Street's Ideological Model

Street refutes the autonomous model of literacy by first reviewing the findings of research by Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1978, 1979, 1981), who assessed the

cognitive consequences of literacy amongst the Vai people of Liberia. Scribner and Cole found literate and non-literate Vai performed cognitive tasks at similar levels of proficiency and that schooling appeared to improve some cognitive tasks, but not others. They concluded that social and educational factors other than literacy have a greater influence on thinking than does the technology of literacy:

It is apparent that Vai people have developed highly diversified uses for writing, and that a host of pragmatic, ideological, and intellectual factors sustain popular literacy (1981, p.86).

Street concludes from this that written discourse is as likely to be changeable as oral discourse, and that the uses of literacy are based on social conventions rather than being universal technical skills which transform thinking as proposed by the autonomous model.

2.3.2. The Context of Literacy

Street proposes that the perpetuation of literacy (and illiteracy) is through institutions that reinforce the domination of certain groups. He defines the characteristics of what he terms the ideological model of literacy as follows (condensed from p.8):

1. the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded;
2. literacy can only be known in politically and ideologically-significant forms and cannot be treated as if it were "autonomous";
3. the practices of reading and writing taught in any context depend upon aspects of social structure such as stratification and the role of educational institutions.

Street finds further support for his ideological model in the work of Shirley Brice Heath (1984) on literacy acquisition among neighbouring American black and white communities. Brice Heath rejects the idea of reading as a technical skill (which is the autonomous position) and prefers it to be seen as a way of "taking meaning" from the environment. For her, reading is a part of learned behaviour, but in contrast to Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (1986) and Ogbu (1987), she argues that literacy varies across and within cultures according to ideology and socialization patterns. In one article, not reviewed by Street, Brice Heath observes that "becoming literate is not the same thing as learning to read and write; it is learning to talk reading and writing" (1984, p.15), and concludes:

Literate understanding requires far more than basic literacy skills and the current emphasis on basic skills to eliminate the "literacy crisis" will not give us literate students (p.27).

Street states that the meaning of literacy is therefore context-dependent, that we should refer not to one literacy, but to "literacies" and that the uses and consequences of literacy are profoundly affected by the beliefs and fundamental concepts through which a society creates order of its world. Further, these systems are not "natural", but are socially constructed and a result of prevailing ideologies.

2.3.3. Reproduction Theory

A simple ideological view of schooling is that it is bound to reproduce the majority culture, particularly the domination of one group by another, because of the capitalist economic system. Carnoy (1974) is typical of this Neo-Marxist ideological position:

schools are primarily places to develop vocational (cognitive) skills that fit in with a societal objective of maximizing economic growth...Schools transfer culture and values and they channel children into various roles. They help maintain social order. The common school is the institution that developed

within capitalist economic and social structures to prepare individuals for assuming various roles in those structures (p.330).

This argument says that reform in the education system is not likely to lead to change because the larger economic and cultural problems are not dealt with. Schools are only one part of the whole system needing transformation. However, more complex issues need to be accounted for to determine the relations between literacy, education, and society (Mallea, 1989; Street, 1984).

2.3.4. Literacy and Power Relations

Street discusses Harvey Graff's (1979) historical research on literacy in 19th century Canada. Graff shows that literacy did not overcome social disadvantages and that employment depended not on literacy, but on ethnicity. Those who were amongst the advantaged were further advantaged by being socially appropriate so that English illiterates gained more rewards than immigrant illiterates. Graff argues that greater literacy is not consonant with increased equality and democracy but with further social stratification and is used for social control.

According to Street, literacy campaigns in the United States and the United Kingdom blame the individual for

illiteracy and unemployment, ignoring the fact that poverty and class structure are more responsible for low levels of literacy than the reverse. Street claims that illiteracy is simply one factor interacting amongst many others such as class, race, sex, welfare dependency, unemployment, poor housing, and a general sense of powerlessness. Rather than working to change individuals, Street proposes that the only long-term way of dealing with literacy levels is to change institutions.

The institutions of society are the perpetuating mechanisms for literacy or non-literacy (and hence power and powerlessness) for Street, but other theorists look beyond institutions to more pervasive structures and mechanisms. James Ryan (1989) discusses the high drop-out rate of the Innut of Labrador from the theoretical perspective of Foucault (1979). The modern Western system of social organization which Foucault calls "discipline" is in Ryan's view the controlling mechanism which "normalizes" deviants from the acceptable standards imposed by the dominant group. Ryan observed incidents of discipline in an Innu community and school which he concluded led to the characterization and self-characterization of the students as negative. This picture is perpetuated by both those dominating and the dominated. It is compounded by learning impediments such as language and cultural differences, a culturally-inappropriate curriculum, social promotion, rejection of the process of

schooling as being irrelevant and perceptions that schooling does not lead to employment. Ryan is pessimistic that changes brought about within the school system will change the situation, since the problem lies in the broader society.

On a more optimistic note, McLaughlin's (1989) analysis of Navajo literacy shows that it is used by individuals in the community he studied for a variety of purposes useful for maintaining traditional culture and for promoting self-understanding. He states that:

we need to examine the interactional minutiae of literacy events...to understand the practices and ideologies of local institutions that constrain and enable interaction, that render readers and writers as objects and subjects (p.286).

McLaughlin concludes that the ideologies and practices of institutions can both limit and allow action and that student understanding of the ideologies of literacy institutions will assist in action for change.

2.3.5. Resistance Theory

McLaughlin's belief that student involvement will bring change is reflected by resistance theorists such as Allen Quigley (1990). Quigley discusses nonparticipation in

literacy programs as resistance to the dominant society which is reproduced in schooling. Using a phenomenological research method he analyses the phenomenon of resistance through analysis of selected works of fiction.

Quigley describes in detail what he found to be the stages of resistance, noting that this process did not take place with the same degree of visibility or speed with each resister. He emphasizes that resistance was not against learning nor objective knowledge but against the subjugation felt in the school. He claims there is a need to change the "deficit perspective" of adult basic education and to recognize that nonparticipation is a deliberate choice. Models must be designed with the resisters and be grounded in relevant values and cultural systems with recognition of the "courageous individuals" who resist.

Henry Giroux (1981, 1983) and Giroux and Stanley Aronowitz (1985) have expanded on the strictly economic reproduction theory of Neo-Marxists educators. They describe social reproduction theory of education as "a view of schooling and domination that appears to have been pressed out of an Orwellian fantasy" (1985, p.71) and reject it because:

human subjects generally "disappear" amidst a theory that leaves no room for moments of self-creation,

mediation, and resistance (ibid.)

Giroux (1983) argues that:

in no sense do teachers and students uniformly function in schools as simply the passive reflex of the logic of capital...they also serve other interests as well, some of which are in opposition to the economic order and the needs of the dominant society...teachers and students do not simply receive information; they also produce and mediate it (p.58).

By ignoring resistance, reproduction theories offer little hope for changing the repressive features of schooling (1985, p.71). The student should be viewed as an actor in the struggle for human liberation and the school as a site where action can be both constrained and mobilized. Social domination is not seen by Giroux as a process that is static or complete, but one that is dialectical. Moreover the role that students play is not only one of challenge to the most oppressive elements of schooling but also one of compliance. Oppositional behaviour can be emancipatory or can contain in itself a dominating rather than a liberating logic. For instance, sexual behaviour of students may be taken as challenging to the domination around them but can have within itself elements of sexism which lead to more oppression.

McLaughlin and Quigley discuss literacy as being a tool of social domination and resisted because of it. In the introduction to a publication by Freire and Macedo (1987), Giroux supports this idea and says that the refusal to become literate should therefore:

be seen as an opportunity to investigate the political and cultural conditions that warrant such resistance...[it] provides the pedagogical basis for engaging in a critical dialogue with those groups whose traditions and cultures are often the object of a massive assault and attempt by the dominant culture to delegitimize and disorganize the knowledge and traditions such groups use to define themselves and their view of the world (p.13).

In McLaughlin, Quigley and Giroux's terms, resistance to becoming literate can be based on more than opposition to cultural domination. It can be the product of ideological values and this can be an opening for further learning. Seeing resistance as ideologically-based exposes and enables educational and liberatory possibilities which can be used to reform education through critical action.

2.3.6. Pedagogy and the Ideological Model

Much recent literacy practice in the ideological model is based on Paulo Freire's (1972, 1976, 1978, 1985) approach to teaching illiterate Brazilian peasants based on political action. Freire and his followers believe that through problem-posing dialogue in literacy education, learners pass through a critical transformation stage ("conscientization") where an analysis of culture takes place which reveals the underlying ideological structures of society. Being aware of these structures leads to a conviction on the part of the learners that becoming active participants in their own change and eventually in political action to alter dominating systems is inevitable.

In criticizing the autonomous model of literacy, Street argues that the idea of "functional literacy" as endorsed by UNESCO disguises the relationship of literacy programs to the underlying political and ideological framework of the sponsors. He contrasts the early UNESCO literacy programs which were assessed in terms of economic return to the work of Freire.

Nina Wallerstein (1983) is one of the few educators attempting to apply Freirian techniques in North America, working with immigrants in the United States. Using an inductive questioning strategy, she has students define a

social problem they are experiencing through use of visual aids and dialogue, facilitating them to analyse their feelings and to explore similar situations they have encountered. They are asked to discuss why they think certain problems exist, and what they can do about the situation. The syllabus is generated from the resulting dialogue which provides material for reading and writing about change.

2.3.7. Critiquing Critical Pedagogy

In the ideological literature reviewed there is little mention made of the results of applying theory to educational practice in any systematic way. Shor (1987) comes closest to it in describing some of his own experiments with white middle-class college students. Nor has it been shown that liberatory critical action has led to effective change amongst students. In discussing Wallerstein's and others' work in critical pedagogy in adult language education, Jackson (1987) notes that there is no mention of the action that resulted from students' "critical consciousness". Thus these educators beg the question:

to what extent does problem-posing education lead to real action? It is vital that accounts of experiments in problem-posing account for the concrete results of the process as well as the theory behind it (p.136).

2.4. Literacy and Power in Northern Canada

The lack of research on actual experiences of literacy pedagogy is very apparent in the context of northern Canada. Perry Shearwood (1987) agrees that literacies are derived from social contexts and proposes a taxonomy of literacies for the Inuit and Athapaskan peoples of the Northwest Territories which expresses the relationship of kinds of literacy to their social functions. Shearwood indirectly acknowledges that although he proposes six types of literacy for these peoples, in many instances competency in literacy is not widespread amongst the aboriginal peoples of the N.W.T. and suggests that "schooling vernacular literacy" and "pragmatic English literacy" may be transition routes in the school to the expected ability in "essayist literacy" (p.639). It remains to be seen if Shearwood's ideas are tested or implemented in the school system of the Northwest Territories.

Arlene Stairs (1990) reports her study of Inuktitut and English writing with elementary students in northern Quebec as a "journey of redirection in native educational and language research" (p.103). She reviews the research she did from the point of view of the Inuit community who expressed

concerns about cultural identity, cultural evolution and assimilation. She states that these questions must explicitly precede and inform this kind of research; implicit assumptions such as the value of literacy on the part of the researchers must be acknowledged.

Stairs says that while some Inuit agree with the cultural assumptions of the non-Inuit, there is overt conflict and opposition to existing educational institutions. The disintegration of the role of children in society, the "drifting into anomie and drugs" (p.118) and the overloading of children with decontextualized teaching pushes them outside the ecological harmony of traditional life. This has created fear amongst elders that traditional ways are being trivialized, the role of the community destroyed and social cohesion abandoned. Loss of language is paramount in this fear and the school is seen as the instrument of destruction. Stairs concludes that "cultural bridges" may be built through "cultural brokers" such as Inuit teaching assistants (p.119) and that we must ask what we can learn from traditional native ways of knowing, teaching and using language.

Neither Stairs nor Shearwood seriously address the complex problem of the conflict of cultures and ideologies between aboriginal peoples and the school. Both assume that solutions to aboriginal language difficulties can be found within and by the school. The literature reviewed in

this chapter points to schools as one of numerous institutions with ideologies which reinforce existing cultural and social structures causing minority difficulties with literacy. The extent of this problem is summarized by John Mallea (1989):

rarely, indeed, have conflicts over schooling in a plural Canada been systematically examined in socio-economic, political, institutional and structural terms. Prevailing theories have stressed instead the school's role in cultural transmission and emphasized notions of neutrality, stability and consensus. Priority is given to this role and educational institutions and structures have been established whose primary function is the maintenance of existing systems (p.115).

Mallea concludes that more research is needed to understand the school's contribution to the differential power relations which result in "the dominant racial, cultural and linguistic groups in Canada exercising control over the governance, administration, curricula and practices of publicly funded school systems" (p.119). The present study is a response to that need.

2.5. Summary

This literature review has indicated that adherence to the autonomous literacy model as described by Street (1984) may reinforce the practice of cultural domination which leads to resistance in education. Lack of success and cultural resistance can be anticipated especially in programs which do not integrate the language and cultural perspective of the students being taught. Several sources have shown that superficial reforms have been attempted in certain institutions and situations. These models are unlikely to lead to alleviating resistance behaviour by culturally dominated students who see themselves in an oppressive system not of their choice or reflective of their cultural needs. Resistance to cultural change (Kleinfeld, 1979) is focussed on institutions such as the school (Ogbu, 1987). Resistance, however, is not only a cross-cultural phenomenon (Shor, 1987) but may be based on ideological values (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985) held by dominated groups and communities. The present thesis attempts to document the cultural and ideological contexts of one such community, interpreting evidence of resistance in a few educational settings in the community from both a cultural and an ideological view. The case study described in the following chapters takes up Mallea's (1989) call "to ground studies of Canadian schooling firmly within their context" in order to develop knowledge about ethnic and power relations in education among different racial,

ethnocultural and linguistic groups (p.122).

The existing literature does not provide sytematic accounts of ideological theory applied to adult native education practice in Canada at this time. The lack of research suggests the importance of basing research not in the theory but in the context of resistance and for documenting examples of the northern native situation.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

3.1.1. Introduction

The first section of this chapter describes the emergent design of the case study research carried out in the thesis. Data were gathered in the context of adult literacy classes in a small community in northern Canada, then categorized to form a descriptive paradigm which assisted in the clarification of the concept of resistance in the context of the research and in the subsequent interpretations of the findings. The limitations of this type of qualitative research are assessed in this section. The final section of this chapter documents the approach used for composition instruction in the classes taught for the case study.

3.1.2. Research Design

The research for this study was based in four short composition courses over a six week period from mid-April to the end of May 1989 given to young and older adults in a small native community in the Yukon Territory. The research question was to determine how the native adult ESL literacy

students in the specific context of the research setting responded to an innovative composition pedagogy.

A qualitative research paradigm was chosen in order to gather diverse contextual data of the kind which could not have been predicted in advance by an experimental or pre-ordained type of research design. Much support for this kind of research approach appears in related studies. For example, in her study of Inuktitut and English writing proficiencies, Stairs (1990) began with a quantitative paradigm which assessed Inuktitut and English writing samples gathered over two years from elementary school students, rating these qualitatively and analyzing them using quantitative linguistic indices of proficiency. As her project continued Stairs realized, by her own admission, that these kinds of data did not respond to the basic questions of values which arose in such an intercultural educational context, particularly in regards such issues as cultural assimilation and school dropout rates.

Similar conclusions have been reached in other studies where cultural differences play an important part in the approach to teaching and learning. Studies in the literature similar to the present one which used descriptive, action-oriented techniques in cross-cultural settings were McLaren's (1986) study of Portuguese immigrants in a Toronto high school, Moll and Diaz's (1987) and Trueba's (1984) study of

Hispanic ESL composition students in California, and McLaughlin's (1989) research with Navajo literacy in the American Southwest.

Because the present research question limited its investigation to the particular context in which the research took place, it required a descriptive and interpretive response which would give a broad view of the subjects' lives and values. A quantitative approach using survey questionnaires would have restricted the data available on native ESL literacy students' responses to innovative composition instruction. It would not have allowed for all possible student responses and research interpretations other than those built into the survey or testing instrument.

It is important to note, however, that the present research is not a full-scale ethnography, but rather a case study which used ethnographic techniques such as participant observation and analyses of local history. Watson-Gegeo (1988) defines ethnography as "the study of people's behavior in naturally occurring, ongoing settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behavior" (1988, p.576). In outlining principles of ethnographic research, Watson-Gegeo warns that ethnography should not become a synonym for qualitative or any and all descriptive observations in nonlaboratory settings. Watson-Gegeo cautions about superficial studies where the researcher "'dive bombs' into a

setting, makes a few fixed-category or entirely impressionistic observations, then takes off again to write up the results" (p.576). One of the hallmarks of ethnography is observation of a setting over a long period of time. An ethnographic approach was not feasible for the present research because the students in the study were available only for a limited length of time, and the research itself created an innovative approach to composition instruction which was not part of the local social structure.

The present research was, rather, a case study of the kind defined by Merriam (1988) as concentrating on a single phenomenon (the "case"), aiming to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. As Merriam observes, a case study can be further defined by certain special features: it is particularistic in that it focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon; it is descriptive of the phenomenon under study, frequently using prose and literary devices rather than numerical data in documenting the phenomenon; it is heuristic, in that it illuminates understanding and gives new insights of the phenomenon under study; it is inductive, with generalizations or hypotheses emerging from an examination of the data which is grounded in the context.

This type of research was considered most appropriate for the context of the study, the research question

formulated and the limited time available. The research would record a particular phenomenon, the response to one instructional methodology in one setting; it would be descriptive, describing behaviours, social patterns and subjective perceptions; it would be heuristic in that it would assess how new approaches to composition instruction were received by the specific population; data would be analysed inductively as it was collected, and an emergent interpretation would be the result.

The research question required direct classroom observation of student response to innovative composition instruction. I was the one person who was able by training, experience and availability to design and present the specific composition instruction. I decided to teach the courses, gathering data as a participant observer. A similar approach was taken by McLaughlin (1989) who acted as a participant-observer in the Navajo community where he taught English in the high school. This teaching position facilitated his access to reading and writing activities from which he developed research questions about literacy over several years. Although Merriam (1988) calls participant observation a "marginal position" and a "schizophrenic activity" (p.94), she also advocates that because what is being recorded are situations, motives, attitudes, beliefs and values, the most careful data collection instrument can be a person who can observe, listen, probe, analyse and

organize (p.103). Since I had instructed native adult students over a period of many years and was acquainted personally with some of the students, I concluded that my participant observation would not be intrusive and that the most difficult problem in the situation would be how to monitor the effects of my altering instructional approaches to suit my perceptions of the needs of the classes.

I was certain that I would obtain an insightful understanding of the classroom experience as a participant-observer, a teacher/researcher. The observations I made of student resistance and my response to the students' resistance would not have been as clear and immediate as a non-participant who had no direct involvement in or control over the events of the classroom.

Ryan (1989) supports this decision in reporting his research on the Innu of Labrador and recording his experience of being back in the classroom where he had done his ethnographic research, this time to teach:

I went into the classroom initially believing I could find alternate ways to teach that would alleviate potential student stress. This was not to be the case. I found myself shackled to those teaching practices that I as a former student and teacher had been immersed in for years...my expectations of what

it meant to be a good teacher dictated that I adhere to such routines as establishing classroom standards, keeping the students reasonably quiet, directing what transpired, and sanctioning deviant individuals...I was powerless to act in a way that would not reinforce these effects (p.399).

3.1.3. Data Collection

Since I was the one person designing and implementing both the instruction and research, the results of the research may have possible biases (to be discussed in Section 1.5 of this chapter). To counteract this, I used several methods and data sources, triangulating them to produce data from alternative perspectives on the daily classroom experiences. Moreover, to supplement these data, additional sources of data were gathered through a search of anthropological, sociolinguistic, demographic and historical documents on the local context surrounding the research.

As a participant-observer I taught all four classes. I was able to use the syllabus to elicit data on students' preferences for process-oriented or product-oriented approaches to instruction and in other pedagogical areas such as methods of correction (discussed later in this chapter). Information was gathered weekly in all the classes by requesting written responses from students' journals. These

journals were kept in separate notebooks for each student, were retained by me between times of use each week, and were distributed and collected within the last fifteen or twenty minutes of the class in which they were used.

The journals provided documentation for students' responses to the instruction. In many cases, it was evident the journals were used as a direct tool by the students for manipulation. Because I stressed the importance of students' opinions of the instruction, the journals were all the more easily a source of conflict. The use of basic action-research methods--considering the students an integral part of the syllabus design--therefore left openings for resistance behaviour that fed into the data collection for the emerging design of the research.

As well as collecting data through the journals, I distributed questionnaires asking clearly directed questions about students' responses in the final weeks of the classes. Short tests and written texts from the students provided further direct evidence of their responses to the instruction. Assignments for compositions were often a source of conflict, ranging from opposition by refusing to do the work at all to producing work well below known levels of competence.

No compositions were requested as homework although

students were encouraged to work at home on their assignments.

Throughout the research I kept two journals. One detailed individual and class progress in the designed lessons. The other was a personal, interpretive journal which I used as a means of sorting out confusing events, conflicting ideas and the emerging patterns in the data. In class or immediately afterward I recorded in this personal journal my observations of students' behaviour, recollected thoughts and spoken communications, and explored my feelings about the behaviour I was experiencing. Above all, this personal journal kept the experience to some kind of exactitude and consistency. In it I began to design a paradigm which presented the confusing amount of data in consistent order to form the basis for later analyses.

Students were formally and informally interviewed about their preferences for a process-oriented or product-oriented approach to composition instruction when other means did not produce replies. Students were also informally interviewed both in class and privately about certain behaviours observed. This was done only directly. In other words, the behaviours of one student were not discussed with another for reasons of confidentiality but also because it was felt third-party discussion would only confuse the data by producing surrounding data which could not be synthesized

in a routine way. In one case, a third party discussion did take place. A student was asked to give her opinion on why others did not attend the class. She felt uncomfortable doing this, gave vague responses, and ended up talking about her own situation. It was apparent from this that the parameters I set up for interviewing students were supportive of data production which reflected individual experiences within the classroom and community.

In addition, formal and informal interviews were conducted with professionals and community members in the research setting and two other similar communities in the Yukon about the behaviours being observed. These comments and observations were recorded and proved helpful in the concurrent defining, analysing and interpreting of the data produced.

3.1.4. Data Analysis

Two kinds of analyses were undertaken. The first was a search of relevant documentation on the history, society, and educational circumstances of the local community. Relevant documentation was gathered through Yukon College, the Yukon Territorial Government Department of Education and Department of Statistics, and the Government Archives, in Whitehorse. Results were compiled into the case study portrait of the town and its cultural background reported in Chapter IV of

this thesis. This analysis aimed to provide a specific background for interpreting the research question of how the students responded to the composition instruction provided.

The second analysis built up a descriptive paradigm of classroom behaviours based on the journals, questionnaires, observations, and interviews to interpret the ongoing phenomena in the writing classes. This second analysis aimed to answer the research question of how the particular students responded to the composition instruction in terms which directly synthesized classroom events through my perceptions as participant-observer. The results of this analysis are reported in Chapter V of this thesis.

The second analysis began with the premise that co-operative classroom behaviour indicated potential for learning. Working initially from observations in my interpretive journal, I first delineated four categories of "learning potential indicators": the students' physical and mental attention; oral and written communication; contributions to the lesson; and application of new concepts and skills. I assumed that, ideally, if all four of these indicators were strongly present, involvement, and hence learning was possible (physical and mental attention); transacted (oral and written communication); engaged (contribution to the lesson); and utilized (application of new concepts and skills). When the opposite situation

occurred, with little or no action being shown in these behaviours, I assumed that little potential for learning was possible, transacted, engaged or utilized.

For heuristic purposes, I labelled behaviours which displayed the greatest amount of attention, communication, contribution and application "accommodation", and behaviours which showed the least amount of these indicators, "resistance". Physical and mental attention ranged from being alert for accommodation behaviour to displaying aversion and withdrawal for resistance. Oral and written communication ranged from above average for the class to abusive or none in displaying on the one hand, accommodation, on the other hand, resistance. Contributions to the lesson ranged from supportive, unrequested interaction for accommodation behaviours to clear refusals upon request, for resistance behaviours. Application of new concepts and skills appeared as accommodation if it was obvious in present practice and was transferred to new situations, and resistance if it were not applied in the present situation and not transferred to new situations.

The data recorded in my journal presented not only the extremes of the learning potential indicators which I defined as resistance and accommodation, but also behaviours which did not fall in either of these two categories, but somewhere in between. For this reason, I further divided the data into

two logical extremes based on active or passive demonstration of these behaviours. Figure 1 shows characteristics of the behaviours that I perceived to indicate active and passive resistance and accommodation.

A further pattern in the journal data related to students' responses to the composition instruction concerned distinctions in the social organization of their behaviours: individual behaviours; group behaviours; and literate and scholarly behaviours. Individual behaviour appeared as an action unassisted or not promoted by the group as a whole. Group behaviour was action that was shared with or assisted by more than one student. Literate and scholarly behaviour was action that directly involved reading and writing or other analytic activities such as classificatory or evaluative thinking and expression. Examples of student active and passive accommodation and resistance behaviour within the three behaviour categories are shown in Figure 2.

A third pattern in the journal data concerned my reactions to the behaviour I was observing, engaged in, and eliciting through my teaching. In much the same way that description of the behaviour of the students was ranging from active accommodation to active resistance my responses to their behaviour were also designated within that range. As Chapter V describes, many of the behaviours displayed were in fact resistant to the instruction offered. Therefore, the

Figure 1: Learning Potential Indicators as Active and Passive Accommodation and Resistance

A C T I V E		
INDICATORS	ACCOMMODATION	RESISTANCE
1. Physical and mental attention	alert	aversion, withdrawal
2. Oral and written communication	above average for class	abusive or none
3. Contribution to lesson	supportive and unrequested	refusal on request
4. Application of new concepts and skills	obvious in practice and new situations	none in practice and new situations
P A S S I V E		
1. Physical and mental attention	present, attention when requested	not present, inattention after requested
2. Oral and written communication	average for class	sporadic, unclear
3. Contribution to lesson	some on request	none on request
4. Application of new concepts and skills	some in practice and new situations	minimal in practice and new situations

Figure 2: Student Behaviours as Active and Passive Accommodation and Resistance

Type of Behaviour	A C T I V E	
	Accommodation	Resistance
Individual	Yvonne comments in journal about separating first draft from later drafts	Dora keeps head in arms, swearing, no response to questions, pushing papers
Group	pairing of Molly and Donna for peer tutoring in writing paragraph	grade 8 to 10 disruptive joking loudly, pushing desks around, arguing
Literate & Scholarly	positive response by all to worksheet activities	verbal refusal to revise writing
Type of Behaviour	P A S S I V E	
	Accommodation	Resistance
Individual	Lisa responds minimally in journal to written question	Nick always 30-45 mins. late to class
Group	grade 8 to 10 writing in class to avoid homework assignment	tolerance of others' disruptive behaviour
Literate & Scholarly	learning centre class setting own learning objectives: focus on problems but no prioritization	no oral contribution to activity such as peer response

responses I recorded were primarily about my responses to such behaviour. Figure 3 illustrates the range of my reactions to student behaviours. These ranged from my active accommodation (changing my behaviour) to active resistance (confronting students' resistance). Passive accommodation appeared in my ignoring resistance, whereas my passive resistance appeared through my indirect manipulation of the resistance.

All of these attributions of student or instructor behaviour to categories were highly intuitive and impressionistic, serving as a heuristic to organize my thinking in preparation for interpretation of the data. After the experience of teaching, the tentative constructs developed in this manner in my journals were checked impressionistically against the whole set of data gathered, categories were refined and elaborated, and considerable published literature on resistance behaviour and theory was consulted to make sense of this predominant response to the composition instruction in view of broader conceptions. Within this analytic framework, the accommodation behaviours documented served as contrasts against the prevalent resistance behaviours or they supported arguments to be made in the final interpretations. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the categorizations of the data within theoretical frameworks capable of explaining the categorized responses to the composition instruction. The

Figure 3: Instructor Responses to Resistance Behaviours

A C T I V E

Accommodation

Changing own behaviour:

e.g.: positive reinforcement modified to respond more realistically to student work at student's request

Resistance

Confronting resistance:

e.g.: asking Marsha to leave equivalency class

P A S S I V E

Ignoring resistance:

e.g.: acknowledging Dora's active resistance only at end of class & providing journal writing as outlet for anger

Indirectly manipulating resistance:

e.g.: calm verbal rejection of resistance & reinforcement of courtesy

literature search yielded two relevant theories: (1) a cultural interpretation and (2) an ideological interpretation. Both theories were assessed (see Chapter VI) in view of the data in an effort to understand why the particular classroom responses to the composition instruction may have occurred.

3.1.5. Limitations of Interpretive Analyses

The heavily interpretive descriptions and analyses used in this research are open to many questions of validity. The basic design and purpose of this research evolved as the classroom events emerged. The position of the researcher as a participant-observer and teacher left the implementation, analysis and interpretation of the instruction and the inquiry open to bias since personal observations of others' and my own behaviour formed the bases of the data. Fluid and inexact definitions and descriptions, shaped by personal and social experiences and perceptions permeated the data.

Nonetheless, certain methodological principles were adhered to in order to ensure the personal perceptions of the researcher could be related to objective criteria, verification, or alternative evidence to substantiate the analyses made. These principles can be likened to the kinds of research approaches which Lather (1986) reviews as inquiry which is "openly ideological" (p.63) in the neo-Marxist sense

of "transformative possibilities of points of view" (p.78). Just as Lather considers feminist or neo-Marxist research to need guidelines which "guard against researcher biases distorting the logic of evidence within openly ideological research" (p.67), the present research draws on Street's (1984) definitions of literacy education as fundamentally ideological and therefore including beliefs or values transmitted through the socio-cultural medium of education and interpersonal classroom interactions.

Lather proposes that ideologically-based research calls for data credibility checks which are self-reflexive, rigorous, and relevant but may nonetheless challenge standards established in the traditional human sciences if it "is to be accepted as data rather than as metaphor by those who do not share its value premises" (p.77).

To attempt to meet this goal, the present research tried to follow Lather's criteria (p.78):

1. emergent, rather than pre-ordained, research design;
2. triangulation of methods, data sources and theories;
3. reflexive subjectivity (documentation of how the

researcher's assumptions have been affected by the logic of the data);

4. face validity (by recycling categories, emerging analysis, and conclusions back through at least a subsample of respondents);

5. catalytic validity (documentation that the research process has led to insight and ideally, activism on the part of the respondents).

The design of the present research was emergent, developing in relation to the local context and social interactions, rather than defining what these may have been in advance through fixed categories for data elicitation, such as tests, surveys or other preordained measures. In this way, students' responses to the instruction provided were revealed in their own terms and cultural or ideological parameters.

To triangulate methods and sources, the data for this case study were gathered by various methods: my observing and recording the students' and my own behaviour; the student journals, compositions, tests and discussions; questionnaires designed to obtain data; and recorded formal and informal interviews with students, professionals and other community members in the site of the research.

Multiple methods of analysis were also used. Using the descriptive paradigm outlined above the data were compiled into three categories which were used for cross-comparison. Moreover, two theoretical interpretations of the data, cultural and ideological, also allowed for triangulation of analysis. Lather mentions triangulation of theories as well. This was approached through the search of a wide range of literature in various related fields such as sociolinguistics, anthropology, history and politics, then incorporated into the dual interpretations of the data within cultural and ideological frameworks. Figure 4 illustrates the triangulation of data and analysis which was done in the case study.

Lather's third guideline, reflexive subjectivity, calls for documentation on how the researcher's assumptions have been affected by the logic of the data. This is inherent in the emergent design of the research reflecting the actual situation being encountered. The way that my assumptions and actions were affected by the data recorded forms a part of the analysis of the case study. Data recorded in my journal depicted me attempting to approach students' behaviour in a range of responses from accommodation to resistance, as illustrated in Figure 3.

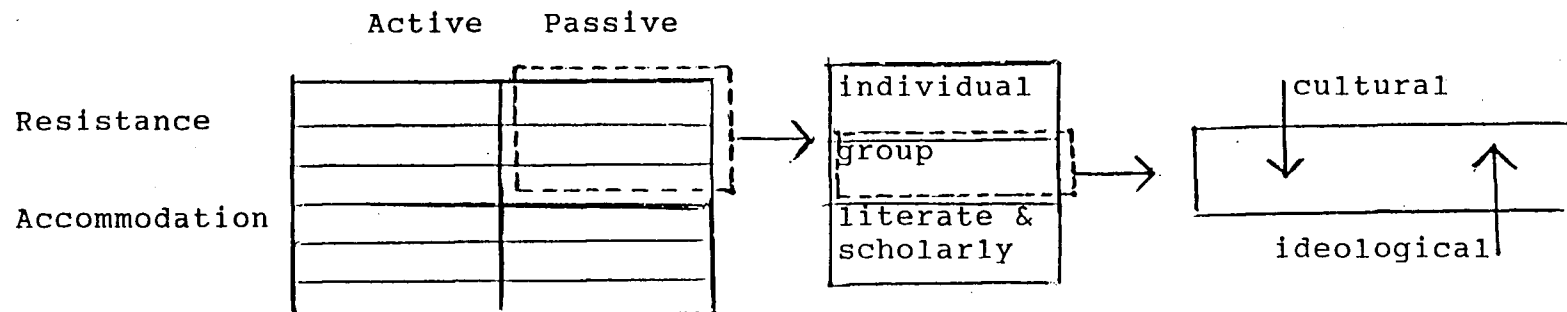
In similar manner, some degree of face validity was

Figure 4: Lather's (1986) Research Guidelines Applied to the Present Analysis

TRIANGULATION OF DATA:

1. Methods: non-participant observation
 participant observation
 literature search
 recording in own journals
 gathering data: student journals
 student materials
 questionnaires
 interviews
 manipulation of events
2. Sources: through above methods
 academic literature
 demographic statistics
 historical materials
 own & others' related experience
3. Theories: anthropological
 sociolinguistic
 educational
 political

TRIANGULATION OF ANALYSIS:



established by the recycling of categories, emerging analysis, and ideas back through a sample of respondents. However, this process was restricted to the teaching situations and informal discussions with community members. The present analyses and interpretations have not been presented to participants in the classes in any systematic way for their verification. Nor has Lather's guideline of catalytic validity been undertaken to document whether the research process led to insight or activism on the part of the participants. Such an effort was constrained by the emergent design of the research which did not predict specific outcomes, nor plan for a time line to assess such results. The time factor in this research negatively affected all the validity tests listed by Lather, underscoring by ethnographers that social research of this type can only be done systematically through a lengthy investment of time.

Although Lather's definition of catalytic validity calls for insight or activism on the part of the participants in research, her definition might be broadened to include informants in the present research such as other professionals and community members with whom the emerging analysis and implications were shared. The results of the research have led to insight and changed pedagogical approaches not only on my own part but also on the part of others who were kept advised of it and who contributed to it

by interviews. Subsequent approaches to teaching and analysis of local events have been altered by a change in attitude toward the role of resistance in instruction for native people. One instructor, who was directly involved in the case study site instructing the oral communications course, has now begun a Master's program focusing on resistance theory.

3.1.6. Summary

This section has outlined the research approach used in this interpretive case study. A major difficulty in the research was separating my functions as the teacher from my role as researcher, particularly when the natural response of the "teacher" meant interference with the objective of the "researcher". However, I found that the case study approach produced considerable experientially-grounded "thick" data which was useful in understanding the phenomena and the context.

3.2. Instructional Approach

3.2.1. Introduction

The following section of this chapter describes the instructional approach used in the case study, documenting the rationale and content of the composition instruction

and the conditions in which it took place.

3.2.2. Rationale and Design of the Composition Instruction

Written composition has conventionally been perceived as one of the least successful areas for native Indian literacy students (see Stairs, 1990). I felt that a fresh look at the methodology of teaching composition for this population was warranted in light of changes which have taken place in composition pedagogy in the past ten years: a movement away from the traditional pedagogy focusing on usage, structure and correct form to a more recent emphasis on strategies for generating ideas, on recursive thinking, on audience orientations and other cognitive processes of composing. Whereas traditional pedagogy was product-oriented, emphasizing completed discourse, more innovative approaches are process-oriented, emphasizing the acts of composing (Zamel, 1982, 1983; Raimes, 1985). This movement has greatly influenced writing instruction in mother-tongue (Hillocks, 1986) and English as a second language settings. (Zamel, 1982, 1983; Raimes, 1985).

Inspired by these innovations and the sense that native students' past problems with writing may have arisen from unfavoured teaching techniques, I designed an approach to teaching composition which would use both the process-oriented and product-oriented methodologies to capitalize on

the learning potential promised in professional publications (Raimes, 1983; Zamel, 1982). The decision to focus on writing meant excluding instruction in reading, which has been the major focus of most adult literacy instruction and research to date. This had the advantage, however, of narrowing the scope of the instruction to a set of student and teaching behaviours which could be clearly identified within one pedagogical paradigm.

The composition instruction was organized to distinguish the process and product orientations and to make them readily apparent to the students. The process orientation was assumed to be a teaching approach which emphasized conceptual and interactive elements. Following Raimes (1985) and Zamel (1987) these were defined as: audience awareness; thinking and writing structures; and peer input and response. The product orientation was assumed to be a more text-based approach with an emphasis on the grammar and mechanics of writing. The process-oriented instruction was presented in the first part of each lesson, followed by a break, then the product-oriented instruction was introduced. Students soon referred to the process-oriented instruction as "ideas" and to the product-oriented instruction as "grammar". It was presumed that to discern how the students would respond to innovative, process-oriented instruction, it would also be necessary to establish their responses to more product-oriented lessons within the same classes.

Additional features of the instructional approach were the use of culturally-oriented materials, as suggested by much of the literature on instruction with native Indian students. Sawyer's (1984) suggestion that contemporary and traditional native culture should be at the centre of all subjects and activities was followed in a limited way, for example, by using local and traditional subjects and materials for writing assignments. Co-operative learning techniques were also implemented in both kinds of instruction using a variety of group, small group and dyad arrangements. Individualized assistance and instruction were also used in each approach. Examples of course outlines for three of the classes are shown in Appendices A and B, and a typical lesson plan for the third and fourth weeks for the learning centre class appears in Appendix C.

The original intent was to teach only in the community campus classroom of the Territorial college with students who were regularly enrolled in the upgrading program there, twice a week. This soon expanded to an evening course requested by the Indian Band and to two classes given in the local school. In all cases, instruction took place twice weekly for a minimum of one and a half hours each session. The course at the Territorial college campus learning centre was designed to last six weeks, the evening course for four weeks, and the two school classes for three weeks.

3.2.3. Instructional Content

In the learning centre class, students were initially expected to produce personal and business letters and two paragraphs by the second week and in the later weeks to compose various types of paragraphs, eventually finishing with an essay. Product-oriented instruction included exercises in parts of speech, punctuation and capitalization, sentence structure, spelling, and use of the dictionary and thesaurus. These initial plans were, however, reduced considerably in response to student achievement--to the point where paragraph writing was attempted only in the last week.

The evening course was organized in response to a request by the Band staff for business English. A course outline was followed largely as planned, using personal and business letters at the beginning of the course, then descriptive and narrative paragraphs followed by a personal writing project. Product-orientations consisted of lessons on the more complex aspects of sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and verb agreement.

One school-based class was grade eight to ten, and the other was an "equivalency" class. The students in each class ranged in age from 14 to 19. These classes were to produce an autobiographical letter focusing on several elements of

writing. The graded class completed this objective in two lessons, and the remaining classes were supplemented by paragraph writing. The equivalency class was still struggling with the letter at the end of the course.

Both classes were given product-oriented exercises based on conventional sentence structures and punctuation as well as errors such as sentence fragments and run-ons.

3.2.4. Instructional Conditions

The research was undertaken with the understanding that education is seldom a small community or individual priority in northern Canada. For instance, it was expected that the scheduling of the classes and the research in the late spring risked poor attendance, since the coming of bright warm days would bring with it the desire to be outdoors in the brief Yukon summer. The students "leave with the ice in the river in May", as one local educator noted. Previously, local Yukon college campuses were closed at the end of April because of this. Other factors affecting attendance were the fact that other short adult education courses were offered at the same time, that land claims negotiations were beginning to reach a peak in the community at this time, and that day care facilities were lacking in the community, making attendance by women difficult.

Conditions promoting attendance at the classes, however,

included eligibility for a training allowance at the college campus, group pressure from peers and the campus co-ordinator to attend, and students' prior experience with visiting instructors in other subject areas. Moreover, attendance in the school classes was obligatory and the research was supported by the school principal as a means of supplementing the usual curriculum.

Lesson plans for the learning centre were approved by the learning centre co-ordinator and for the school by the principal. I outlined the evening course in a meeting with potential students from the Band staff and it met with their approval.

In all courses I expected that initial shyness and lack of participation would disappear in time as students became more at ease with me as an instructor and a person. I presumed that I would not have difficulty in controlling the events of the classroom. In adult educator fashion I was mostly concerned that I could respond positively to my students' expressed needs. I accepted that composition was not an area where many of them had experienced success and therefore planned to make the courses as engaging and rewarding as possible.

3.2.5. Summary

The instructional approach was based on my previous experiences teaching small native groups in the Yukon, recent arguments for the value of process-oriented teaching methods in writing instruction, and my belief that adult education should be student-oriented and community-based. Constraints on the teaching included the choice of students, location and the amount of time involved in the courses, and a syllabus designed to distinguish product and process-oriented instructional approaches. With Ryan (1989), I found that actual experience as a teaching participant in the classroom gave me insights that could not be substituted by other methods of inquiry.

CHAPTER IV:

THE COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

4.1. Bear River

4.1.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the local community where the instruction and research was situated. The first section explores the history, setting, and the demographic characteristics of the community that I call "Bear River" in the Yukon Territory. The educational context of Bear River, especially adult education in the community for the present generation, is examined in the second section of this chapter. The third section provides anthropological and sociolinguistic accounts of the Athapaskan culture, of which native students in the present research were members. The purpose of these descriptions is to account for the circumstances into which the instruction was introduced so as to understand more fully students' responses to the instruction.

Bear River is typical of many small native Yukon communities demographically and physically. It is nestled at the junction of two rivers in a trench between two ranges of mountains which rise on both sides of the town and overpower it. Bear River is diminutive in the vast landscape of

boreal forest with barren patches and tundra covering the valley. One senses the smallness of human settlement in this harsh environment where temperatures can reach as low as minus 60 degrees Celsius.

According to one reporter from the Whitehorse Star, Bear River is an "enigma" which "deserves a better reputation" (July 14, 1989). The residents, the reporter claims, get strange looks and uneasy feelings from others when they say they are from Bear River, a town with "up to 90 per cent unemployment and serious problems with alcohol abuse." She cites deaths by alcohol abuse which include the popular deputy chief who died of hypothermia in an abandoned building the previous winter, but concludes that Bear River's problems are "balanced by warmth and spirit".

4.1.2. History of Bear River

The impact of outside pressures on Bear River has been overwhelming, from the first contact with European explorers and traders to today's corporate exploitation of rich natural resources which are part of native land claims.

Nonetheless, the Canada Census (1986) statistics show that Bear River's population of 355 is about two-thirds native Indians. Fifty-five people list their mother tongue as the local Athapaskan dialect or as it and other languages.

This shows some retention of the aboriginal language (since Yukon Indian languages are largely becoming extinct), but the retention rate probably reflects Bear River's relatively recent and sporadic contact with non-native society.

Bostock (1972) writes that the explorer Robert Campbell travelled the area in 1840 for the Hudson's Bay Company. In the following six years two trading posts were established. Both were abandoned within ten years, and for almost fifty years Indian/white trade was terminated in the area. The impact, however, of bringing the fur trade to a hunting and gathering native economy had begun.

McDonnell (1975) reports that trade began again in 1899 when Indians from the east moved into the area. According to McDonnell the shift from a hunting and gathering economy to a hunting and trapping economy brought new definitions of relationships to the land and a reorganization of social activities including trade. Needs developed to use different tools. Manufactured items were only acquired by the exchange for furs and a system of debt at the trading post. Animals were killed which were not used previously; equipment needed was heavier and less easy to transport, necessitating the use of dogs for transportation. Travel for trapping purposes was thus more restrictive than for hunting.

By 1905 the Hudson's Bay post had been bought by Taylor

and Drury, and the post was given its current name. Bear River became the main supply depot since it was the furthest point on the river which could be navigated by steamboat. It became a central location for a mixture of Indian peoples from the surrounding areas.

There are few recorded sources for the early Indian history of the area but the letters of Poole Field (e.g. 1913), a Hudson's Bay factor, are informative. Field found a native population that was constantly nomadic in the search for food, with small self-sufficient extended family groups of 5 to 15 individuals who displayed a highly complex relationship with the animal world.

The old Bear River townsite survives as a flat cleared area on the north shore of the larger river, while the present site occupies the south shore. To serve the few people who live on the north shore there is a footbridge over the river which is a focal point for the town year-round. In summer, a cable ferry takes vehicles across the river, and in winter an ice-bridge connects the two river banks.

Bear River was one of the few settlements of its time to survive the decline of the fur trade in the Yukon which began about 1945, according to McDonnell (1975). McDonnell records a second phase of non-native impact in the area beginning with the first visit of a Department of Indian Affairs

official in 1949. By 1952 a Catholic mission with a resident priest was established and the children of the area were being schooled in residential schools in Whitehorse and Carcross. The early sixties saw most Indians living in the bush in the winter supplementing summer wage earnings and government subsidies by hunting.

4.1.3. Present Day Bear River

In 1986, of the 269 people of employable age reported by Census Canada in Bear River, 37 (nearly 14%) were receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits as of March 1988. This figure reflects the lack of stable employment possibilities. The seasonal hunting, trapping, guiding and mining exploration economy does not employ many people for any length of time. According to local informants, approximately one-third of the Unemployment Insurance recipients receive training allowances to attend the campus of the local college.

The Yukon Territorial Government publication Yukon Data Book (1987) states that apart from renewable resources, the economy of Bear River is based on mining exploration and a small but growing tourist industry. As with most small Yukon communities many people are employed to serve the others who live there. The one hotel houses the one bar and one of two cafes. The other cafe, when it is open, is run by the Bear

River Indian Band who also have one of the two general stores. Government services, as in all part of the Yukon, are generous, with three RCMP officers, a wildlife officer, a health centre with two resident nurses, a social worker, a community addictions worker, and a group home for children. Much of the local housing is supplied and serviced by the Yukon Territorial Government Housing Corporation with rents geared to income. Other housing has been built by the local Indian Band for Band members.

There is a distinct east-west division between the native and non-native sections of town, with a through road the dividing line. All of the services except those run by the Indian Band are in the non-native section of town on the west, including the Roman Catholic Mission and the other churches. It is interesting to note that the Yukon Government's Data Book map of Bear River excludes everything east of the road boundary, although the Indian businesses, the Band's extensive offices, an old Band hall used for periodic part-time classes or recreation, the college campus, as well as dozens of single-family log houses are located there. On the government map, the area known as the "Indian village" which comprises half the town, does not appear to exist.

During the early 1940's a road was built to accommodate an oil pipeline from the Northwest Territories to Whitehorse

to serve American Army troops building the Alaska Highway during the Second World War. The road passed through Bear River. The pipeline was only briefly in use and the road is passable now only in the summer, providing access to some of the Yukon's most spectacular scenery. Some elders now living in Bear River recall their first encounter with non-native people at the time of the building of this road.

Interestingly, they say their first view of non-natives was of the American blacks in the U.S. Army, recalling their shock at the "dirty" faces they encountered.

In the 1960's a mining town was built within 50 kilometres of Bear River bringing to completion a year-round highway connecting the town to the south and west. It was expected that mining would have a great impact on Bear River with an exodus of workers to the new mine. This never occurred. As reported by Miller (1970) this was because the mine never made efforts to include native people in its employ despite written agreements to do so. The lack of impact of the mine on Bear River can be seen in the mining of a coal deposit 3 kilometres from town which supplies the mine with energy. It is mined by a Whitehorse contractor and employs only one local person. Mining exploration for gold, silver and tungsten exists in the area, but any development activity is done at the site with very little reliance on Bear River as a supply centre either for goods or labour. The recent closure of a near-by gold mine in the area is

reported by Bear River residents as having very little effect on their economy.

Bear River is defined in the Territorial Government Data Book as an unorganized community, meaning it is administered by the Yukon Territorial Government for local services. In 1966 a chief and council were created by the Department of Indian Affairs to directly administer local Indian concerns. According to McDonnell (1975), by the early 1970's the first chief and council, which consisted of older men who could neither read nor write, were replaced by a more educated leadership with an average age of 25. They were mostly women. This new council involved the Band in economic development activities such as establishing a co-operative store and a sawmill. Now the Council and several committees influence local decisions even when problems arise that are not their direct responsibility. At the time of this research the major controversy being dealt with was the building by the Territorial Government of a large covered hockey rink which had not been requested by the local community. Located behind the school in the largest brightest-coloured building in town this unexpected gift had been argued over for several months. The community was attempting to have other services which they felt were more urgently needed placed into the building shell and the Band Council was playing a very active part in the fight.

4.1.4. Summary

The history of the Athapaskan people of Bear River reveals a reliance on white economic control through the trading post in the early years which today has been transposed to non-native control through government assistance and institutions. The early years of contact which resulted in many cultural, economic and physical changes for local Athapaskans have been replaced by times which offer a sedentary lifestyle in exchange for few disruptions to the non-native aspirations in the area.

However, there are recent indications that the people of Bear River neither desire nor anticipate this lack of involvement in their own present and future. The setting up of a barricade on the road to a local tourist lodge more than once by the Bear River Indian Band Council, indicating that the land is claimed by them, is a physical metaphor for the political resistance that can be expected as land claims negotiations come closer to a reality in the area.

4.2. The Educational Context

4.2.1. Introduction

Traditional Athapaskan value systems are expressed in beliefs, the structure of human relations, and ways of

communicating. These all come together in the act of education. If there is Athapaskan resistance to cultural synthesis or change, then it is no doubt revealed in modern Canada's educational institutions which in structure, intent and philosophy so directly contrast with traditional Athapaskan ways. This section describes the history of education for the native people of Bear River and their present day education systems.

4.2.2. Educational Background

Haig-Brown (1988) examines resistance to the oppression of native language and culture in her work based on a residential school in Kamloops, B. C. She details the opposition to rules which produced counter-cultures which still live in the memories of the former students she interviewed. Haig-Brown says that not one of the natives she interviewed ever indicated any sense of regret for their actions, and that they can be viewed as "actions of strong people against a system which degraded and dehumanized" (p.103). Much of the detail in Haig-Brown's work could be easily transferred to any residential school in the Yukon, according to local, native sources.

Personal communication from officials in the Yukon Department of Education and from former residential school students in Bear River reveals that prior to the building of

the school in 1967 all Bear River native students were sent to residential schools or hostels in communities in Northern B. C. and southern Yukon three to five hundred kilometres away. This was the case with all communities which did not have local schools. In some cases, children were sent away to school even when there were local schools, since the Department of Indian Affairs judged some parents as incompetent to keep their children over long periods of time or the parents were known to trap away from town over the winter months. The residential schools and hostels (from which native children attended regular non-native schools in the larger community) were run by the Anglican and Catholic Churches, but they were financed by the Department of Indian Affairs. Children were away from home for the ten months of school with occasional visits home at Christmas. These native students were placed in large impersonal dormitories, where, Patterson (1972) writes:

efforts were made to erase the effects of their infancy and childhood experiences. They were sometimes under considerable pressure, including physical punishment, to give up their customs and religion, and to stop speaking their mother tongue...The quality of the instruction was not high and the level of their schooling was "well below" what it would have been after the same number of years of schooling in a school for white children (p.134).

The residential schools and hostels were not well staffed or supplied. But today, according to a Yukon Government's Bureau of Statistics research paper, Yukon Student Profile (1988), the Bear River school has an enviable ratio of seven teachers to 87 pupils. It offers classes from kindergarten to grade ten. In the past the school had had many problems with its physical structure, arising from experimentation with pilings in the permafrost ground on which the building sits. But it is now a sound and attractive building with a large library, gymnasium, science and wood workshop. The school's bright, rounded hallway pleasantly displays student work and pictures of the few local graduates, who had to attend grades eleven and twelve in other communities.

This school makes some attempt to recognize the local Indian culture. A native woman is employed by the Indian Band as the Community Education Liaison Co-Ordinator (CELC), a kind of native counsellor working in the school and the Band office. Although not originally from the community, the CELC has been active in native education for many years there, and she is known for her emotional strength and for being "radical". Most Yukon schools have this position, which does not require training, and is dependent on the school principal and Indian Band for definition. Local sources complained that the position's function often

deteriorates into serving only as a truant officer rather than dealing effectively with larger cross-cultural or educational issues.

The Yukon Native Language Centre in Whitehorse under the direction of one linguist has worked for many years to record and salvage the seven distinct Athapaskan dialects in the Yukon, but has only recently been able to work in the local language. Now a resident linguist is on contract to continue work in Bear River, and he is training a native woman to teach the language in the school. Native language is taught a minimal amount each day, in competition with French, in the lowest grades. The native language teachers have been trained over several years in the Yukon and are now certified by a program through Yukon College, the only certification and specialized training available for aboriginal language teachers in Alaska or northern Canada.

4.2.3. Participation in Education

The Indian Band, in concert with all other Indian Bands and the Council for Yukon Indians, has complained for many years that the native Indian dropout rate from school is completely unacceptable. No ethnicity statistics have been available from the Department of Education until very recently, and these have to be read carefully to reveal the true situation.

The research paper Yukon Student Profile (1988) states that the number of native students is in proportion to its percentage of the population. The Indian population of the Yukon is 21.3% of the whole population. A total of 23.6% native students enrolled in Yukon schools in 1988. Statistics of numbers of children per family by ethnicity are not available. Since native families appear to have more children per family than non-natives, a higher percentage of native children in school would also be expected, so that this statistic may not actually reflect the native retention rates in school. In Bear River, out of an enrollment of 87 in 1988, 58 were native, exactly two-thirds of the school population (Yukon Government, 1988). Unfortunately, ethnicity is not reported by grade, nor has it been done over a period of years, so that a native dropout rate cannot be calculated.

However, of relevance to the issue of native retention in school are the statistics for the whole of the Yukon for student enrollment by grade and ethnicity for 1988. Assuming a fairly steady proportion of native students over a period of years, comparing the statistics for grades one and twelve for the Yukon is interesting. For the whole of the Yukon in 1988, native students were 34.3% of the grade one population. Grade twelve of the same year shows 21.3% native population. A further complication of these statistics arises in the

definition of grades. There is no indication of how many of the senior grade population is in what is called a "modified program" or a non-academic stream, where many native students are enrolled. As reported by the Canada Census 1986, the percentage of Yukon registered Indians with at least high school education is 26.5, which compares to a general Yukon population percentage for the same category of 66.5, the highest in Canada.

A clearer picture of the native student enrollment can be seen in the statistics for the "equivalency program". This is a specially-designed school program for students at risk, designed along the lines of adult basic education, but with a work component. Upon completion of the equivalency program students are expected to move back into the regular system. Not many do. Across the Yukon, of 51 equivalency students, 36, or 70.5% were native in 1988, over double their proportional representation of the general population. In the "special education" category, numbers are small, but 60% were native students.

In Bear River in 1988, there were 27 students in the junior grades (grades 8 to 10). Assuming that two-thirds of these are native, 13 of them should be native, since an additional 5 students, all native, were in the equivalency program covering grades 8 to 10. However, in June of 1989, only two native students from Bear River graduated from high

school.

4.2.4. Educational Settings

The equivalency program in Bear River is situated apart from the school, in one room of the "wildlife building", a log warehouse that has been converted by the Territorial Government to accommodate the wildlife officer, the social worker, the addictions worker and the equivalency program. The one large room is well-equipped and bright, with a shared washroom down the hall.

Students (native and non-native) in Bear River who drop out of the regular school system, including those who drop out of the equivalency program, have an adult basic education upgrading system to turn to, offered by the local college campus. Training allowances are paid for full-time attendance at the adult learning centre. Opinions differ on whether this draws students away from the regular school system or not, offering a kind of alternative high school with pay.

The learning centre has been in operation in Bear River since the late 1970's and has been located in a mobile unit without running water in the area east of the main road in Bear River known as the Indian village. The narrow, long unit has three small rooms apart from the washroom which has

now been converted to a curriculum storeroom. One room at one end is the instructor's office, crammed with additional curriculum, a desk and a computer. The larger middle room is a classroom, with small tables bunched into the centre, surrounded by a dozen chairs, video equipment, a photocopier, and a chalkboard. It is extremely uncomfortable to move around in since the tables are located in the centre of such a narrow space. Windows extend along one length of this room, and the door opens to the outside directly, making for very cold inside temperatures every time someone opens the door in the cold weather. The third room at the opposite end of the unit from the office houses the class computer and counselling information. The classroom is kept in a general state of disarray; the walls are covered with accumulated notices, lists, posters and calendars from the months gone by.

4.2.5. Adult Education Personnel and Curricula

The learning centre instructor or "Community Campus Co-Ordinator" is responsible for instructing and counselling all students from basic literacy to college preparation (grade twelve equivalency). She is also called upon for organizing (and sometimes for teaching) evening courses in various continuing education offerings from accounting, computer literacy and typing to basic home repair and first aid. The small campus had 13 full time upgrading students over the

winter of 1988-89, half of whom had left by the time of this research. As well, several evening courses were offered over the winter months, including accounting and computer literacy.

The campus co-ordinator is a Metis woman from the northern part of another region of Canada who taught for several years in her home province and who has a degree in education. One of her daughters was a full-time student at the centre. Dolly's perpetual energy and commitment to native education is exceptional, and despite a somewhat cool reception at first in Bear River because she is not local, she retains a healthy optimism tinged with pragmatism. She was a continuing support for all the details of organizing and sustaining this research.

The local college offers band management training in several modules, delivered in the small communities. One of these modules, oral communications, was taught over the period of this research. A man contracted by the college travelled to Bear River from Whitehorse three times to present 3-day workshops each visit. Although designed to assist Band staff in their regular administrative problems, the training was open to the community, and students from the learning centre attended some of these workshops, leaving the writing course at those times. At the same time, a basic home repair course was also being offered, housed in a mobile

unit that travels to several communities throughout the Yukon over the winter months, remaining in each spot for a few weeks.

One of several local committees active in Bear River is the Yukon Campus Advisory Committee, which is representative of the local educational and business interests and the Indian Band. This committee has the responsibility for administering a small continuing education budget for short-term courses, and it acts in an advisory capacity for all adult education in the community. At the time of the research, a proposal was being made to the Indian band and to the Advisory committee for a program to train a paid literacy worker through the college since the upgrading available in the learning centre did not accommodate low-level literacy students.

There is no written source of information on the history of learning centres in the Yukon. Officials of the Department of Education in Whitehorse reported that before the establishment of the learning centre in Bear River, the only adult education available was an adult upgrading system called BLADE, adopted without change from the Saskatchewan Newstart program, for two or three years in the early 1970's across the Territory. The program was discontinued in the mid-1970's after an evaluation conducted by the Department of Education which had been clear on its disapproval of the

program. Before and after the BLADE system, it was necessary for adult students to move to Whitehorse to attend the Yukon Vocational Technical Training Centre for upgrading and skill training until Yukon College established the community learning centres in the early 1980's.

It was apparently unusual to use the school facilities for night courses, although there appeared to be a general lack of space for such offerings. When approached about the present research, the school principal was enthusiastic and very supportive of a class being put on in the school. According to the learning centre co-ordinator, habit and lack of feeling comfortable in school surroundings had tended to dictate where continuing education took place.

Despite the many examples of adult education now offered in Bear River, attendance has been very low. It was reported by the learning centre co-ordinator that there was initial enthusiasm and insistence on having courses, but some courses simply ended early due to lack of attendance, or struggled along with one or two students. Cost per student completion can be assumed to be very high.

4.2.6. Literacy in Bear River

Census Canada defines illiteracy as those people over 15 years of age, not in an educational institution, having less

than 9 years of schooling. In Bear River, the 1986 Census reports that out of 245 adults, 85 stated they have less than 9 years of schooling. This is a functional illiteracy rate of 34.6%, seemingly about average for Yukon registered Indians. Of this number, 58.8% are female. A further 80 adults identified themselves in the census as having grade 9-13 with no certificate, totalling 67.3% of the adult population without high school graduation. These numbers are not related to ethnicity. It is safe to assume that since many of the adult non-natives in Bear River hold professional or business positions, the percentage of native illiteracy is considerably higher than for non-natives. It is also safe to assume that many respondents would exaggerate their actual schooling, saying, for example, that they had acquired a grade when they had dropped out of school in that year. The functional illiteracy rate amongst native people in Bear River, then, may be above 50%, a number which we are accustomed to associate more with Third World countries than Canada.

4.2.7. Summary

Local native informants in Bear River expressed a strong interest in all aspects of education, coupled with a firm belief that education would bring economic benefits to individuals and the Indian Band as a whole. However, this motivation did not appear to support native people

sufficiently to create full participation in the education available to them in Bear River.

4.3. The Cultural Context

4.3.1. Introduction

Although the amount of anthropological research on Athapaskans in the Yukon is not great, a constant focus of concern has been the impact of the extremely different non-native society on Athapaskan material culture as well as on their value systems. The impact continues today, suggesting that interethnic experiences, especially those in educational institutions, may logically lead to resistance to cultural change by the people of Bear River.

4.3.2. Anthropological Background

Honigmann (1949, 1954), McDonnell (1975), Crowe (1974), Nelson (1973), Brody (1987), Cruikshank (1988) and others reveal that prior to the beginning of village life through the establishment of trading posts and other non-Athapaskan institutions, the aboriginal people of the Canadian north had developed social structures which were highly responsive to their subsistence, survival economy. Small, nomadic, extended family groups efficiently hunted and gathered food throughout the seasons, adapting to the subarctic

environment. Elders proffered knowledge necessary to survival which could only be acquired over long years of experience in the wild, while young and middle-aged adults actively provided food and care for the young and old. Children were taught to become a working part of this mobile unit.

Honigmann, McDonnell, Brody and Cruikshank discuss Athapaskan vision quests. They show that assistance to survive was given to Athapaskans from contact with a non-material realm which, through mediation and intervention by animals and other natural phenomena, allowed individuals to acquire power which gave them special abilities. It was understood that everyone had the potential to transcend the strictures of circumstances and that ability was simply a matter of the degree of power acquired. For men, abilities were given by intervention, while for women, they were slowly accumulated over time.

This world-view contributed to a strong sense of personal autonomy among traditional Athapaskans; success was interpreted as a function of personal power given from outside the person, not of one's relationship to others. Dependence on others who may have more power in certain areas was natural. Sharing of the rewards of power, for instance, the sharing of meat from a successful hunt, was expected and no special status for the giver or receiver resulted

(McDonnell, 1975; Nelson, 1973).

Cruikshank (1988) reports that the acquisition of special privileged knowledge for men came through the assistance of specific other-world beings (animal-people) accompanied sometimes by extreme, unorthodox behaviour which in normal times would not be accepted. The person was understood not to be aware of his unacceptable behaviour, so no shame or guilt was attached to his actions, for which he was not responsible. It was a struggle with the animal-people, and if the person did not succeed in the struggle, he would simply die.

Men and women lived complementary lives, with women responsible for the more sedentary camp life of gathering, cooking, the care of children and sewing clothing, and the men for the provision of the raw materials for their lives. Both were able to perform the other's duties. Division of labour by gender was not strictly reinforced, but a pragmatic view of labour prevailed. Descent in the two moieties, either Wolf or Crow, was matrilineal. As reported by Cruikshank (1988) and McDonnell (1975), men relied on outside intervention and assistance with power to exploit the land, while women used empirically-based knowledge to control their day-to-day lives. The power of males was dominating and potentially dangerous, while that of females was protective and helpful. The attitude to males was one of deference, to

females, trust and familiarity. Women were inclined to co-operate in their activities, while men were more competitive.

From a once strong position of autonomy and balance in society, Athapaskans have been subjected to major forces reducing control of their lives in a brief space of cultural time. Europeans encountered what amounted to a Stone Age culture in the Nineteenth Century Yukon, and in a few generations the impact of industrial society can readily be seen in all Athapaskan communities.

Most scholars suggest that the natural pragmatism and adaptability of the Athapaskans have been both an asset and a detriment to their survival in our modern world. Embracing trapping as a way of economic life brought access to the tools which made life easier, but which also demanded that a lone trapper live for weeks without family support since the extended family group was no longer necessary, and even somewhat of a handicap to mobility. Later, even partial dependence on a wage economy and universal government supports such as Family Allowances and Old Age Pensions brought a more sedentary life in established communities which further reduced individual control over day-to-day life (McDonnell, 1975; Miller, 1970). Attendance at schools, particularly residential schools, completely separated the young from understanding their traditional way of life (Patterson, 1972; Haig-Brown, 1989).

In discussing aboriginal contact with non-Athapaskan life, McDonnell (1975) states that present-day developments are:

unprecedented and cannot entirely be viewed as derivative of a previous way of thinking about and interpreting social relations. Nor can the past be ignored. It still intrudes in the understanding and organization of current affairs (p.14).

Traditional Athapaskan life and beliefs were so extremely different from that of the impacting European culture that new ways of survival and thinking were demanded. However, the past is not entirely gone because of this and an understanding of how it intrudes on the present Athapaskan way of life is important.

Patterson (1972) states that:

The twin poles of total assimilation and total maintenance of indigenous culture in a contact situation represent theoretical alternatives which are never realized. Between them lies the range of what actually occurs and what is really a third alternative: cultural adjustment and/or synthesis. This can vary in many degrees along the spectrum between the imaginary poles...from the contact of the

two cultures the Indians developed something which was new and unique and was neither Western nor traditional but contained in a new form elements of each...This synthesis becomes part of the definition of the culture and thus continues along with whatever changes are occurring in the majority culture (p.169-170).

Athapaskan cultural patterns today are in various stages of adjustment or synthesis 'epending on the community and the individual. In McDonnell's words, they are "bifarious" (1975, p.22), or following both the path of tradition and of a new vision. He finds the traditional cultural threads also somewhat obscure because of cultural synthesis occurring at different rates.

4.3.3. Sociolinguistic Background

According to Scollon and Scollon (1981), much influence from the older cultural perspectives appears in modern language use among Athapaskans. Scollon and Scollon's analyses of discourse styles of Northern Athapaskans find contrasts with English in the areas of the presentation of self and the distribution of talk, amongst other differences. In the presentation of self, Scollon and Scollon argue that the high degree of respect for the individuality of others and a careful guarding of one's own individuality leads to conversation being threatening because of the possibility of

a negotiated change of point of view. The Athapaskan will wait until views are known before open discussion takes place (Scollon and Scollon, 1981, p.15). For instance, McDonnell (1975) observes that:

a person who proposed something that was generally thought to be questionable, unwise or unsuitable was not apparently received with a straight out verbal negation--if anything his proposal was received with silence (p.310).

Scollon and Scollon also discuss the power relationships between people as being a source of conflict between Athapaskans and English speakers. In one example (1981, p. 17) they show that the dominating relationship between teacher and child in Athapaskan culture requires the Athapaskan child to listen while the English teacher speaks. Yet the English-speaking teacher demands response from the child to display knowledge which in the Athapaskan view has not yet been fully acquired. A further example of language conflict is found in the display of ability. The Athapaskan speaker believes it is bad luck to show off abilities while the English speaker likes to "put his best foot forward".

In discussing distribution of talk, Scollon and Scollon say that Athapaskan speakers pause just slightly longer between turns in conversation while English speakers continue

relatively quickly (1981, p.31) with the result that most of the conversation is dominated by the English speaker.

Departure formulas also differ, with the Athapaskan being careful of courting bad luck, and not referring to a future meeting.

Scollon and Scollon say that talk is distributed between English speakers and Athapaskans so that:

the English speaker is favored as first speaker, as controller of topic, as principal speaker, and yet in the end he may not have any conclusive idea of what went on. For the Athapaskan speaker it is difficult to get the floor, to bring the conversation around to his own topic, and in the end to feel he has had much effect on the outcome (1981, p.27-28).

Scollon and Scollon further observe that the Athapaskan structure of information and organization of content differ from that of English and that adoption of the discourse patterns of the essayist style of writing, perceived to be those of the English speaker, are seen by the Athapaskan as a change in ethnicity. They suggest that:

it is this internal conflict that explains much of the problem of native literacy programs as well as problems with English literacy in the public school

systems of Alaska and Canada (1981, p.53).

In the traditional society of Athapaskans the primary ways to acquire knowledge, apart from the special intervention of animal-people, were by observation as a child, personal experience, and stories of the experiences of others.

The work of Yukon anthropologist Cruikshank (1988) tells of the link between personal experience, stories, and knowledge, and of passing that knowledge along. One of her informants, Mrs. Ned, says:

"...We only want to talk about important things." By "important things" she is referring to the songs, the stories, the genealogies and the place names that constitute the frame of reference for her life, the knowledge she wants to pass on to instruct young people. "We have to get the words right," she assures me over and over again. "Old time words are just like school." (1988, p.207)

Past experience, sometimes handed down for several generations, recalled through oral narrative, was (and is) the means by which the Athapaskan narrator uses acquired knowledge to instruct other people about how to deal with problems in the present. Scollon and Scollon expand on this, stating that the Athapaskan view of the strongly autonomous

individual:

tends to reject expertise that other individuals may have unless one can see a way to incorporate that knowledge into his own knowledge structures (1981, p. 101).

The shared experience of narration requires that knowledge must be contextualized in the experience of the listener, and passed on in such a way that it minimizes the threat to individual autonomy and flexibility. Oral narrative changes to suit the circumstance and the listener, and Cruikshank (1988) warns that:

well-intentioned but uncritical use of oral traditions from one culture as though they are equivalent to historical evidence as defined by another culture, may lead to misrepresentation of more complex messages in narrative. Attempts to sift oral accounts for so-called "facts" may, ironically, underestimate the value of spoken testimonies by setting positivistic criteria for assessing truth value or distortions (p.198).

The indirect, opaque lessons of oral tradition reflect the lives of traditional Athapaskans. According to Brody (1987), there are no rites of passage among the hunting

peoples of the Canadian north, and individuals grow at their own pace:

Social and personal life is informal and improvisational; individuals follow their own trails. The culture and land impose their disciplines from within, establishing both consciousness and limits that are shared as knowledge and experienced as laws. The force and inevitability of these do not seem to require codes, institutions or organized ceremonies (p. 143).

Any rites of passage found amongst these peoples, Brody says, are a function of social structures found in more or less permanent communities which require organized ways of affirming and enforcing law.

4.3.4. Summary

The relevant anthropological and sociolinguistic literature suggest that it was not only the material Athapaskan culture that was altered drastically and irreversibly by contact with non-Athapaskan society. Ancient values were also dramatically confronted. However, resistance to this cultural change, according to Patterson (1972), is the basis of the survival and present re-birth of Indian ways across Canada.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

5.1. The Classroom Context for Resistance

This chapter reports the findings of the research. It begins with general findings from the composition instruction implemented in the case study. This is followed by selected findings for each of the three categories of student behaviours mentioned: individual, group, and literate and scholarly behaviours. Selection of these data was made to be representative of each category of behaviour.

The question researched in the case study was: how did native ESL literacy students in the particular context respond to innovative composition pedagogy? The major response to both types of instruction provided was resistance behaviours as defined in the descriptive paradigm presented previously. Most of the resistance reported here occurred consistently enough to be predictable in particular circumstances.

5.1.1. General Findings

Little information was forthcoming in the students' journals about their preferences for composition

instructional approaches. However, later analysis of the responses that were given and observations from my own journal revealed that the students much preferred the product-oriented approach over the process-oriented one. The general consensus by students' own admission was that this approach was favoured because it was less challenging.

The major, general finding of this research was that my relationship with the students did not grow positively. Rather, the students visibly resisted most of my efforts to teach composition. Although one student told me privately "it's a good thing we like you", most displayed antipathy to the classroom events if not to me personally at some time during the research. I began to experience difficulty controlling instruction and at times planned instruction could not be implemented due to lack of student co-operation. Individual needs were seldom expressed or apparent, and most students did not show an interest in integrating writing into their lives beyond what was minimally required of them in the classroom.

The syllabus used in the case study depended heavily on co-operation for success. I based my teaching on the premise the accommodation by both students and teacher allows for learning potential. The opposite situation was one where I believed little learning was possible. In this framework, my responsibility was to present lessons which were as

responsive as possible through changes in methods and materials to meet what I saw as student preferences and needs. The "treatment" to alleviate the learning deficit could not be forced; it had to be accepted to be learned. From this perspective, the ultimate choice to accomplish the objective of learning was with the student and was determined by the student's ability or willingness to co-operate with the events of the lesson.

The students' perspective on the learning situation apparently differed from this. They no doubt saw that the teaching events were planned and presented with minimal room for alteration and only as I chose to change the lesson in responding to circumstances that I saw as important or when I requested student opinion. Despite consultation with students, the expectation was that students would be essentially passive beings within strict parameters, left with choices of action that ranged only from co-operation to opposition to events outside of their control.

Each partner in the process of instruction, student and teacher, had power that was limited by the co-operation or lack of co-operation of the other party. There seemed to be an unspoken commitment to this power arrangement which was generally accepted. When control did not appear to be a concern, the result was co-operative action on both sides which I believed led to possible learning. But when this

balance of power was abandoned (by either side), a struggle resulted which meant little possible learning.

5.1.2. Individual Resistance Behaviour: Communication

Individuals' acts of communication, whether verbal or written, were often the focus of what I termed resistance behaviour. Both written and verbal communication were at times withheld altogether for no apparent reason, or were used aggressively in all the learning situations in Bear River.

One example of withdrawal of communication appeared with Lisa, a student in the learning centre. Lisa was often withdrawn and petulant. She was eight months' pregnant with her first child and I was told by the other students several times that she was temperamental due to her pregnancy and they showed no intolerance of her lack of communication which was interspersed with bursts of anger. On most occasions Lisa sat through the lesson with her head on her arms on the table, emerging briefly only when there was no other alternative. I recorded one of Lisa's reactions to my questions while in class as follows:

E: Lisa, who is doing the action in this sentence?

L: ----

E: Is Hal the one who wore the shirt?

L: ----

E: Hal is the subject, right?

L: Dunno.

Dora, another student at the learning centre, displayed aggressive communication in every class she attended. She was a cousin to the young man who had died of hypothermia earlier in the year and she had received medical attention for problems such as sleeplessness resulting from her grief. She showed obvious signs of abuse of alcohol and was having a tumultuous affair with a local young man which was also affecting her emotionally. My journal records a typical event with this student:

When I arrived, Dora was at the computer, playing a game. She just ignored me when I asked her if she was there for the writing class, but finally said no. I asked her if she intended to quit. No answer. I kept prodding her, asking her if Dolly had made her come to the writing class when she didn't want to. Nothing but grunts and swearing in reply. Finally, somehow, I talked her into trying the class for today to see if it was any good, saying she could quit after that if she wanted to. Lisa arrived, and appeared in a fairly good mood until she read Dora's mood. She withdrew completely again, head in her arms, no replies to my questions, while Dora continued swearing and pushing

papers around on the table. It was all so extreme and silly that it seemed relatively easy to ignore their actions and simply continue blindly on teaching.

While in this class, I tried to record what was communicated by Dora:

E: Dora, can you give me an example of a noun?

D: ----

E: How about a verb?

D: (muffled)-run-

E: Right!

D: Shit! (shuffling of books on the table)

At the end of this class, I suggested to Dora that she might want to get her problems off her chest by writing in her journal about them. Since I had not shown that I recognized that there was a problem prior to this in the class, she seemed surprised, and in a move which was meant not to communicate, but did, she said in her journal:

I'm not in the mood to talk about my personal problem with anyone. It's between me and someone else. This is getting boring for me. I guess I get tired of it because I've been doing this last year I'm getting tired of doing these stuff over and over.

The communication problems with both Lisa and Dora illustrated that there was a seemingly uncrossable line which defined the extent of their resistance, setting a kind of "bottom line". Neither appeared to want to carry their action to its logical conclusion by leaving the class no matter how trying their presence was to both of us.

Lack of other students' communication either by interference or assistance was often noted when active resistance was being displayed by one student alone. A high degree of tolerance by other students of even extremely disruptive behaviour seemed to indicate that a more involved approach by them would not be acceptable. The other students would generally look away or work diligently at something. Some small indications of annoyance would appear such as the escalation of the number of protests to me from the others about work, but communication was minimal from the group if an individual student were resisting. The focus of attention of the group was never on the disrupting student.

On three occasions I had the opportunity to teach one student alone, twice at the learning centre and once in the equivalency class when only one student appeared for class. In all cases the students were communicative, attentive and contributing. In the learning centre when I taught her alone, Lisa responded intelligently and clearly to my questions, was alert, and seemed to be "finally learning" as

I said in my journal. In the equivalency class, Nick was once the only student to come and he was anxious to prove to me how much he could do. He showed me that he knew much more than he had displayed in previous work in the class. My journal records that he "has a good sense of humour which I hadn't realized, and we both had a good time." This did not continue in the following class where Nick was his usual unobtrusive (and unworking) self.

The Athapaskan-dominated classes were a direct contrast to the grade eight to ten class in communication patterns both of which I saw as displaying resistance. Resistance in the latter was a cacophony of chatter meeting any undesirable request or event, whereas in the classes with a majority of Athapaskans resistance in communication patterns was unusually lengthy silences. The learning centre and equivalency classes very seldom responded or contributed an idea when requested, such as: "Who can answer this?" or "Does anyone have anything to add to that?" The usual response was silence. A great deal of pressure was needed to produce any response and the preferred choice was not to take part at all even when the answer was known. At no time did I witness a comment directed from one student to another when it was to do with the lesson, except in the grade eight to ten class which was mainly non-Athapaskan. Neither was I aware of any "cheating" by helping each other with answers in the Athapaskan classes.

The lack of communication and in some cases, complete silence of some students effectively masked their academic abilities, personalities and feelings, giving me a distorted view. Particularly in the equivalency class, it was necessary for me to review my assessment of students I thought of as shy or withdrawn because of silent reactions. Further experience with them, especially if it were personal and alone, indicated more confidence and ability than I had initially suspected.

I based initial assessment and further evaluation on the give-and-take of communication in the classroom. Individual levels of literacy were not easy to determine because of the lack of oral and written communication and resistance to producing work. For instance in the learning centre, Dora, (who said in her journal that she was bored with what we were doing because she had done the work before and she was "getting tired of doing these stuff over and over") never showed in the other writing that she produced or in her oral responses that her abilities were beyond the work assigned.

In the learning centre, I once requested assistance from the co-ordinator to communicate to the students what she and I felt was their responsibility for learning. It was responded to very well at the next lesson. Along with a high level of potential learning indicators, I recorded in my

journal:

Dolly must have done a great job on these students!...they actually responded, co-operated, smiled, and learned today.

The exercise included group peer response, but it soon became apparent that they were displaying their work only to me. They would not criticize each other's work when asked or contribute to the writing on the board. The exchange resulting from the work was only between me and the one student at the board, although attempts were made to have the other students discuss the composition. Communication seemed difficult even under these positive circumstances.

5.1.3. Group Resistance Behaviour: Pressures and Responsibilities

Yvonne was a former residential school student who had received all her formal schooling away from home. As the one evening class student, she said in her journal that she was:

not a very good person to work with in a group, because I've always got this feeling of not wanting to ridicule my work, from childhood days, I guess--always taking a chair in the back row.

Yvonne expressed a common fear of exposing herself to ridicule and embarrassment by being called upon to make a contribution to the group as a whole.

Group development and responsibility is stressed in most adult education; peer group input and group response are important aspects of the process-oriented approach to writing instruction. Although group discussions were attempted regularly, they were generally unsuccessful in raising involvement in the instruction except with the grade eight to ten class. I expected the latter would have the most experience working as a group, and the non-Athapaskans would be fairly sophisticated in their responses to group techniques such as brainstorming and peer response, enjoying the group action. The two native boys in this class, however, contributed little or nothing, even when called upon directly. One of these boys would sometimes join in the crowd when rampant joking was taking place, but he was generally ignored by the others when he did this. Tony, the other, was not shy, appearing self-confident and simply choosing not to take part in the general joking.

Pairing seemed less threatening than group work, whether it was with a teacher/student or student/student combination. It was the one reliable method which clearly resulted in accommodation behaviour and a high level of potential learning indicators.

Students "voting with their feet" by being unpunctual or not attending was one of the greatest problems experienced with the teaching in Bear River. Most absences probably arose by individual choice, but the problem was so universal that I chose to call it a group response since particular incidents were sometimes shared by all students in the class, and absenteeism was carried out by nearly everyone at one time or another.

The least expected example of absenteeism was with the evening class which was organized in response to the interest shown in it by the Indian Band office staff. The course had been advertised prior to my arrival in the community and discussion had taken place personally with many of the staff. A meeting had been held in which six staff members signed up to the course. Five other possible students were gathered from the school, the learning centre, and other offices. I felt that to be realistic, I could expect a class of six or eight but I was prepared for twelve. The first night only two students appeared. That number quickly reduced down to the regular attendance of only one.

I anticipated that attendance at the two school classes would be more regular, but late arrivals were always the order of the day, becoming more frequent as time passed and they realized I was not going to police them. Attendance at

the learning centre was also unexpectedly poor. Attendance dropped dramatically during the week that Dolly went to Whitehorse for training. The day she returned, all six students re-appeared at the centre. The incentive of group pressure should have resulted in a fair rate of attendance, but had the opposite affect. Since attendance was sporadic by all but one of the students, any peer pressure actually worked against regular attendance.

Apart from simply not wanting to come, there were many possible reasons for lack of attendance as pointed out to me by several people from the Band office and in the community. These ranged from the time of year (spring is notoriously a time for absences because of the warmer weather), to other more important commitments such as meetings or trips to Whitehorse, to babysitting problems. The fact that baby-sitters were scarce, expensive, and unreliable affected almost every woman at the learning centre. However, a firm long-term effort to organize a group solution to child care problems was not evident.

The incident of absenteeism that was chosen for case study interpretation was an incident that occurred three times at the learning centre in the weeks of the research. Behind absenteeism at certain regular times was an unspoken tradition that the day after arrival of training allowance cheques was a holiday. Dolly had, by her own admission,

given up on trying to control attendance at this time. She had begun by withholding a day's allowance for the day missed but this, even when carefully explained and justified by her, did not change the "cheque holiday". She used signing in and out as a means of displaying attendance but this was quickly ignored and became what she saw as harassment by herself of students with whom she wished to be friendly and helpful. Having tried her best, Dolly simply accepted the undeclared holiday the day after the cheques arrived and organized her teaching around it.

5.1.4. Literate and Scholarly Resistance Behaviour: Learning Through Literacy

For the product-orientation approach I used worksheets for grammar and mechanics; these were usually met with visible relief from nearly all students. They seemed to be a comfortable, familiar activity which required little active application of thought. Often the work done on the worksheets was of good standard but it was apparent that little of this learning was applied to new situations. When the same grammatical concept was encountered in actual writing, the knowledge "learned" was not transferred to the composition at hand. For example, the learning centre students all did well on worksheets for sentence fragments and run-ons but the greatest number of errors were made in their writing in this area, sometimes on the same day as the

worksheet exercise. Reminders had to be made often about punctuation and capitalization rules although these were consistently done well on the worksheets. Little improvement was observed in later writing.

As part of the instruction I tried to stimulate thinking and writing beyond simple description. In using classification, simple exercises were responded to actively in the lesson, but when it was necessary to apply the concept to writing it was not often done. For example, students at the learning centre were asked to make lists of items for sale and classify them under a heading (e.g. beds and chairs might be classified under the heading furniture) in a sign to be posted locally. Most of the students did not list enough items to categorize, such as:

FOR SALE: T.V. \$120 and stereo \$50. In good working conditions. See owner.

Some used categories that were too broad:

FOR SALE: furnitures, clothing, kittchin stuff.

Evaluative thinking was required of all the students since I requested that they contribute to the planning of the lessons by telling me their preferences for a process or product approach. The responses were often disappointing and

inadequate. Most of the students passively co-operated with the request by responding with something, but they did not think very deeply about their responses, nor elaborate on them to any great extent:

The difference between the ideas and grammar of writing is that on wednsdays we get to choose our own ideas on what we are writing.

The dictation I don't mind it I guess but its sort of a pain.

I perfere the marking.

I like bother grammar of writing because its cool.

Gramar, why? had more fun today than yesterday.

The use of journals as thinking and writing tools to discuss preference was approached by all students so cautiously as to constitute further evidence of resistance. For instance, Lisa avoided making a determination on which kind of marking she preferred, written comments or a number grade, for two weeks of journal entries and my questions back to her, (during which she wrote with complete neutrality that she preferred "the marking"). I was finally rewarded with: "I perfere the number grade."

Class writing assignments also displayed direct evidence of resistance. Twice in the grade eight to ten class I tried to make grammar lessons playful by having students play a sentence completion game. Pairs would first compose the subject of a sentence, then pass the paper along to the next pair, who would compose the verb and then the third pair would compose the completion of the sentence. The game became a sensational hit, provoking long and loud giggles. The results of the game both times were consistently violent and vulgar. For example (actual names were used in the original, but have been changed here):

Old Lindstrum the bald headed fairy queen jumps around pulling his wang.

John had the smallest penis in the world which smelled like diahrea.

Gloria and her crack are outrageously big while she use a dildoe and pole to get the feeling.

Neither of the two Athapaskan boys seemed comfortable with the results of these sentences. The second time the exercise was used, the more active students had asked to do it as a reward for working since it was the last day of

class. Tony, usually the quietest student, suddenly became angry although he had remained silent until then. It was a shock to hear him say very loudly three times: "I don't want to do this!" I wanted to point out the implications of their responses to the group, so persisted in carrying on with the exercise. Finally I told Tony that he could sit in the hall if he didn't want to take part, and he did so eagerly. I went to see him once to let him know he could come back into the class if he wanted to, but he refused, adding that he didn't like what the class was writing. As I was leaving after the class one of the teachers expressed surprise to me that Tony had been out in the hall. I said to him that it was not so much me sending him out as Tony doing it for his own survival and suddenly realized the truth in what I had said. I quickly ran after Tony and told him that I thought he was quite right in his decision to leave the class, that I was impressed with what he did and that I also hated the results of the exercise. He was pleasantly astonished that a teacher would speak to him as frankly as I did, and he went away smiling broadly.

Resistance to literate and scholarly behaviour was observed in other indirect applications of learning as well. For instance, there was little note-taking and this was done only when students were specifically directed to do so. Students consulted dictionaries only as a last resort when I refused to answer questions about word meanings or spelling.

Although a thesaurus was introduced and was familiar to most of the students, they never voluntarily used it. New vocabulary or spelling was not integrated into students' writing.

5.1.5. Summary

Data gathered for this study showed that students' predominant response to the composition instruction was resistance. This resistance appeared in most individual, group, and scholarly/academic behaviours, as evidenced by the incidents described above. In all the settings of the instruction and in all three categories of behaviour recorded there were few indications that students were involved in a learning process. Requesting or producing work that was not in the lesson was unheard of. With one exception, no one displayed enough active interest in the subject at hand to ask further questions or request elaboration. There was little evidence that writing had changed its incidental role in the students' lives outside the classroom.

CHAPTER VI

INTERPRETATIONS

6.1. Why Resistance?

The findings reported in the preceding chapter indicated that the main response of a small number of native ESL literacy students to innovative composition was resistance. The present chapter considers two possible explanations for this response of resistance, (1) cultural differences and (2) ideological action.

This chapter first interprets the findings in regard to Athapaskan cultural traits as indicated in the literature to determine if the resistance may logically have resulted from cultural influences. The second part of this chapter interprets the findings from Giroux and Aronowitz's (1985) ideological perspective. Giroux and Aronowitz propose that analyzing resistance behaviour makes it possible to recognize how dominated students through acts of resistance "draw on the limited resources at their disposal in order to reaffirm the positive dimensions of their own cultures and histories" (p. 107). This perspective provides understanding of resistance behaviours as reflective of social relations in the community. The two interpretations are presented for each of the three categories of student resistance behaviour.

documented: individual, group, and literate and scholarly behaviours.

6.2. Cultural Interpretation

6.2.1. Individual Resistance Behaviour: Cultural Communication

Scollon and Scollon (1981) note that education in traditional Athapaskan life is not based in an institution isolated from the older generation but is situated in the heart of the family, in a narrative communication structure with the learner observing and listening to elders. For Athapaskans, knowledge must be passed on in such a way that it is contextualized in the experience of the listener. The skill of the narrator is challenged to meet the needs of the listener in order to be heard and understood, since knowledge which is given can be taken or rejected at will (p.101). According to Scollon (1987) it "is a structure that is jointly produced by everyone who is a party to the interaction" (p.29). In the Western approach, knowledge is viewed as true and complete in itself, and is seldom subjected to the recipient's interpretation or response. The contrast between the two education structures could not be greater.

The students in the case study readily understood the

concept of audience, reflecting their narrative experiences where the person listening has a direct stake in the process of story telling. This understanding may also point to a reason for the failure of communication through journals. I was the audience of the journal writing, but it was an impersonal involvement, and distant in time. I requested that the students decontextualize the journal audience to a non-specific reader or to themselves, which may have been difficult for them because of Athapaskan expectations for contextualization of audience.

McDonnell (1975) states that to fully sense Athapaskan social organization an understanding of the importance of personal autonomy is "critical" (p.122). McDonnell relates this to the Athapaskan process of acquiring special knowledge and power (which is the object of life). The person is not credited with wisdom due to ability; it is acquired through means which are beyond control. For men, knowledge and power are communicated alone in a struggle with animal-people over whom a mere human has little say. For a woman, wisdom and control of hostile forces come slowly with experience, also due to no ability on her part. Interference or assistance by another person would not alter and may even harm the result. A consequence of the belief in indirect acquisition of knowledge, according to McDonnell, is deep respect for the individuality of others and protection of one's own autonomy.

Because of the necessity of autonomy, the students at Bear River may not have believed that help from other students would be worthwhile, resenting the interference in their learning of someone who they did not see as having any right or special knowledge. They may not have wanted to help another student out of respect for that person's autonomy of action. They may have seen their assistance in my design of the teaching as inappropriate for the same reasons. The lack of interference in other students' display of resistance, and the success of one-to-one instruction noted in the findings may be directly attributable to the importance of individual autonomy in Athapaskan culture.

Western classroom techniques rely on verbal display of knowledge by the student. Students are required to progressively test their absorption of the incremental steps of knowledge in the belief that one learns by making mistakes. In contrast, Athapaskans attempt a skill only when it is felt that it has been learned (Scollon and Scollon 1981, p.18). Athapaskans find a display of error doubly wrong. First it is wrong because one must wait until the learning is complete before testing it out and secondly, it is wrong inherently, bringing bad luck by speaking about uncertain things (since speaking is a powerful act). Knowledge and power lie within the individual and the person will know when it is time to use them.

In further contrast, Scollon and Scollon (1981) observe that the person in the subordinate position of the Athapaskan social structure is expected to be the spectator and the person in the superordinate position is expected to display (1981, p.161). Techniques I attempted to implement such as participatory research and student-centred learning invert a top-down power structure relationship between teacher/researcher and student by having the direction come from the student. The Athapaskan power structure is broken, making students uncertain whose role it is to listen, and whose to display.

Scollon and Scollon (1981) observe that Athapaskan speakers pause just slightly longer than English speakers between turns, showing deep respect for the speaker's right to continue speaking. Pausing long enough for students to assimilate questions and formulate requested replies is noted in pedagogical research as a problem within teaching generally. With Athapaskan discourse patterns, it is even more a hindrance to classroom communication. To a non-Athapaskan, taciturnity and silence can be hostile withdrawal, shyness, or even stupidity. Often when I was greeted with silence I classed it as resistance. Perhaps it had less severe implications for my students, being the result of Athapaskan discourse patterns.

In my journal I commented in the equivalency class that

they seemed to be "struggling to learn", which to me was showing accommodation. The belief that learning is not done without some amount of effort contrasts sharply with the gentle Athapaskan traditional education process, based on a profound regard for the individual intelligence of the learner. Learning is seen to be accomplished when the individual knows the right time has come, and will then be done almost effortlessly.

6.2.2. Group Resistance Behaviour: Cultural Pressures and Responsibilities

In Athapaskan culture the right of each person to autonomy allows free will on the part of the individual to choose a path, and to let others choose theirs. A direct result of the respect for individuality is stress in group situations. This is first mentioned by Honigsmann (1949) in his anthropological study of the Kaska, and by Balikci (1968) in similar work with the Kutchin of the northern Yukon, also Athapaskan. Nelson (1973) confirms the Athapaskan "inability to develop a real sense of community" due to being "pervasively individualistic" and records a "high level of interpersonal hostility" from being forced to live together in villages (p.281). Social competence is based on one's ability to avoid conflict and to survive individually, not on the ability to merge with others. In non-Athapaskan society, one person is not independent of another, nor is survival

assured independently, as it can be for the traditional Athapaskans if necessary. Indeed, one means of coping with stress in Athapaskan society is to isolate oneself from company by leaving the community, sometimes for weeks at a time (Balikci 1968).

Athapaskan autonomy and the stress felt from group contact contrasts sharply with bureaucratic and technological structures which are found in present-day education. In adult education group formation is sought. Western Christianity values individual responsibility to the group and towards the actions of others. The concerns of the individual are placed at a lower priority than those of the group; collective action is viewed as more potent than the action of each individual. The findings reported in Chapter V show that my attempts to utilize group pressures and responsibilities in the classes in Bear River failed or produced only superficial responses. The successful use of pairing and individualized tutoring in the classroom was understood when the pair was looked upon not as a small group, but as a one-on-one teaching technique emphasizing the individual autonomy of each student.

In traditional Athapaskan society, while taking part in a struggle with animal-people for acquisition of special knowledge, actions no matter how bizarre were not the responsibility of the person involved (Cruikshank 1988).

Hostility by Lisa or Dora in the learning centre class was tolerated or ignored by the group and no excuse was necessary, or it was explicable because they were unhappy. Actions while influenced by outside powers were possibly not perceived to be the responsibility of the individual, nor of the group.

6.2.3. Literate and Scholarly Resistance Behaviour: Learning Culture Through Literacy

Learning to be literate and scholarly entails more than acquiring the skills of reading and writing (see Brice Heath, 1984). It also calls for learning the forms of thought of a society, of how that society manipulates discourse, and of all the social trappings of the schooling through which literacy is taught.

Ong (1982) states that:

in functionally oral cultures the past is not felt as an itemized terrain, peppered with verifiable and disputed "facts" or bits of information. It is the domain of the ancestors, a resonant source for renewing awareness of present existence, which itself is not an itemized terrain either. Orality knows no lists or charts of figures. (p.98)

The instruction that I attempted in Bear River was designed as a totally contrasting terrain to that of Athapaskan oral culture, whose structures of information and organization of content differ greatly from literate English structures--and are in Scollon and Scollon's view, "mutually exclusive of the discourse patterns of essayist prose" (1981, p.53). Where interethnic oral communication patterns produce social conflict between speakers, these same patterns may produce internal conflict in Athapaskan writers, challenging their very sense of culture.

My attempts to have students contribute opinions and discuss points inevitably resulted in resistance. According to Ong (1982), the decontextualized rhetorical tradition of the Western world which has coloured logic and education for centuries is related to the Greek tendency to "maximize oppositions in the mental as in the extramental world" (p.111). In the Athapaskan effort to minimize opposition, argument is avoided as respect for another's right to autonomy but also as protection from the hostility of others and protection of one's own individual strength. McDonnell (1975) says Athapaskans would rather say nothing than to say "no" to a proposal and to separate than argue. Negotiation is avoided and discussion of a proposed action is not initiated until consensus is gathered through oblique methods (p.310).

6.2.4. Summary

A cultural interpretation offers a possible explanation for resistance behaviours by Athapaskan students in response to composition instruction in Bear River. Individualism basic to Athapaskan cultural structures may not only underlie the difficulties in personal communication in the classroom but may also present a reason for the lack of success in group activities. The reliance on literacy as a means to educate the orally-based Athapaskan culture may affect it profoundly and may be a reason for resistance.

Brody (1987) says that in northern hunting societies, "egalitarian individualism is at the heart of social integrity and wellbeing" (p.133) and that:

the individualism of the culture is a barrier against any form of organized domination; the egalitarianism a barricade against competitive individualism. (p.123)

Athapaskan cultural survival may be supported by resistance which displays rejection of a completely different cultural learning context. Recognizing education as a foreign cultural message-bearer, students in Bear River may have logically resisted this intrusion.

6.2.5. Limitations to the Cultural Interpretation

As intriguing as a cultural interpretation of resistance may be, it does not offer a full and sufficient explanation. Students' responses to the instruction should, from this view, have been far more consistent and predictable given the shared culture in the same situation. However, the data gathered for the research showed that some individuals chose resistance while others did not in the same situation, indicating that factors other than culture may have been in play. For instance, Lisa's lack of communication in the learning centre was not shared by any of the others in the class at the time. Some of these same students were at a different time influenced by resistance behaviour by another student and contributed to it, choosing to be influenced by group pressures rather than following the cultural imperative of non-involvement.

There was often more overt resistance recorded from the non-Athapaskan students, who shared the school's cultural background and objectives, than the Athapaskans in the same class. This indicates that cultural differences may be only one basis for resistance.

An important indication that cultural influences may not be the only factor in resistance was the existence of accommodation behaviour. When resistance was observed, there

was sometimes in the same situation accommodation behaviour by other Athapaskan students. Molly, for instance, despite personal embarrassment to do so, introduced herself to me on my request the first day of class while no one else did. A fuller explanation of resistance behaviours in the findings may be possible through looking at it as rejection of the social and political (ideological) domination by the non-native population.

6.3. Ideological Interpretation

6.3.1. Introduction

This section interprets selected findings in the three categories of resistance behaviours using Giroux and Aronowitz's (1985) proposed definition of resistance as ideologically-based.

Numerous sources suggest that individual choice is a strong cultural value for Athapaskans. Social dilemmas of Indian people in Bear River, such as drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, family breakdown, violent death and general anomie, can be looked upon as a turning-inwards of the stress resulting from lack of choice and loss of control over decisions affecting daily life (Yates 1987). Freedom to choose the direction and quality of one's own life within reasonable limitations and to practice the values that shape

those choices is a condition basic to human development. When freedom to express values through choice of action is withdrawn, as in the case of a dominated culture, the result is extreme stress, but also resistance to the dominating force. Resistance to unreasonable domination is inevitable if the human spirit is to survive under domination, yet it is also a demonstration of hope that gives dominated people cause to believe that change is possible.

6.3.2. Framework for an Ideological Interpretation

In attempting to establish a definition and a rationale for the notion of resistance, Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) critique reproduction and resistance education theories for focusing on overt acts of rebellious student behaviour. They claim that resistance has "little to do with deviance and learned helplessness, but a great deal to do with moral and political indignation" (p.104). They say that resistance must not become a term for every expression of oppositional behaviour and propose that it is important to determine what constitutes resistance behaviour. Oppositional behaviour must be defined in relation to the interest it serves and analyzed to see if it represents a form of resistance by determining the degree of emancipation in it:

The central element of analyzing any act of resistance must be a concern with uncovering the degree to which

it highlights, implicitly or explicitly, the need to struggle against domination and submission...the concept of resistance must have a revealing function that contains a critique of domination and provides theoretical opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interests of social and self-emancipation (p.105).

They add further what resistance is not:

To the degree that oppositional behaviour suppresses social contradictions while simultaneously merging with, rather than challenging the logic of ideological domination, it does not fall under the category of resistance, but under its opposite--accommodation and conformism. (ibid.)

Certain findings of this research reported in Chapter V can be interpreted within Giroux and Aronowitz's ideological definition of resistance or accommodation and conformism. So that confusion can be avoided in the terminology, "conformism" is used rather than "accommodation" to describe what Giroux and Aronowitz call acts that are not resistance, since I use the term "accommodation" in a less complex way in reporting the findings of this research. The findings noted here have been chosen through three criteria: (1) they reveal a choice of action to conform to or to resist domination; (2)

the choice has been made to resist and that choice has been clearly communicated; (3) the choice reveals a possibility of critical action. In order to exclude the possibility of the behaviour being culturally-based, data have been chosen which are clearly not grounded in Athapaskan values. Giroux and Aronowitz emphasize the dialectical or contradictory nature of resistance behaviour--that the same act can contain elements of both resistance and conformism. As well as criticizing resistance theories for their failure to understand the contradictory or dialectical nature of resistance and their focus on overt acts of rebellious behaviour, Giroux and Aronowitz critique resistance theories in two other areas: their lack of taking into account issues of gender and race and their lack of attention to the effect of domination on personality.

6.3.3. Individual Resistance Behaviour: Ideological Communication

Dora's aggressive communicative actions first in the computer room and then in the classroom in the learning centre clearly fit into the common definition of oppositional action. This event displays the dialectical nature of resistance, as an example of Giroux and Aronowitz's conformism rather than resistance. Dora had a choice of continuing to exercise opposition to joining the class or conforming to my pressure while she was at the computer. She chose the latter, and came into the class. Because of this

unsatisfactory conforming action she found it necessary to make it clear that she rejected my domination of her choice to be involved or not and displayed aggressive action. When I did not conform to the oppressive possibilities and respond by confrontation, the episode did not escalate.

The interpretation that Dora's initial aggressive action was not resistance but conformism as defined by Giroux and Aronowitz is strengthened when one considers the necessity of resistance to consist of critical action toward emancipatory possibilities leading to what Giroux and Aronowitz term "opportunities for self-reflection and struggle in the interests of social and self-emancipation". Her action of not communicating left no opportunity for reflection about the situation.

Dora made her rejection of my involvement in her personal decisions much clearer in the writing in her journal, coming closer there to an act of resistance. Taking the chance of discussing her problem through her journal may have led to an opportunity for self-reflection and self-emancipation. She wrote decisively that she wanted to solve her problem herself, but softened it with the reason of being bored. This action displayed an opening for possible critical action.

6.3.4. Group Resistance Behaviour: Ideological Pressures and Responsibilities

Was the action by the learning centre group of taking a day off on receipt of training allowance cheques resistance according to Giroux and Aronowitz? The cheque holiday showed a choice by the group to resist direct pressure by Dolly to attend. The group used her need to display support towards them, and simply ignored her good advice or threats until Dolly capitulated and let them have a holiday without fear of reprisals, displaying rejection of domination by the college. In this, they fit into Giroux and Aronowitz's definition of resistance, by revealing a critique of domination.

Critical action in the situation was not only possible, but was taken by the students. They acted in a way that produced the result wanted, giving them the break they felt they deserved at the symbolic time of reward for attendance, cheque day. Some of them had previously been employed and had not taken unofficial holidays on the job after receiving paycheques, according to general community opinion. When the result would probably be losing a job, it seems that similar action was not taken, but when they could rely on the good feelings of Dolly, they chose to take advantage of the "emancipatory possibilities."

6.3.5. Literate and Scholarly Resistance Behaviour: Learning Ideology Through Literacy

In the display of violent sexual writing which was resisted by one Athapaskan student, there are two instances of resistance to be examined: the class response to the exercise and Tony's reaction to it. I examine each of these separately. The class writing and enthusiasm for it displayed a choice of action to resist which was clearly communicated in the product of the exercise and in the hilarity surrounding it. Superficially, it reveals a critique of the domination of the oppressive school structure since many of the written comments were about teachers. However when looked at more closely, by Giroux and Aronowitz's definition, this incident reveals less of a critique of domination than conformism to sexual violence which feeds into gender domination. My attempts to have the students assess the implications of their statements resulted in some slight embarrassment but only took the edge off the fun rather than helping them to reject the action. Although this might indicate that critical action was possible if the same thing was attempted in future, the event at the time recorded ended in true conformism, "suppressing social contradictions while simultaneously merging with, rather than challenging the logic of ideological domination", as Giroux and Aronowitz describe it (1985, p.105).

Tony's action was more clearly resistance according to Giroux and Aronowitz's definitions. Putting Tony in the hallway showed my conformism to the norm of the dominating school system, in which he was expected to do what he was told. Paradoxically for both of us, he was punished for something I ultimately agreed with. Tony took critical action in the situation by agreeing to leave and by refusing to come back into the class when invited. He was willing to suffer the embarrassment of being seen in the hallway, which was unusual for him, rather than being pressured into taking part in something he did not see as valuable. His courageous action was a critique of the students' and my own conformism and domination. The action showed more than simply "possibilities of emancipatory action", but was an emancipatory action itself.

6.3.6. Advantages and Limitations to an Ideological Interpretation

This ideological interpretation assumes that there is a common human need to hold beliefs and values which form a basis for choice of action, and a need to practice these in day to day living with some amount of freedom from being dominated by others' beliefs and values. This general humanist approach gives a more inclusive basis of analysis than a cultural one for interpretation of the findings in this case study, illustrated here by the reference to

selected findings which are clearly not culturally-based phenomena.

An ideological interpretation opens up a supportive position for acts of resistance, viewing them not as unthinking destructive acts of rebellion, or as unchanging entrenched cultural phenomena, but as a courageous defence of values possibly leading to constructive dialogue and change. It assumes an active position by those persons who are dominated in society and institutions, allowing for challenge to subjugation.

Giroux and Aronowitz's inclusive humanist basis of analysis is framed by a definition of resistance rooted in the purpose of acts of resistance. Resistance must be seen from the "degree to which it highlights the need to struggle", and must have a "revealing function", "critiquing domination" and allowing for "opportunities for self-reflection and social and self-emancipation" (1985, p.105). The existence of acts of what I have termed accommodation are not acknowledged as holding liberating possibilities. While these exacting restrictions give clear direction, they limit the analysis to the point where action which might be called resistance was rare, making the application of this theoretical base problematic.

Classroom findings of resistance in this case study can

be productively interpreted through ideological analysis, but even more important for this study is the basis for resistance found in the community context in which the research took place. The history and present day social conditions of Bear River as illustrated in Chapter IV make resistance an inevitable outcome. The educational and other institutions in Bear River not only ensure the reproduction of a non-Athapaskan culture, but also reinforce social and political domination by non-Athapaskans (see Mallea, 1989). Opportunity seemingly exists for native people in Bear River to alter economic and social conditions, but an oppressive structure of built-in failure and control through the non-Athapaskan minority's institutions from the larger society ensure that change is not readily available.

However, ideological resistance by natives has resulted in the establishment of power structures in venues such as local native economic development, Indian Band political structures reflecting local traditions, native media programs, and in local systems with direct responsibility for social issues such as child care and substance abuse programs. These native-run institutions, the result of ideological resistance, may prove to be more effective in the long term than resistance in the schools since control by non-Athapaskans is not as pervasive in these areas as in education.

6.4. Summary

This chapter has shown that a cultural interpretation of the resistance behaviour reported in the findings should not stand alone. A more complete interpretation of the findings appears in a definition of resistance which reveals the roots of resistance behaviour to be in the rejection of domination as posited by Giroux and Aronowitz (1985). Nonetheless only certain findings fit with Giroux and Aronowitz's definition of resistance, demonstrating the dialectical nature of resistance wherein the same act contains elements of resistance as well as conformism.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Summary of Findings and Interpretations

In answering the research question how native adult ESL literacy students in the particular context of Bear River respond to innovative composition instruction, this case study has shown that they responded to nearly all instruction with resistance, as evidenced by data gathered from the classrooms and the community context. Although these findings are exploratory, descriptive and tentative, there is much evidence that Bear River is an extreme example of cultural and ideological subjugation. The total experience of the Athapaskan community of Bear River was not in the past and is not now a supportive, productive one. The Bear River history of cultural and social domination by non-Athapaskans is still evident in the modern demographic and educational statistics and descriptions. This nomadic society has lost forever a viable way of life that assured survival both physically and culturally. It has been replaced by a sedentary community that is controlled by non-Athapaskans, split between races, substance-dependent, with few chances for employment leading either to financial stability or personal fulfillment. The results of all these social ills

are readily apparent, literacy rates being only one measurement.

Cultural impact has been met with dramatic change in Athapaskan society but also with hidden and (more recently) overt opposition. This thesis illustrates that resistance can be rooted in cultural conflict but that cultural differences are not the sole explanation for native resistance in Bear River. The natural, inevitable human response to domination is resistance and this can be due not only to cultural influences but ideological ones as well.

The assumption that cultural impact and change is the only cause of resistance behaviour would imply that by extension, resistance should not be a problem with native students once cultural domination is complete and we need only to show respect for cultural differences and wait out the time of cultural synthesis. Apart from thus ignoring the fact of resistance in the non-native students, the main implication of this perspective would be to continue to feed into the domination already in place. Instructor response which is informed by an ideological interpretation of resistance behaviour may lead to understanding not only the cultural but the social and political definitions through which students see themselves and may lead ultimately to a more democratic learning situation.

Giroux and McLaren (1986) state that:

schools should prepare students for making choices regarding forms of life that have morally different consequences. This means that educators must replace pedagogical practices which emphasize disciplinary control and one-sided character formation with practices that are based on an emancipatory authority, ones which enable students to engage in critical analysis and to make choices regarding what interests and knowledge claims are most desirable and morally appropriate for living in a just and democratic state (p.225).

From this dialogue and mutual understanding hopefully may develop the need for students and educators to jointly take part in action to erode the social and political domination that permeates the present relationship of native people to education.

7.2. Personal Reflections

Understanding the basis of the resistance recorded in Bear River as ideological as well as cultural brought to my instruction a new dimension. Supportive actions on my part would have remained unexplored if the interpretations of the resistance data had not been applied. In an effort to

increase the learning potential of students I used the interpretations of data that I was beginning to make to point directions for teaching. As I began to base immediate responses in the classroom on what I saw as the reasons for resistance behaviour, I began to react less emotionally and with a more professional attitude.

If I saw the resistance I was encountering in Bear River as being culturally-based, I would view the situation more clearly from the students' perspective and was able to adjust to it. If I considered it to be based in ideological concerns, I began to see resistance as something impersonal and inevitable in the situation, not to be confronted but to be used as a focus for learning possibilities on both sides. I began to reinforce what I defined as accommodation behaviour whenever possible by pointing out how it was benefitting learning and to discuss more often when I found something offensive, particularly when it fit with Giroux and Aronowitz's definition of conformism.

For instance, in the second attempt at the sentence completion exercise for the grade eight to tens that ended in violent sexual images, I made deliberate attempts to have the students look at their actions and be critical of what I saw as sexist behaviour rather than dismissing the products of their writing or ending the exercise. I let them know that as a woman I found the violence repugnant, and asked the boys

how they felt about their being made fun of. It was too short a lesson to have any direct results, but I noted in my journal that the second time I used the lesson (when I began to question their sentences) the aggressive behaviour was more subdued than the first time.

Mallea (1989) in discussing Giroux's work on resistance theory observes that:

Resistance is an active process involving interactions between lived experiences and the institutions and structures that attempt to shape them. It is a political act that involves actors, processes and structures internal and external to the educational system (p.47).

Nowhere in modern Athapaskan society is the possibility of resistance to cultural and ideological domination more possible and apparent than in educational institutions. These institutions carry with them not the solutions to the Athapaskan dilemma but the perpetuation of their subjugation. Through education Athapaskans have suffered the determined efforts of non-Athapaskans to assimilate them to a foreign culture and to a passive existence. Education is correctly seen as the implement of the dominant majority for the continuance of the status quo. It is suggested in this thesis that educators should take an active part in

dismantling this structure in concert with their students.

7.3. Implications for Pedagogy

This thesis presents only one teacher's view as a participant-observer/instructor of her own and others' behaviour in a sometimes quite emotional setting. Clearly the interpretive case study presented is a preliminary investigation into the broad scope of native Indian nonparticipation in literacy and reasons for resistance in native education. The findings and interpretations in the study are descriptive and tentative, as findings in resistance research generally are, and in need of clarity as critiqued by Giroux and Aronowitz (1985).

That being said, it is still possible and important to infer implications from the findings in this thesis which should be valuable to the field of adult native literacy pedagogy particularly in the North. The case study has pointed out the inadequacy of the cultural interpretation of events found in the research. This implies that current cross-cultural analyses of education such as that done by Scollon and Scollon (1981), Watson-Gegeo (1988), and John (1972) which contrast one culture with another in the hopes of discovering what "they" do and what "we" do in certain circumstances is of limited value to pedagogy. It is apparent that attempts at altering approaches in methodology

and curriculum to suit another culture's learning process can be done only to a restricted degree since the education system which is used is itself a cultural entity that has its own parameters and constraints on change. The thesis points out that at least for the constantly-changing cultural environment of the North, any in-depth research of cultural details will only be partially applicable at any one time for any one group in any one place. The research done here suggests that a cultural analysis of native education may moreover support democratically distasteful manipulation of students through attempts at reforming the dominant system without real changes being made in the social and political relationship between the cultures. It also suggests that much is yet to be learned from resistance behaviour of students from the same culture as the education system which may be applied to all cultures.

Process-oriented research and pedagogy to this point have not been concerned with the cultural and social factors of composition instruction, having been conducted mainly with motivated pre-university students (see Raimes, 1985 and Zamel, 1983). The cultural and ideological interpretations of resistance behaviour in this thesis suggest that adult writing instruction needs to confront more directly the issues causing resistance to literacy acquisition in the community contexts. Culture is only one part of the complex social interchange which constitutes a cross-cultural

classroom. There are implications here for the individual composition teacher and for teacher education. Understanding is needed by instructors of the forces that shape education as a social institution as indicated by Folds (1989), Ryan (1989) and McLaughlin (1989). Training is needed in applying ideological analysis to a local situation. Teacher education pedagogy should be examined in the light of proposals outlined by Giroux and McLaren (1986) for a democratically-based education. This research also implies that skills not usually associated with the teaching process as it is now practiced may need to be taught in teacher education such as group dynamics, counselling skills, and methods of social and psychological analysis.

This thesis does not imply that merely interpreting resistance behaviour from one or another perspective means that the behaviour is then controlled or made to be more productive. Giroux and Aronowitz (1985) and Quigley (1990) support the view reached in this thesis in concluding that recognition and analysis of the causes of resistance together with the resisting students should lead to a greater understanding of social conditions and eventually to emancipatory action to change conditions from a joint student/educator position of strength and knowledge. But resistance is not a phenomenon restricted to education, as indicated by the exploration of the community context in the case study and as suggested by writers such as Carnoy and

Levin (1976). It would be presumptuous to propose that education can change resistance in the larger social context. However, the critical and political process of dialogue should in and of itself be a catalyst for change if only at a local level since it is capable of generating a productive teaching methodology as indicated by the work of Wallerstein (1983) and Shor (1987). Literacy education, because of its intricate association with the culture and social strata of those most dominated in our society may be seen as being obligated to pursue ideological analyses with its students.

7.4. Further Research

These broad implications indicate a number of specific directions for future research in Northern native adult literacy pedagogy. The framework of Giroux and Aronowitz's challenge to resistance research leads to the conclusion, underlined in this thesis, that much more work must be done in educational research to document the dialectical nature of resistance, expanding analyses to include acts of accommodation. More examination also needs to be devoted to the issues of gender and race and to explore the effect of domination on personality. Northern native literacy provides a rich ground of data for this kind of inquiry.

Neither adult literacy education nor native education have been priorities for policy makers who look first to

reform in the school for answers to literacy questions. Research on the reasons for this neglect, the status of adult literacy education as a profession, and how educators can take up the challenge of lifelong education for native peoples within a context of native languages, culture and control are some of the important research areas that need exploring in northern Canada. A greater understanding is needed of the impact on northern native peoples of residential school learning, of moving from an oral to a literate learning and communicative process, of the loss of family involvement in education, of the educational contribution possible through aboriginal bilingualism and elders' influence on values.

Cultural analysis of the findings in this thesis implies that the Athapaskan cultural imperative of autonomy for the individual exaggerates the universal human need for freedom of choice of action in society. This needs to be accounted for more fully in educational research with Northern Athapaskans. A particular focus could assess how current composition pedagogy restricts or confounds this need when group methods are used in adult education.

Virtually all composition instruction for Northern Athapaskans is now done by instructors who are not Athapaskan, nor native from other parts of Canada. These instructors are seldom from a lower social strata and are usually transient in the community with little local

commitment. The cultural influence of the non-native middle-class professional instructor on composition instruction for northern Athapaskans is another area for future research.

This thesis indicates that despite the restrictions of self-examination, illuminative self-reflective data can be produced by a participant-observation approach which carefully documents and assesses classroom and community contexts. One of the most important and direct implications of the present exploratory case study, and a logical next step following the study, is that research in this cross-cultural setting would be more effective and comprehensive if done over a longer period of time with a fuller ethnographic approach. This study also points out that serious consideration should be taken of Lather's (1986) recommendation for catalytic validity and Jackson's (1987) criticism of problem-posing pedagogy. The present type of research on innovative teaching practice needs to be socially accountable by demonstrating that students and community members can apply insights acquired through such research.

The application to northern Athapaskan composition pedagogy of what is already known about the social underpinnings of literacy and transformational curriculum design is essential. Systematic research is especially lacking in native adult literacy education on differences between what Street (1984) has called the autonomous and the

ideological models of literacy. As indicated by Stairs (1990), particular attention should be paid prior to implementing any research in the Canadian north to the ideological assumptions behind the instruction, the utility in the community of the instruction and the research, and the role of dominance in pedagogical practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Course Outline, Evening Class

Appendix B: School Courses

Appendix C: Learning Centre Writing Course

Appendix A:

Course Outline, Evening Class

WRITING IMPROVEMENT WORKSHOP

COURSE OUTLINE

Tuesday and Wednesday, May 2 to May 31

WEEK:

1	Writing for Your Reader -personal notes & letters	sentence structure
2	Writing with a Purpose -business memoes, letters	punctuation capitalization
3	Content of Writing: 1 -descriptive paragraphs	spelling
4	Content of Writing: 2 -narrative paragraphs	verb agreement
5	Personal Writing Project	expanding sentences

Appendix B:

School Courses

Equivalency class: 10:35-12:00 Wed. and Fri.

Grades 8-10: 12:55-2:35 Wed. and Thur.

Wednesday (Instr. 1)

Thursday/Friday (Instr. 2)

Week One:

autobiographical letter

-who to?

-why?

-what?

sentence structure:

-subjects

-verbs

-completions

personal letter format

Week Two:

draft one/two

-paragraph

sentence fragments

punctuation

Week Three:

final draft paragraph

verb agreement

-chronological order

Appendix C:

LEARNING CENTRE WRITING COURSE

WEEK: 3

INSTRUCTION: 1

1. topic sentences,
concluding sentences
2. comparison and contrast
3. discussion of above paragraphs,
revision of week 2's descriptive
and narrative paragraphs, with a
focus on topic and concluding
sentences

INSTRUCTION: 2

sentence structure (SVO),
sentence types

PRODUCTS:

revised drafts of week 2's
paragraphs, one comparison
and contrast paragraph

sentence exercises,
editing of week 2's
paragraphs for verb usage

WEEK: 4

1. topic sentences,
concluding sentences

punctuation, capitalization

2. cause and effect

3. discussion of content of cause
and effect paragraphs, revision of
week 3's paragraphs

PRODUCTS:

topic and concluding
sentences, cause & effect
paragraph, revised week 3's
paragraph

punctuation, capitalization
exercises, editing of week
3's paragraphs for sentence
structure